Discursive Symbolism in A Semiotic Approach on the Joker Movie Trailer

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Abstract: Movie trailers are powerful marketing tool to influence audiences. Joker is the most famous villain character in the DC world. Data shows that the Joker movie trailer uploaded by movie-themed verified YouTube accounts has been watched more than 71 million times in four months. The trailer is discussed through a semiotic perspective to analyze discursive symbols in a film trailer. The result shows that there are three main connotative meanings for Joker: (1) a good person who loves his mother, (2) the formation of his identity, and (3) the transformation from a good person to a criminal.

Keywords: discursive symbolism, Joker, semiotics, trailer

Abstrak: Trailer film merupakan alat pemasaran yang dianggap kuat untuk memengaruhi penonton. Joker adalah karakter penjahat paling terkenal di dunia DC. Data menunjukkan bahwa trailer film Joker yang diunggah oleh akun-akun YouTube terverifikasi bertema film telah ditonton lebih dari 71 juta kali dalam kurun waktu 4 bulan. Trailer ini dibedah melalui perspektif semiotika yang menganalisis simbol-simbol diskursif dalam sebuah trailer film. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga makna konotasi utama terkait Joker: (1) orang baik yang menyayangi ibunya, (2) pembentukan identitasnya, dan (3) perubahan dari orang baik menjadi penjahat.

Kata Kunci: Joker, semiotika, simbolisme diskursif, trailer

The audience who has the information on who has the role of the Joker is rather controversial, yet agrees on it and follows the disappointment of Jared Letto as the former cast of the Joker.

> From the look of things, people are rather divided on the new take on the character but seem to agree that Phoenix was a good casting pic for the character. Whether or not the film turns out any good or if there is even a point to it, however, is still up in the air. (Griffeth, 2018)

The pre-research data shows that the Joker movie trailer (Phillips & Cooper, 2019) was shown in some movie-themed verified *YouTube* accounts, such as Movieclips Trailers, Film Trailer Zone, and Warner Bros Pictures. It had been watched over 71 million times in just four months based on the total views of those three accounts accessed on August 7th, 2019 (Primary data, 2019). That number shows that so many people watched and more than two million people liked the trailer. Even though the Joker is a villain in DC Universe, he still has a lot of fans around the world.

The marketing literature about advertising effectiveness for films has primarily examined the effect of advertising budgets on the financial performance of the studio or movie. It indicates that advertising budget influences stock prices and successful movies are likely to be supported by higher budgets than poorly performing movies (Basuroy, Desai, & Talukdar, 2006, p. 294).

Movie trailers are powerful marketing tool in the film business, but they are rarely used as an object of research. Ruiz (2012, p. 1876) argues, "Despite being one of the most successful marketing tools used to bring the public to the cinema, there are only a few researchers who have noticed its importance and studied it from an academic perspective". This argument is one of the main reasons researchers conduct semiotic studies on a film trailer.

A movie trailer is a content design, specifically designed to generate a positive consumer response regarding the emotional appeal, and made to captivate the movie audience so that they are attracted to come to the cinema.

> The content and design of the trailer can therefore provide investors with critical information about the quality of the movie. Given that movies are hedonic products, the trailer needs to convey the hedonic aspects of the movie and generate positive consumer responses to the emotional appeals and interestingness of the trailer. (Karray & Debernitz, 2017, p. 370).

Mohan describes how a movie trailer is made to make viewers interested to see the movie.

> It takes specialized skill to make the trailer in a way that connects with you and makes you anxious enough to watch the film to know more. The trailer-makers of Stree were successful in keeping that mystery intact. (Mohan in Bhatt, 2018)

Mohan agrees with Ruiz, trailers are a marketing tool. This makes film trailer an interesting research topic, especially in the study of semiotics. This kind of study made a deconstruction on signs and symbols to see the meaning behind texts. Meanwhile, this study aims to describe the signs shown in the Joker movie trailer that are hidden behind denotative signs. Therefore, the researcher does not include denotative meaning in this trailer and does not describe the signs shown by the storyline.

Symbolic interactionism assumes that everything is virtual. All interactions between human individuals involve an exchange of symbols (Ahmadi, 2008, p. 302). When we interact with others, we are constantly looking for clues about what types of behavior are appropriate in that context and how to interpret what others mean. Symbolic interactionism directs our attention to the interactions between individuals and how these interactions are used to understand what other people say and do as individuals. One of the fields of study that is very relevant to be analyzed using the semiotic method is film because it is built from a sign system that works together to achieve the desired effect. Certainly, it is different from a static photographic image. The series of images in films tend to produce imaginations that are full of markers (Putra, 2021, p. 241).

After an explanation of the various signs, the next thing to do is to examine the meaning of the signifier in the advertisement. According to Charon, signs or symbols in advertisements, packaging and websites can be classified as social objects. Charon (2007, p. 48) defines, "Every object in a situation that an actor uses in that situation. The use of it has emerged socially. The usage is understood and can be applied to various situations." Meanwhile, there are four different meanings to understand symbols: (1) symbols as social objects, (2) meaningful symbols, (3) symbols used to represent and communicate, and (4) symbols that are intentionally used.

Discursive symbols are symbols that capture a method using reason or intellect so it is also called the symbol of reason. The discursive symbol contained a structure built by words according to the law of grammar and syntax. Ignorance of the law causes the sentence to lose meaning or cannot be understood, there is a blurring of meaning. The symbol provides insight and even directs the convention. Langer (in Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel, 2017, p. 102) mentions that symbols are every means by which we can make abstractions. Abstraction itself is the release of the form of its contents, namely the release of the same form of different content into the form of concepts.

Interpretation is a process of forming general ideas from a variety of concrete experiences. If the interpretation gives certain details in expressing objects, phenomena, or situations in more general contexts or terms, the terms will have more detail than the previous ones. Therefore, there may be an interaction between the marker, the sign, and the understanding of the viewer, which in turn will affect the viewer's interpretation of a movie trailer, where the signs create a separate interpretation for the viewers who watch it (Broden, 2002, p. 237).

Kurniati (2016, p. 33) explains that the term non-verbal is usually used to describe all communication events, except spoken and written words. It can be said that non-verbal events and behavior are not truly non-verbal. The non-verbal field is an area that emphasizes the importance of phenomena that are empirical, factual, concrete, and without speech. It means that the non-verbal field is related to concrete, real objects, and can be proven through the human senses (Wibowo, 2013, p. 72). Table 1 shows the concretization of that thought.

Table 1 Berger's Concretization

Signifier	Signified
1. Long hair.	Not according to the culture (especially if the hair looks shabby).
2. Neat hair.	Entrepreneurs.
3. Hair cut too short.	Gays and soldiers / both.
4. Brown brick.	Hate sports, and leisure activities.
5. Pale.	Intellectuals (or a person who was sick).
6. Levi's.	Casual clothes, the proletariat.
7. Jean's particular design results.	Respected, or luxury.
8. Jean K. Mart	Workers.
9. Three sets of formal clothes.	Executives, entrepreneurs.
10. Suitcase.	Old fashioned, traditional.

Signifier	Signified
11. Diplomatic bag.	Type a successful entrepreneur.
12. Handbag.	European style, Italian descent.
13. Backpack.	Nomad.
14. Shopping Bags.	Farmers.
15. Sandals.	Artists.
16. Winged.	Type of entrepreneur.
17. But for workers.	Workers.
18. But nomads.	Nature lover, wanderer
19. Pilot glasses.	Middle class.
20. Glasses with the chain.	Freak.
21. Dark glasses/black.	Type the streets, people who are crazy.
22. Tie with the knot ties.	Educated people.
23. Thick tie.	Ancient people.
24. Tie like a rope.	Villagers, Western Nations.

Source: Berger in Gibraltar, 2014, p. 150

In addition, camera motion, image capture, and image capture size also have different interpretations as described in table 2, table 3, and table 4.

Table 2 Camera Technique

Signified of Taking Picture	Definition	Signifiers
Close-up	Only the face	Intimacy
Medium shot	Nearly the entire body	Personal relationships
Long shot	Setting and characters	Context, scope, distance,
Full shot	The whole body	Public personal relationships

Source: Berger in Gibraltar, 2014, p. 151

Table 3 Camera Movement

Signified	Definitions	Signifiers
Pan down	Camera pointing down	Power, authority
Pan up	Camera pointing up	Weakness, diminution
Dolly in	Camera moves in	Observation, focus
Fade in	Images come from a blank screen	Beginning
Fade out	Images on the screen go blank screen	Closure
Cut	Images move from one image to another	Continuation, interesting
Wipe	Images erased from the screen	"Determination" of conclusion

Source: Berger in Gibraltar, 2014, p. 151

Tabel 4 Visual Language

Sign	Importance	Unimportance
Size / scale	Large	Small
	Bigger than Surrounding	Smaller than Surrounding
Position	Middle	Side
	Front	Back
	Up	Down
	Upper Left Side	Lower Left Side
Angle/camera location	Under the Object	Above the Object
Figure/object lighting	Light	Dark
Background lighting	Light	Dark
Focus/depth of field	Clear / Sharp	Blurred
Appearance frequency	Mostly Shown	Rarely Shown
Accent	Different than Surrounding	Just as Surrounding

Source: Berger in Gibraltar, 2014, p. 151

Tabel 5 Mood-Associated Colors

Mood	Color
Exciting, stimulating	Red
Safe, comfortable	Blue
Depressed, disturbed, confused	Orange
Gentle, soothing	Blue
Protect, defend	Red, brown, black
Very sad, heartbroken, unhappy	Black, brown
Calm, peaceful, serene	Blue, green
Dignified, regal	Purple
Fun, carefree, happy	Yellow
Challenging, against hostile	Red, orange
Powerful, strong, very good.	Black

Source: Berger in Ekayanthi, 2015, p. 52

Everyone must have a favorite color. Usually the color affects the mood. Table 6 shows the description of the mood represented by the colors.

Moreover, Gibraltar (2014, p. 150) has an opinion that the language of colors represents different meanings of the colors. Every color has different characteristics that can both inspire and evoke emotions, such as (1) pink which is feminine, soft, soft, beautiful, and romantic; (2) red which is energetic, powerful, dynamic, active, and heat; (3) cream which is gentle, classic, exclusive, neutral, warm, and sweet; (4) orange which is carefree, popular, loud, bright, hot, and passionate; (5) pale yellow which is chirpy, sunny, warm, soft, pretty, and sweet; (6) light green which is fresh, happy, cheerful, and growth; (7) green which is classical, cool, worldly, exclusive, and quiet; (8) light blue which is calm, clean, cool, peaceful, gentle, and relaxed.

Darmaprawira (in Gibraltar, 2014, p. 150) states that image color has several symbolic values in general. Red is the strongest color, the most attractive, and associated with blood, anger, courage, sex, danger, strength, masculinity, love, and happiness. Purplish red shows something noble, majestic, rich, proud (arrogant), and impressive. Purple is cold, negative, mood, easy to give up, and symbolizes sorrow. Blue is cold, passive, quiet, peaceful, and enchanting color that draws us to solitude cools and creates distance. Moreover, blue symbolizes holiness, hope, and peace. Green symbolizes contemplation, belief (religion), eternity, immaturity, growth, hope, rebirth, and fertility. The negative side of green is a color associated with disease, hatred, poison, and jealousy. Yellow symbolizes enjoyment, agility, and intellect well explaining the nobility of love as well as a deep understanding of relationships between people. White means a positive, stimulating, bright, light, and simple character, also symbolizes purity, innocence, honesty, and purity. Gray is calm, polite, humble, and intelligent, and symbolizes doubt, neutral nature, and the mediator of conflict. Black symbolizes darkness and the absence of light and denotes dark forces, mystery, spoilage or error, and the night. In addition, black can also show a firm, formal, and solid structure.

In this research, those concepts, including camera movement, camera technique, Berger's concretization, color meaning, and color mood association are used to describe briefly and analyze the connotation signs in the movie trailer.

METHODS

Zaimar (2017, p. 220) defines semiology as a qualitative method of research that was successfully transferred to media studies by researchers, who needed more approaches to explain media studies. Barthes tried to show a new semiotics doctrine that allowed analyzing the sign systems to prove how nonverbal communication is open to interpretations through connotative meanings.

> Semiotics does not attempt to describe the structure of the work; it is not a matter of recording structure, but rather producing a textual structure that can move (a structure that has moved from reader to reader throughout history). Textual analysis is not trying to find out what defines a text but how it spreads. (Barthes, 1981, p. 135)

This research specifically observes signs and symbols throughout the trailer of The Joker movie. Zaimar (2017, p. 220) mentions that signs consist of an image, a word, an object, or even a certain type of practice and the meaning of signs depends on the relationships between the signifier. Based on that statement, the researchers collected cut scenes in the trailer, as they contain words (verbal codes) and images (contains objects) as the source of our research data to be analyzed.

Film is a relevant field of study for semiotics. Sobur (2009, p. 59) states that films are composed of signs and include various sign systems that work together to achieve the desired effect. Films related to architectural signs, especially indexical, use more iconic signs, namely signs that describe something. Indeed, the visual feature of the film is its similarity to the reality it shows. The dynamic images in films are icons of the reality they represent.

Figure 1 shows Barthes' semiotic scheme used to describe the method the data in the Joker movie trailer is analyzed in this study.
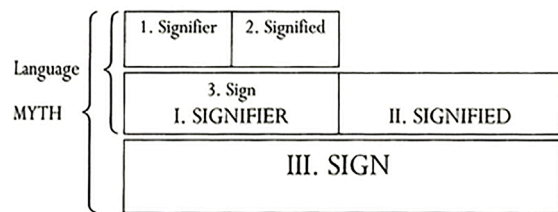
Figure 1 Map of Barthes's Semiotics
Source: Cobley and Jansz (2010, p. 51)

Researchers conducted an analysis using this model by applying two stages. First, the denotation stage, includes the relationship between the signifier and the signified in a sign of reality. Second, the connotation stage, includes the researcher's interpretation to find emotions and cultural values in the film.

The researchers also conducted a teller-focused interview with two movie experts to validate the findings of this research. They are a director, named Iman, and a scriptwriter, named Putra. The teller-focused interview is oriented to support and facilitate narratives. The practice of teller-focused interviewing is based on a dialectal way of thinking about the relationship

between the interviewer and the interviewed (Hydén, 2014, p. 796). Then, the interview is used to discuss the research findings as a part of the triangulation method.

FINDINGS

This research finds three major signs: (1) this trailer enlightened viewers about the relationship between the Joker and his mother; (2) viewers are shown how the craziness of Gotham city turns Arthur Fleck to be his dramatic persona, called Joker; and (3) this trailer specifically shown that his clown makes up is a persona that he created as a mask as his new identity, as a personification of his sentence. The findings were started by dividing the movie trailer into several scenes. So, every scene can be analyzed and described both denotatively and connotatively.

The first scene shows Arthur Fleck is within a therapy session, as seen in figure 2. The denotative sign can be found clearly when in the therapy session Arthur Fleck was sitting face to face but not staring straight at the therapist asking questions, "Arthur, does it help to have someone to talk to?" then Fleck stared at the therapist while smiling. Fleck is wearing a white shirt in a brown jacket, with long hair. This scene uses a medium shot in a dark color nuance, cutting to the next scene. On the other hand, the connotative sign refers to Berger's concretization that long hair means unrelated to the culture. Adityawan (in Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33) states that the medium shot depicts personal relations. Fleck's scale and position show that he is an important character. Altogether, this scene

marks the very beginning part of Fleck's sad life as the nuance of dark color means unhappiness, sadness, and heartbreak.


Figure 2 Scene 1
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The second scene is rather complicated because it uses a two-part narrative style. The first sentence is "My mother always tells me to smile, and put on a happy face. She told me I had a purpose, to bring laughter and joy to the world." Then, the second narrative continues with the sentence "Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?" Those narratives are described in multiple scene cuts, as seen in figures 3, 4, 5, and 6.
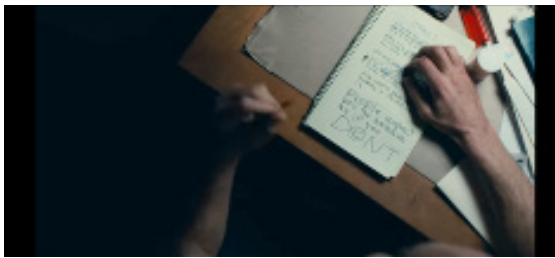

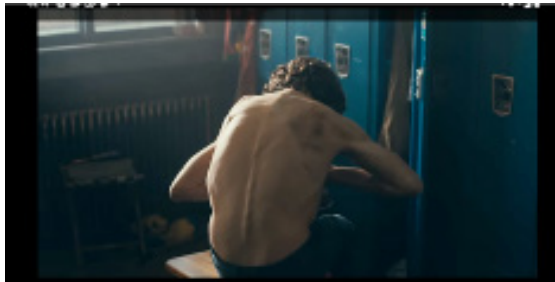**Figure 3 Scene 2-Cut 1**
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)
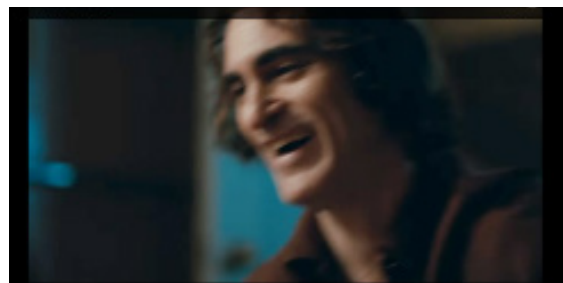
Figure 4 Scene 2-Cut 2
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

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Figure 5 Scene 2-Cut 3
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 6 Scene 2-Cut 4
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The denotative sign in scene 2 begins with Fleck walking on the roadside of the city in the first cut. The camera is behind him and follows in a full shot while narrating the first sentence, "My mother always tells me to smile and put on a happy face. She told me I had a purpose, to bring laughter and joy to the world." When the narration by the clause "Tells me to smile, and put on a happy face," the scenes are cut to various daily activities of Fleck and his mother, and then he smiles, as seen in figure 4. Various shots are used in the second cut, such as close-up and medium shots while maintaining both camera focus and lighting of the character, both his single scene and the cuts showing activity done with his mother. The second cut of the scene continues the narration by the clause "She told me I had a purpose, to bring laughter and joy to the world" as seen in figure 5. Fleck was writing down jokes and was also seen working as a clown

holding a sign. This part also uses the same techniques as the first cut, using close-up and medium shots while maintaining both camera focus and lighting of the character. The last part of the scene (cut 3) continues the narrative "Is it just me or is it getting crazier out there?" It is a part when he got beaten while working as a clown, seemingly made fun of by some youngsters, then move to the cut where Fleck is facing backward sitting down in a locker room. The camera technique used is a medium shot, while zooming in on him as seen in figure 6. All cuts in the scene focused on the character.

The connotative sign in scene 2 can be found in the narrative sentences working side-by-side with the cuts shown in the trailer, with every word shown, and empowering the cuts. The dark nuance in this scene describes blue-ish dark instead of black, which signifies the absence of light while depicting passive and peaceful nuance (Darmaprawira, 2002, p. 73). All the cuts in this scene show the importance of the storytelling, by using the close-up and medium shots to signify intimacy and personal relationship (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 73). Another indication is the object is always visible in the center of the screen at a larger scale than the surrounding objects.

The third scene is quite long and filled with a soundtrack "Smile" by Jimmy Durante (Agar, 2019) with an enormous amount of cuts, but no dialogue. The denotative sign in this scene can be observed through cuts when Fleck was bathing his mother and then dancing wither, as seen in figures 7 and 8. They use a medium shot, still in a dark

environment focusing on both characters in both camera and lighting. Iman and Putra add some interesting points about this finding.

> I like how this trailer shows us how close and personal Fleck's relationship was before he became the Joker. For me, it is a clear sign that he is a caring and loving person as we can see when he dances with his mother, and when he bathes her. (Iman, director, interview, September 8th, 2019)

> For me, Fleck was seemingly an honest person, it's shown by both his facial expression and body gesture when he's spending time with his mother, therefore it's an honest close relationship as he is happily caring for his mother, not doing it under pressure at all" (Putra, a scriptwriter, interview, September 9th, 2019)

Figure 7 Scene 2-Cut 5
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)
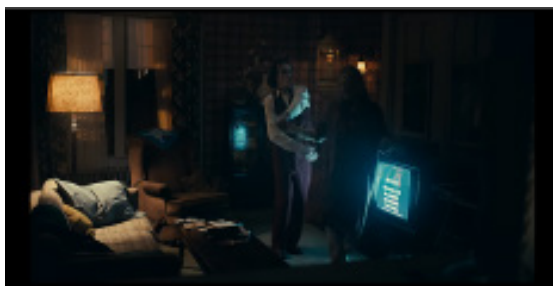
Figure 8 Scene 2-Cut 6
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

At the beginning of the scene, the soundtrack "Smile" by Jimmy Durante is played with the lyric (Streetdirectory & Lyric Advisor, 2019), "Smile, though your heart is aching. Smile even though its breakin', When there are clouds in the sky, You will get by if you smile through your fear and sorrow, Smile and maybe tomorrow." The song continues to play, while some cuts are shown in this scene. When the first part of a song says "smile," the cut shows Fleck smiling at a girl, cast by Zazie Beetz, who also smiles while sitting face to face separated by a dining table, as seen in figure 9. This cut uses both medium close-up shots, still using dark theme background, yet focusing on both characters in the center.

Figure 9 Scene 3-Cut 1
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 10 Scene 3-Cut 2
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)
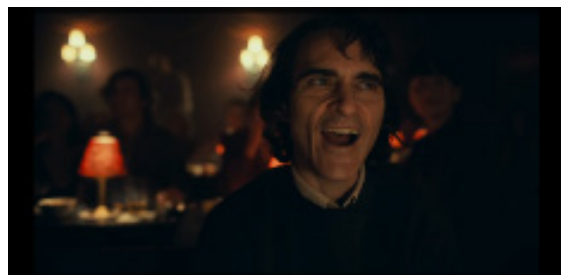
Figure 11 Scene 3-Cut 3
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 12 Scene 3-Cut 4
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 13 Scene 3-Cut 5
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The cut then shows Fleck walking to Arkham State Hospital and crossing the street (figure 10). A full shot focuses on him crossing the road and the hospital is taken with a hospital share that is bigger than him. Then, the scene switches to the third cut which shows two things. First, Fleck is seen standing on stage and holding a microphone while a group of spectators watch. Second, close-up. The technique was demonstrated when he sat in the audience and laughed in the middle of the camera.

Figure 11 and 12 show the scenes where Fleck is seemingly sitting at a dresser table, looking in the mirror wearing clown makeup-dominant in white, while having a red and blue accent on his face, forcing his smile with both his index finger. This cut uses the close-up technique, in a rather dark environment, yet focuses on his expression almost filling up the screen. The last cut

happens on a train, where Fleck is laughing hysterically while having a sad face, then confronted by several men in suits, which later get beaten up by the same group of men, as seen in figure 13. This cut uses a full shot, medium shot, and a close-up shot while focusing on the character, mostly in the middle of the screen.

The connotative sign can be understood initially through Agar's argument on why the song "Smile" by Jimmy Durante is played:

> Lyrically, "Smile" tells the listener to keep their head up high no matter how bad things get, because tomorrow could bring about better fortunes. In a twisted way, this message can be applied to Joker's Arthur Fleck, who becomes increasingly convinced the world is a crazy and bizarre place. Footage in the trailer shows Arthur is somewhat down on his luck; he's frequently beaten up by strangers and struggling as a stand-up comedian. In response, he transforms into the Joker, a character prominently known for his psychotic smile. As Arthur says, he used to think his life was a tragedy but realized it's a comedy. Dressing up as a killer clown may not be what Arthur's mom or Durante had in mind when they said to smile, but Arthur's trying to make sense of it all in his way. (Agar, 2019)

The argument tells the whole story of the trailer, but in this scene, the lyrics work side-by-side with what the cuts are showing. The camera pictures show different meanings in each cut. The close-up signifies intimacy and is validated by the importance shown by the camera placement in the center so it has the objects-

characters bigger than the surrounding objects. The blue environment that creates dark blue nuance (Darmaprawira, 2002, p. 73) is shown by the lyric "Smile" which signifies a peaceful and empowering mood. However, the rest of the cuts say otherwise when the lyrics say, "Smile even though its breakin', When there are clouds in the sky, You will get by if you smile through your fear and sorrow" (Streetdirectory & Lyric Advisor, 2019). The camera technique used is the close-up which signifies intimacy and the medium shot which signifies personal relation (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33). However, the importance is shown with the character placement supported by the facial expression of laughing and faking a smile. The group of men in dark-colored suits is concretized by Berger (in Sobur, 2009, p. 59) as educated and considered a businessman. However, the black and brown nuance in the third and fourth cuts signifies sadness and a broken heart.

The fourth scene is unique, it has the continuation of the soundtrack played since the third scene, with narration (Phillips & Cooper, 2019), "Gotham's lost its way. What kind of coward would do something that cold-blooded? Someone who hides behind a mask."

Figure 14 Scene 4-Cut 1
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 15 Scene 4-Cut 2
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 16 Scene 4-Cut 3
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The denotative sign is shown through narration by Thomas Wayne, saying "Gotham's lost its way. What kind of coward would do something that cold-blooded? Someone who hides behind a mask," with every sentence divided into a three-part cut. The first one showed that Fleck was running in the tunnel and holding a bag while wearing clown makeup, as seen in figure 14. It is taken with full shot, in a dark nuance, in the nighttime, while focusing on Fleck running in the middle of the screen. The second one was when Wayne was narrating, "What kind of coward would do something that cold-blooded?" It shows a hand holding a gun-a revolver in two hands, as seen in figure 15, and then turns to Fleck dancing alone, not wearing a shirt, and showing his seemingly skinny shirtless body, with his both hands above his head, holding the same revolver. The cut is drawn in a dark nuance with very minimal lighting,

while it still focuses on the gun and the character in a close-up shot and full shot. The last cut is when Wayne was narrating, "Someone who hides behind a mask." It shows when Fleck is being chased in a crowded area, seemingly a subway train station as a train can be seen passing by, then putting a clown mask in a garbage can. This cut uses a bright nuance, focusing on the face of both the chaser and Fleck, and then it focuses on his hand putting down his clown mask, in the middle of the screen, as seen in figure 16. This myth is empowered by our interview with Putra (a scriptwriter, interview, October 9th, 2019). Putra said, "For me, what stands out the most is the narrative done by both Fleck and Wayne, they both said things about the city gone crazy, and this validates the scenes showing the madness in Gotham city."

The connotative sign in the scene that is dominated by the black and brown nuance in two of the scene cuts. According to Sobur (2009, p. 59), it depicts and signifies sadness and a broken heart. However, the last cut of the scene is bright white-dominant which signifies pureness, brightness, and a positive character (Gibraltar, 2014, p. 148). The camera techniques used in this scene always put the objects and characters in the center of the screen which signifies importance (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33). Moreover, the shots used are close-up which signifies intimacy, and medium shot which signifies personal relationship (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33). The camera movement used is a dolly-in, which signifies focus or observation (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33).

The fifth scene has the same formula as the fourth scene with the same continuation of the same soundtrack and narration. However this time, the words narrated by Arthur Fleck who said, "I used to think that my life is a tragedy. But now I realize, it's a comedy."
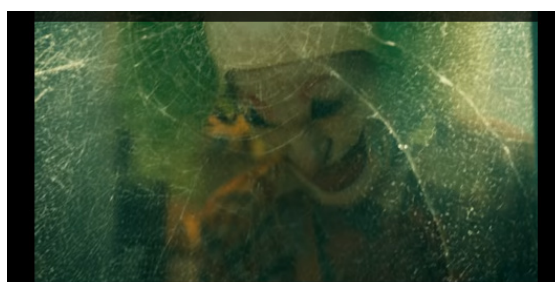

Figure 17. Scene 5-Cut 1
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 18. Scene 5-Cut 2
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 19 Scene 5-Cut 3
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 20 Scene 5-Cut 4
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 21 Scene 5-Cut 5
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The denotative sign can be observed in the fifth scene which begins with a black screen with the phrase "PUT ON" in white font color, at the center of the screen, as seen in figure 17. Later on, it showed Fleck wearing a red clown nose, walking towards a gate using a medium shot, focusing on Fleck's walking, and then it is cut to the next part. The second cut, as seen in figure 18, showed that Fleck was kneeling and forcing a smile on a child with both his index finger in his white shirt and brown coat while separated by an iron fence gate. This second cut uses a medium shot, focusing on the child being forced to smile by Fleck. The third cut begins with a black background, similar to the first cut, in two phrases "A HAPPY" and then "FACE" The cut focused on Fleck seemingly smiling on stage, as seen in figure 19. The camera technique used is a close-up. The last two cuts were narrated by Fleck. The two parts showed two completely different things. The first one showed Fleck in clown makeup was breaking a mirror with his face while narrating, "I used to think that my life was a tragedy," as seen in figure 20. This cut uses a close-up camera technique focusing on Fleck's expression while breaking the mirror. The second cut showed Fleck walking in a corridor wearing the new Joker makeup in a purple suit with

a brown vest and green shirt with his hair dyed in green, and then it transitioned to him dancing on the stair wearing the makeup and outfit, while narrating, "But now I realize, it's a comedy," as seen in figure 21. This cut uses a dark nuance while in the corridor and bright nuance while in the stair, with a medium shot, close up, and long-shot camera techniques and all is focused on Fleck. Both key informants have different points about this finding.

> Everyone knows who or what the Joker is, a crazy villain, wearing a clown suit doing evil stuff, but this trailer shows how he transcends from a day job comedic clown to a whole new identity, the last two scenes show us as viewers how Arthur Fleck becomes the Joker. (Iman, a director, interview, October 20th, 2019)

> Well, this trailer showed us how normally a loving person can be a villain, this is not just a villain, the Joker is one of the greatest villain characters ever written in DC history, and this trailer showed his human side, a character study on becoming the Joker himself with his new identity. And his identity is shown by his makeup and purple suit. (Putra, a scriptwriter, interview, October 20th, 2019)

The connotative signs of this scene are dominated by bright white, signifying purity, brightness, and positive character (Darmaprawira, 2002, p. 73). The camera techniques used are the close-up shot which signifies intimacy and the medium shot which signifies personal relationship. They always put the objects and characters in the center of the screen which signifies importance in both character and object, such as a white font with

black background (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33). The camera movement used is the dolly-in which signifies focus or observation and cuts to describe relationships within separated cuts in the scene (Sosrojudho, 2008, p. 33).

The sixth scene, as the last scene is an outro, showed two separate cuts. The first one showed the title of the movie "JOKER" and the second one was a fade-in scene showing Arthur Fleck as the Joker wearing his famous suit.

Figure 22 Scene 6-Cut 1
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

Figure 23. Scene 6-Cut 2
Source: Phillips & Cooper (2019)

The denotative sign is shown in this scene through the title of the movie itself as seen in figure 22, "JOKER", filling up the screen, written in white font with a black background, focusing at the center, and then the camera cuts to the main character, the Joker, as seen in figure 23. The second cut of the scene showed the Joker wearing face paint, dominant in white, with a blue and red accent around his eyes, lips, eyebrows, and nose. In addition, he has lime green

as the color of his long hair, a dark green shirt, and a brown jacket. From a brown-ish wooden background, the camera fades out from a medium shot to black.

The connotative sign in this scene is indicated by the title of the movie, written in white with a black background, referring to the important part of the trailer. Sosrojudho (2008, p. 33) argues that objects in the middle of the screen indicate that they are important because they are supported by the lighting, camera focus, and the size of the objects. The objects include the title and the main character in the same format. It means that they have similar importance in this trailer. The dark nuance in this scene indicates power (Sobur, 2009, p. 33).

DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the trailer, Arthur Fleck, the Joker's real name, says that his mother always tells him to smile and put on a happy face, as seen in figure 4. Then, this narrative style is ironically shown by doing the exact opposite of his mother's words. His second words show viewers how he could be someone very important by saying, "She told me I had a purpose, to bring laughter and joy to the world." This particular scene enforces her mother's first sentence about smiling, shown by doing his day job as a clown holding up a sign whilst smiling as seen in figure 3, and then he got beat up and made fun of by a group of youngsters.

Other denotative signs of his close relationship with his mother are shown in two scenes. The one is when he's bathing

his mother, as seen in figure 7, and the other showed when he's dancing with his mother, as seen in figure 8. Those denotative signs show us that, connotatively the Joker, previously known as Arthur Fleck, is a good person that has a good intimate and personal relationship with his mother as he takes care of her. The myth behind all this is a well-known myth as if a person takes care of someone means that he has a good relationship with those whom he takes care of. With all those signs shown in the trailer, it can be concluded that the Joker is a good caring person who takes care of his mother.

The symbol in this movie trailer to depict the Joker's close relationship with his mother is the happy emotion shown in two scenes. The first scene is when Fleck is bathing his mother in a bathtub, they both are smiling while doing so. Their expressions depict very clear happiness and caring. The same expression is shown and strengthened with a dance move in the second scene, where the facial expression of both characters is seen as happy. This means that expressions in this movie are trying to communicate with the audience-interact (Charon & Vigilant, 2008, p. 48). Therefore, the scenes depicting the relationship are both constructing and interacting meaning and validate Charon's theory of symbolic interactionalism.

The craziness of Gotham city turns Arthur Fleck into his dramatic persona, the so-called Joker. There are specifically two scenes that depict Gotham city's way to push Fleck lower, both scenes depict violence as he got beaten. The first one is

when he dresses as a clown whilst working, and is then made fun of by a group of youngsters in an alleyway as seen in figure 6. The second one is when Fleck was on a train, laughing sarcastically-also then got beaten up by a group of men in suits as seen in figure 7. This scene that shows the madness of Gotham city is empowered by Thomas Wayne's narrative, "Gotham's lost its way." Both scenes share the same symbols. The violence is a crime and it shows that the city is very violent. Both scenes are then strengthened by Fleck's sentence when he said, "Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?" His words refer to the great violence that he suffers from, where connotative sign speaks of great violence that happens daily in a form of an unorderly city.

His clown makeup is a persona that he created as a mask for his new identity, as a personification of his sentence, "I used to think that my life was a tragedy, now I realize it's a comedy". From this, smiling is his identity, as he tried to smile before, but then sarcastically smiled when he became the Joker.

All signs described in this trailer are symbols. According to Charon (2007, p. 48) social objects, as symbols, are intentionally created and used to communicate and represent something to others and ourselves. Besides, Charon and Vigilant (2008, p. 51) also argue that symbols are intentionally used to represent and communicate. Symbols are not created as an ordinary denotative symbol, but a connotative discursive symbols. They are expressed

sequentially and not spontaneously. In addition, the connotation is the tone of a text and how has been decorated (Barthes in Krampen, 1987, p. 80). In the final analysis, the signified of a connotative sign is the fragment of an ideology, and the signified, in turn, rhetoric, both going back to a real system via metalanguage even here no differences are made between communication and indications. Thus, anything which furnishes meaning becomes a sign, and any group of the sign becomes a system, although neither the existence of an intention to communicate, not of a complete sign inventory, nor a combination of rules or opposing features, is proven (Krampen, 1987, p. 59-88).

CONCLUSION

All the signs and symbols as social objects in this movie trailer are well-constructed to depict three main points, as this is a single character study-based movie, that depicts the main character as a good caring person before turning into the culturally most famous villain character in the DC Universe known as the Joker. Secondly, his mother was the main reason for him being the good and evil in her absence. Lastly, this trailer also shows how his identity as The Joker is invented. This trailer depicts his journey from good to evil in a short period, mainly caused by the absence of his mother and the madness of Gotham city. Scenes are well-arranged, using both verbal and non-verbal symbols such as facial expression, body language, and also narrative-style sentences.

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