

The Shadow of Horror: A Semiotic Analysis of Cinematic Transitions in *Ivanna* (2022)

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the representation of scenes in the movie *Ivanna* (2022) using the shadow technique through a qualitative approach and Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. *Ivanna* is a horror film that tells the story of the spirit of Ivanna, a Dutch woman who was beheaded by Japanese soldiers during their colonization of Indonesia. The depiction of the sadism of the massacre that befell Ivanna, combined with the time-setting connectivity through the shadow technique, makes the study of how this technique produces a smooth transition between two realities with different time settings a unique and interesting subject. This study, which employs the shadow technique, complements film representation studies, an area that has not been extensively explored. Peirce's semiotics involve categories in the meaning process, commonly referred to as the meaning triangle, which includes the sign, the sign reference, and the sign use. The results show that cinematography effectively presents a visual representation of the narrative, particularly in the horror genre, where light plays a key role in creating tension. In conclusion, *Ivanna* successfully combines both elements to convey messages and enhance the audience's experience.

Keywords: Shadow, Light, Film, Representation, Semiotics.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji adegan representasi masa lalu dalam film "Ivanna" (2022) dengan menggunakan teknik bayangan melalui pendekatan kualitatif dan teori semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce. *Ivanna* merupakan film horor yang menceritakan tentang arwah Ivanna, seorang wanita berkebangsaan Belanda yang tewas dipenggal oleh tentara Jepang saat menjajah Indonesia. Penggambaran tentang sadisnya pembantaian yang menimpa Ivanna dan konektivitas latar waktu yang menggunakan teknik bayangan membuat kajian bagaimana teknik bayangan yang digunakan menghasilkan transisi yang halus untuk menghubungkan dua realitas dengan latar waktu yang berbeda sebagai studi yang unik dan menarik. Studi dengan teknik bayangan ini melengkapi kajian representasi film yang belum banyak dilakukan. Semiotika Peirce memiliki kategori dalam proses pemaknaan yang biasa dikenal dengan segitiga makna, meliputi tanda, acuan tanda, dan penggunaan tanda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sinematografi efektif dalam menghadirkan representasi visual dari narasi yang telah dibangun, terutama dalam genre horor di mana cahaya menjadi kunci utama dalam menciptakan ketegangan. Kesimpulannya, film "Ivanna" berhasil menggabungkan kedua unsur tersebut untuk menyampaikan pesan dan meningkatkan pengalaman penonton.

Kata Kunci: Bayangan, Cahaya, Film, Representasi, Semiotika

INTRODUCTION

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Film is a communication medium often used to convey messages to the audience through various visual and audio elements. Two essential elements are interconnected and continuous in a movie: cinematic elements (processing style) and narrative elements (material to be processed) related to the story aspect. The movie *Ivanna* is interesting because it is based on the true story of the author, Risa Saraswati, who was able to communicate with spirits from childhood until she finally met the figure of Ivanna and wrote an interesting life story.

In horror films, directors usually insert myths, legends, and local history as the source of the story and then use cinematographic techniques to build and support the story. By definition, horror is a feeling of fear, anxiety, and a terrible feeling obtained after reading, witnessing, or experiencing something (Ismail & Nugraha, 2024). A story is a special kind of narrative creation that connects cognitive, emotive, and motivational domains to the narrated tale, so providing structure to personal experiences (Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss, & Ahmed, 2019); a person's life is defined by their story, which also recounts their events.

Concurrently, genre is a classification of the content and form of a work (Kartikasari & Suprpto, 2018). Along with the development of world film trends, genres, and technology, national films are also increasingly varied, one of the growing genres is horror (Meliala & Bezaleel, 2024). It can be concluded that the horror genre is a work that gives the audience a feeling of fear, horror, and anxiety. Usually, techniques in movies are used by the genre. The existence of films is in line with their development; as time goes by, the film genre is increasingly circulating in the community; movies are works that record moving images to convey a message. Supporting the story in the movie requires adding techniques such as lighting, sound, camera, and others.

Martin (2019) identified a correlation between low empathy and fearfulness with increased enjoyment and desire to view horror films. Furthermore, a positive relationship exists between sensation-seeking and the enjoyment or preference for horror. The horror movies' plots, settings, and characters are often artificial and unreal. In documentaries, however, the tense atmosphere, plot, and events are authentic. This fact makes documentaries look more scary (Park, 2018). Nonetheless, watching a documentary or even a horror movie based on a true story can remind the audience that the bad things that happen to the characters in the movie can happen anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. The satisfaction of watching a horror movie is felt after the movie is over, which often makes the audience feel addicted because, throughout the movie, the body tends to freeze. After all, the heartbeat becomes faster in anticipation of the next scene, and when the movie is over, there is a feeling of pleasure and relief in the audience's hearts.

The *Ivanna* movie, which aired in 2022, was adapted from a novel by Risa Saraswati entitled "Ivanna Van Dijk" which is a spin-off from Danur Universe (2016) and has the same director as The Queen of Black Magic (2019), Kimo Stamboel. Ivanna tells the story of Ambar, a girl with the ability to see mystical things, who must face the revenge of the spirit of Ivanna, a Dutch woman who was beheaded by Japanese soldiers during the colonial era. This movie received a rating of 5.7/10 on IMDb.com from 1,100 users, with comments from 19 reviewers and 11 film critics.

The background of Ivanna's life story, coupled with the shadow lighting technique used by the director, makes Ivanna's movie better and unique. Horror movie lighting techniques use a lot of low-key light to add tension and create a frightening effect for the audience. According to Frawley (2023), the difference between low-key and high-key is in the amount of light. A high key means a lot of fill light to key light, so there are not many shadows on the subject or object, and the light intensity is fairly high overall. Whereas low-key lighting is dark, the key light is the main light with a fill light of low or no intensity so that bright, dark shadows are more visible. Low-key lighting functions in scenes are intimate, gripping, gloomy, and mysterious. That way, this technique will display the chiaroscuro effect; a low-key lighting setup is used in the high-contrast lighting technique known as chiaroscuro to create contrast between the subject and a dark background (Sewell, 2022). It was a method that brought together very strong contrasts of light and dark inside a picture, giving the appearance of shape and volume.

This film is interesting to study because it represents the character's past with a tragic story using the shadow technique not only used as narrative, they also function as visual metaphors that employ broader themes such as trauma, memory, and fear. Semiotics studies how humans see things to signify without combining them with communication (Sobur, 2017). The word "Semiotics" is taken from the Greek, namely "Semeion" or "Seme" which means sign or interpretation of signs. Charles Sanders

Peirce's semiotic theories used to examine how tools such as lighting and shadows can function as a medium of communication that infinite in time and space.

Pierce's semiotics has three stages: the reception of sensory elements through the five senses, followed by the association of cognitive experience, known as the object, and culminating in the interpretation by the sign's recipient. Zhou (2023) demonstrated how symbolic components hold layered meanings that affect a viewer's viewpoint as the film progresses. Peirce's semiotic stages provide a structured approach to interpreting the use of shadow techniques as a medium of communication that is not limited to its relationship with the main characters in the film, but also in relation to a broader narrative context that addresses collective themes such as social trauma, memory, and the psychological impact of horror.

In addition to the narrative elements, another thing that makes horror movies more interesting is the cinematography elements, one of which is called *mise-en-scène*, which is everything that appears in front of the camera and will be shot. In Ivanna's movie, lighting is also used to influence the atmosphere, mood, and character of the movie scene. Usually, lighting can help the director accentuate certain aspects, including the shadow technique in Ivanna's film. This film is even more interesting to discuss because the lighting techniques, camera movements, and visual effects used by Kimo Stamboel, the director of Ivanna, are unique and not commonly used by horror films in Indonesia, so this film feels interesting because the techniques used are different from other Indonesian horror films.

Previous studies related to semiotic analysis of films have been conducted by various scholars. For example, Putra (2023), examined the portrayal of women in the horror genre, though his semiotic analysis focused on different techniques. Farid (2023) used narrative and visual analysis in horror films, employing elements of mystery and myth to create visual contrasts that heighten tension and fear. Dark, contrasting lighting can evoke a sense of mystery and cast eerie shadows. Additionally, appropriately used music can enhance the tension and intensity of frightening scenes. Mustafa (2022) analyzed the symbolism of coins, light, and shadows in *The Dark Knight*, revealing how shadows reflect a dualism of black-and-white, representing both justice and goodness on one side, and evil and violence on the other.

A study focusing on the arrangement of indoor lighting as a dramatic enhancer was conducted by Muhammad & Rahmad (2022). In the movie "Marlina the Killer in Four Acts," low-key lighting techniques in indoor scenes create an impression of darkness and gloom. Lighting also helps create dimension in the space, allowing the audience to feel as though they are in the same setting as the characters. In addition to lighting, other factors such as camera settings, artistry, and the expressions and gestures of the actors can also affect the dramatic elements in a film.

Gong & Zhang (2021) asserted that sound in horror films contributes to narrative progression, enhances storytelling, depicts characters and settings, underscores the environment, and engages the audience's psychology. It collaborates with visual elements to cultivate anticipation and fear, facilitating the audience's spontaneous identification and immersion in the film's content. All of these elements demonstrate that sound is pivotal in horror films. Park (2018) states that even though the audience already knows that the scene being watched is an unreal movie, they still feel tense and shocked at each plot point. One contributing factor is the lighting technique. There are various types of light in horror films, such as silhouettes, spotlights, low lighting, hard light (hard light, *chiaroscuro*), large shadows, and projected shadows.

While numerous studies have examined Indonesian horror films, most emphasize social and cultural contexts, leaving underexplored technical elements like the utilization of shadows and lighting techniques in establishing horror atmospheres. A semiotic analysis of the shadow technique in the film 'Ivana' contributes to understanding the relationship between cinematographic techniques and audience experience in the horror genre. This study formulates the following problems based on the identified background; 1) In what ways does the shadow technique utilized in the horror film 'Ivana' enhance the audience's experience? 2) What visual and auditory elements are employed in this film to establish a horror atmosphere?

This study aims to enrich the understanding through a semiotic lens of how shadow techniques and other cinematic elements can strengthen the narrative and create an immersive experience for the audience.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach and Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis. This method was chosen to explore how the shadow technique in *Ivanna* is used as a medium in communicating past events and conveying deeper meanings.

This research takes data from the cut scene of *Ivanna* by using shadow technique. Each scene was examined in detail, focusing on the technical use of light, shadow and temporal transitions. Peirce's semiotic framework, which includes the components of the sign (the representation), object, and interpretant, is used to explain how these elements contribute to the storytelling of the movie. By applying this method, the results of the study will reveal the implied symbolic meaning of the shadow technique to the audience.

The shadow technique is both an aesthetic component and a significant narrative instrument. In a semiotic framework, shadows function as signs possessing distinct meanings that enhance the psychological experience of the audience. In *Ivanna*, shadows represent physical objects while also evoking tension and uncertainty. Shadows serve as both visual components and representations of diverse psychological concerns. The analysis also included visual and audio cues to establish a horror atmosphere. The dark, high-contrast lighting is a prominent visual element, frequently resulting in dramatic shadows. Color symbolism significantly contributes to the establishment of a horror atmosphere.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Shadow Technique as A Shaper of Audience Experience

Shadow lighting is one of the important elements in cinematography that can give dramatic, artistic, and symbolic effects to a movie scene. This lighting technique uses a light source that casts firm, long, or dark shadows on the subject or background. Shadow lighting can express the mood, character, conflict, or theme in the movie.

This study found that the use of shadow techniques in the movie "*Ivanna*" serves as a strong narrative support to convey the background of the main character. Semiotic analysis, based on Peirce's theory, shows how shadows are used as signs that evoke memories and emotional bonds. For example, in the scene where the flashlight is pointed at the wall, the shadow of the main character's past directly tells the tragic and dark story that continues to haunt her. This finding supports Peirce's idea that in this case, shadows can transcend direct visual meaning and serve as deeper symbolic representations.

The shadows in "*Ivanna*" contribute to creating fear and tension. The film uses lighting techniques to emphasize and show the contrast between light and dark (chiaroscuro), and create tension that affects the emotional distress of the audience. This reinforces the idea that shadows in horror cinema are not just an aesthetic choice but an integral component of storytelling that shapes audience perception and emotional engagement.

The editing technique used to transition between the past and present in "*Ivanna*" with light and shadow techniques creates a cohesive narrative. With the help of audio, color grading, and the storyline revealing the main character's past through shadows, the film successfully presents a smooth transition to the flashback scene. This is in line with Kovarski et al.'s (2022) assertion that editing techniques significantly affect the perception of time in movies.

This research enriches the field of film semiotics by offering a detailed examination of how shadow techniques in horror films can serve as narrative support. Previous research has often focused on general lighting techniques; however, this study delves deeper into the use of specific shadows to perform flashbacks of past memories and touch the audience's emotions.

In semiotic analysis, what is more important in films is characterized by several iconic signs that can describe something intended to convey its message to the audience; symbols as modalities of cognition (Temliakova, 2020). The application of Peirce's semiotic theory provides an overview of how the shadows in "*Ivanna*" function as interpretive signs that contribute to the story structure and emotional resonance of the film.



Figure 1. Two people holding a flashlight in the dark
Source: Ivanna movie (2022)



Figure 2. Shadow of a man standing upright
Source: Ivanna movie (2022)

Figure 1 shows a dark room due to a blackout with two people holding flashlights and highlighting one side of the house. Shadows appear like a reenactment of the cruel and sadistic events that have occurred in the house in the past, as seen in Figure 2. The shadows that appear on the wall have shapes that resemble soldiers, women, and residents. As illustrated in Figure 1, the use of a flashlight in a dark room highlights the central role of shadows in building tension. The surrounding darkness contributes to a sense of curiosity and fear at the same time. The shadow in this scene is not only a plot detail of the story but also serves as a visual metaphor depicting the main character's dark memories while dealing with a traumatic past.

The semiotic analysis of this scene reveals that the Representamen (Ivanna) is an "entity" resulting from a dark event and having to tragically lose her life, while the Object (shadow) is used as a visual communication medium that is not limited to space and time. Both are related and add to the interpretative tension experienced by the audience. The illuminated side becomes meaningful with key elements of the action highlighted, just as a dark spot or shadow becomes a deliberate mark by hiding details that implicitly participate in the overall meaning of the scene (Sadowski, 2018).

The whitewashed style for horror films provides a unique visual signature seemingly discovered by chance. According to Carl Theodore Dreyer, director of the film *Vampyr* (1932), an important consequence of choosing the white style for a horror film is that shadows project well on white walls, one of which is the unexpected shadow of obvious dramatic import (Sadowski, 2018). The utilization of lighting schemes in the display of visual material is crucial in cinema production. Such flicks continue to captivate the audience's attention (Medvedieva & Rosliakova, 2023). Our brains are used to imagining the big picture of events, that the dark must hold terrible things. Park (2018) adds that with silhouettes, some of a character's physical appearance is obscured and produces a distortion of reality that appears together with contrasting shadows and lighting.

A shadow that shows a figure as a dark, textureless silhouette can be a living shadow that can be threatening, mysterious, and has an implied meaning (Sadowski, 2018). Muhammad & Rahmad (2022) state that low-intensity lighting (low-key lighting) will give the impression of darkness and gloom. Good lighting can be an additional force on the setting and setting to build dramatic elements in the movie. Lighting also helps create dimensions in the space in the scene. The creation of space dimensions helps the audience to feel what the player feels as if they are in the setting.

In Figure 2, the shadow of a man who stands tall and looks intimidating despite being a silhouette. Here, the lighting technique is set up to produce sharp shadows and emphasize the separation between past and present realities. In line with Peirce's concept of semiotics, where the shadow becomes the icon that resembles the figure and depicts the original event, while the event reflected through the shadow being the cause of Ivanna's terror becomes the index, and the flashlight becomes the symbol of a little light in Ivanna's dark and dark life as the secret is finally revealed.

Filmmakers often use the shadow technique to make one's imagination conjure up the most horrific things (Park, 2018). This method is quite simple and effective in increasing fear because the movement of light toward the shadow is unknown to the audience.



Figure 3. Amber approaches the intercom that sounds in the dark
Source: Ivanna Movie (2022)



Figure 4. Amber approaches the intercom that sounds accompanied by lightning
Source: Ivanna Movie (2022)

Generally, A movie is made up of extrinsic (moral lesson, background, social conditions, history) and intrinsic (theme, setting, character and characterization, plot, and point of view) elements; it also includes the ways in which camera angles, cinematography, sound design, and composition are used to convey the story to the audience (Yusuf, Nasir, & Mahmud, 2022).

In Figure 3, Ambar's approach to the intercom, which suddenly lights up in the middle of the darkness is supported by the rainy atmosphere accompanied by lightning. The strangeness of the

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intercom functions as a representamen of the oddity in the house, while the audience is asked to interpret it as a symbol of the relationship between the past and the present. The sudden glow of the intercom in the dark scene creates contrast, builds tension, and draws the audience's focus to the significance of the moment.

The tension escalates in Figure 4, where lightning briefly illuminates the scene. The room, previously shrouded in darkness with only the intercom light visible, is suddenly revealed in full view. The chiaroscuro effect is used here, with the extreme contrast between light (from the lightning) and dark (due to the power outage) reflecting the duality between the present and the past narratives. The lighting functions as a momentary revelation, contributing to the unveiling of the truth.

Audio-Visual Cues in Creating an Atmosphere of Horror

Based on Peirce's triangle of meaning (Sign, Object, and Interpretant), the intercom in Figures 3 and 4 functions as the sign, which is activated unexpectedly during a blackout. In the absence of electricity, the intercom's light becomes the central focal point, drawing the audience's attention in the otherwise dark environment. The intercom also acts as the object, serving as a communication medium between the past and present time settings. The interpretant is the emotional response elicited from the signs and objects, which, in this case, is the sense of fear and tension that reaches the audience.

The interplay of light and shadow in films is essential for creating an atmosphere and influencing the audience's perception of the scene (Štampfl & Ahtik, 2023). In this scene, the intercom light, blackout conditions, and lightning contribute to the heightened tension. According to Chion (2019), in *The Theory of Sound in Film*, sound does not merely serve as background noise but also strengthens the meaning conveyed by visuals. The sound of lightning in this scene amplifies the anxiety and reinforces the visual tension. The contours of an object's shadow—shaped by the interplay of light with surfaces—define the patterns of illumination, shadow, and highlights, all of which affect how the audience perceives the scene (Štampfl & Ahtik, 2023). Shadows can be classified as hard or soft, depending on the quality of the light; soft light creates diffused and blurred shadow edges, whereas harder light produces sharper shadows. These varying shadow effects influence the viewer's perception of space, mood, and emotional intensity.



Figure 5. Ambar sees the incident of Ivanna being dragged by the villagers
Source: *Ivanna* Movie (2022)



Figure 6. Amber sees Ivanna's head being grabbed by Japanese soldiers
Source: Ivanna Movie (2022)



Figure 7. Ambar and the villagers are shocked to see Ivanna's head decapitated by Japanese soldiers
Source: Ivanna Movie (2022)

In the film *Ivanna*, other characters are only able to witness the horrific events that befell Ivanna through shadows, while Ambar, who has a visual impairment, is the only one able to "see" the incident clearly. In Figure 5, Ambar seems to be at the scene, witnessing Ivanna surrounded by residents and dragged from the kitchen to the living room. Based on Peirce's triangle of meaning, the sign in this scene is the tone shift to a warm yellowish grading. Yellow, classified as a warm hue, serves as a visual medium in film (Sugiarto & Widiastuti, 2020), where color interacts with other story elements to enhance realism and emotional impact. In this case, the yellow tone evokes a sense of nostalgia and intimacy, linking the audience to Ambar's feelings of sorrow and memory of Ivanna's tragic past.

In contrast, Figures 6 and 7 introduce the color blue, which symbolizes coldness and tension, highlighting the sharp emotional divide between past and present. The use of blue alongside lighting techniques emphasizes the atmosphere of fear and unease. As Štampfl and Ahtik (2023) suggest, shadows and light not only set the tone but also influence the audience's emotional response. In this scene, the lighting and the interplay between light and shadow generate a stark contrast, underlined by sound, which Chion (2019) claims reinforces the visual meaning. The sound of lightning, coupled with Ivanna's screams, amplifies the emotional distress of Ambar and the audience, enhancing the overall tension and helplessness felt in the moment.

Cinematic shadows or silhouettes such as those seen in *Ivanna*, create ambiguity by obscuring the character's physical features. This lack of detail evokes feelings of curiosity, unease, and mystery as the audience is left to "read" the character through the silhouette (Sadowski, 2018). Moreover, the use of color and lighting techniques in *Ivanna* helps distinguish between the past and present.

Flashback scenes are portrayed with warm yellow-orange tones, creating a nostalgic and intimate feeling, while the present is marked by cold blue tones, reinforcing the gripping tension of the moment (Putra & Manesah, 2024).

The transition between these time periods is seamless, allowing the audience to distinguish the flashback from the present without confusion. The use of lighting, shadows, and color coding in this context is essential for maintaining clarity in the narrative. The flashback sequence, with its yellowish warm tones, not only indicates a shift in time but also enhances the emotional intimacy of the scene. According to Susan Blackmore, the tone in films can make viewers feel the difference in atmosphere, particularly in horror films, where the darker tones are used to create fear.

The flashback sequence is defined as a scene that occurs before the main story, providing background on Ivanna's tragic experiences in the house, where she was tortured and ultimately beheaded by Japanese soldiers. This traumatic event leads to Ivanna's ghost haunting the house. Ambar's role as a character who experiences this through shadows and limited perception further highlights the relationship between the past and present, bridging the temporal divide. Gordejuela (2021) defines flashbacks as pivotal moments in films that reveal transformative events from the past, impacting the narrative's progression. Although the definition is unmentioned in cinematography and usually not in the form of a physical flashback (often shown through a clear transition or change of tempo in the film), the term flashback is nonetheless characterized as the recognition that something profoundly transformative and surprising happens in the initial montage of different temporalities in separate sequences.

In a broader context, flashbacks serve as cognitive tools to help audiences understand a character's backstory and emotional arc, as noted by Bort-Mir (2023). The use of editing, lighting, and shading techniques to facilitate these transitions plays a crucial role in how audiences perceive time and memory in cinema (Johnson, 2022). Kovarski et al. (2022) emphasize that editing techniques, such as cuts and transitions, affect time perception, cognitive processes, and emotional engagement. The changes in lighting and shadow play a key role in shaping how the audience interprets the past and present, which aligns with Peirce's semiotic theory. The sign (such as shadows) and the interpretant (the audience's emotional reaction) work together to convey deeper meanings about fear, loss, and the haunting presence of the past.

The analysis of Figures 5, 6, and 7 demonstrates how the use of color grading, shadows, and sound techniques facilitate the transition between past and present, enhancing emotional engagement and helping the audience understand the film's thematic undercurrents. The representamen (shadows) acts as a medium for displacing time and connecting the past and present, supporting the narrative's exploration of memory and trauma. Film transitions facilitate a fluid and cohesive connection between two images or scenes, enhancing the naturalness and engagement of the viewer's experience (Francis, 2023).

Compared to previous research, which has largely focused on cinematic techniques for visual effects or narrative enhancement (Octavita & Zaimar, 2018; Teng & Hisham, 2023), this study provides a more in-depth and specific semiotic analysis of shading techniques in horror genre films. By examining the specific use of shadows and transitions, this research offers new insights into how these techniques not only enhance aesthetics but also reinforce thematic depth, making the audience more emotionally connected to the film. This research expands the application of Peirce's semiotic theory to explore how editing and cinematic techniques manipulate time perception and emotional resonance, offering a fresh perspective on the use of shadow techniques in horror films.

The findings align with Peirce's semiotic framework, enriching our understanding of how shadows function as narrative tools in horror films. The use of these techniques in *Ivanna* not only facilitates the connection between the past and present but also plays an essential role in storytelling, communication, and audience engagement. This research fills existing gaps in film semiotics, offering a more comprehensive view of how cinematic transitions and shadow techniques contribute to the horror genre's emotional and thematic complexity.

CONCLUSION

This research provides an in-depth analysis of the use of shadow techniques in the film *Ivanna* to represent the past and how these techniques serve as a medium for transitioning between the past and the present. Through qualitative methods and Peirce's semiotic analysis, several key findings emerge.

The shadow technique proves to be an effective communication tool, conveying Ivanna's tragic past while supporting the narrative's emotional tone. The movement of lighting and shadows is not merely an aesthetic choice but a powerful method for depicting the darkness and trauma endured by the main character. This enhances the fluidity and immersiveness of transitions to flashback scenes, enriching the audience's understanding of the character's background.

The visual elements, such as shadow techniques, combined with color grading and sound design, are crucial for depicting past trauma, ensuring that transitions between scenes remain cohesive and emotionally resonant. Visual cues, such as shadows, and auditory signals, such as the intercom, complement one another in evoking emotions like tension and anxiety. The intercom functions as both a sign and an object in the film, representing a communication device that highlights the eerie and foreboding atmosphere. This results in an interpretant, creating a sense of unease for the audience. Peirce's semiotic approach allows viewers to interpret these visual and auditory elements, understanding how shadows and objects symbolize the violent and haunting history of the characters.

By analyzing Peirce's semiotic framework, this research demonstrates how shadows and lighting techniques can be used as narrative tools in film. It contributes to a deeper understanding of semiotics in cinema, particularly in the horror genre, by revealing how visual elements can serve not only an aesthetic function but also a narrative one. Filmmakers can use these findings to further develop and adapt shadow techniques in their own works, enhancing the quality and variety of films within Indonesia, especially in the horror genre.

Although this study focuses on the use of shadow techniques in horror films, it recognizes the limitations in not fully addressing other contributing factors such as color grading, film tone, and sound design. These elements are integral to creating subtle transitions and reinforcing the atmosphere. Future research can build on this foundation by exploring how color, light, and sound interact to convey messages in horror films. This study can serve as a reference for filmmakers and researchers, encouraging the exploration of shadow techniques as a tool for representing the past and enhancing storytelling in horror cinema.

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