

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF GOOD AND EVIL IN THE FILM THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL: A BARTHESIAN SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

Tasya Khumairah¹, Yunitari Mustikawati², La Sunra^{3*}

^{1,2,3} Sastra Inggris FBS Universitas Negeri Makassar

¹tsyakhmrh@gmail.com, ²yunitari@unm.ac.id, ³la.sunra@unm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the visual representation of good and evil through character appearance in The School for Good and Evil (2022) using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The research aims to reveal how visual signs construct meanings of goodness and evilness through the appearances of the characters in the film. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study uses selected screenshots featuring the visual appearances of major characters as the primary data. The analysis focuses on visual elements such as costumes, colors, hairstyles, accessories, facial expressions, and settings. The data are analyzed through Barthes' three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth (Barthes, 1972; Barthes, 1977). The findings indicate that good characters are visually represented through bright colors, elegant costumes, floral ornaments, soft lighting, and harmonious appearances. At the connotative level, these visual elements signify purity, kindness, beauty, nobility, and social prestige. In contrast, evil characters are represented through dark colors, gothic costumes, dramatic lighting, intimidating appearances, and threatening visual environments. These signs connote power, danger, aggression, rebellion, mystery, and moral threat. Furthermore, at the mythic level, the film reinforces conventional fairy-tale ideologies that associate physical beauty, elegance, and brightness with moral goodness, while associating darkness, monstrous appearances, and destructive power with moral evilness. This study contributes to semiotic film studies by demonstrating how visual signs embedded in character appearance communicate cultural meanings and ideological values related to morality in contemporary fantasy films.

Keywords: visual representation, good and evil, character appearance, semiotics, Roland Barthes, fantasy film.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi visual kebaikan dan kejahatan melalui penampilan karakter dalam film *The School for Good and Evil* (2022) dengan menggunakan teori semiotika Roland Barthes. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana tanda-tanda visual membangun makna tentang kebaikan dan kejahatan melalui penampilan karakter dalam film tersebut. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini memanfaatkan tangkapan layar terpilih yang menampilkan penampilan visual karakter utama sebagai data utama. Analisis berfokus pada elemen-elemen visual seperti kostum, warna, gaya rambut, aksesoris, ekspresi wajah, dan latar tempat. Data dianalisis berdasarkan tiga tingkat signifikasi Barthes, yaitu denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos (Barthes, 1972; Barthes, 1977). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakter baik direpresentasikan secara visual melalui penggunaan warna-warna cerah, kostum yang elegan, ornamen bunga, pencahayaan lembut, serta penampilan yang harmonis. Pada tingkat konotatif, elemen-elemen visual tersebut menandakan

kemurnian, kebaikan, kecantikan, kemuliaan, dan status sosial. Sebaliknya, karakter jahat direpresentasikan melalui warna-warna gelap, kostum bergaya gotik, pencahayaan dramatis, penampilan yang mengintimidasi, serta lingkungan visual yang memberikan kesan mengancam. Tanda-tanda tersebut mengandung makna konotatif berupa kekuasaan, bahaya, agresivitas, pemberontakan, misteri, dan ancaman moral. Selain itu, pada tingkat mitos, film ini memperkuat ideologi konvensional dalam cerita dongeng yang mengaitkan kecantikan fisik, keanggunan, dan kecerahan dengan kebaikan moral, sementara kegelapan, penampilan yang menyeramkan, serta kekuatan yang merusak dikaitkan dengan kejahatan moral. Penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap kajian semiotika film dengan menunjukkan bagaimana tanda-tanda visual yang terdapat dalam penampilan karakter dapat menyampaikan makna budaya dan nilai-nilai ideologis yang berkaitan dengan moralitas dalam film fantasi kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: representasi visual, kebaikan dan kejahatan, penampilan karakter, semiotika, Roland Barthes, film fantasi.

A. Introduction

Literature is a form of artistic expression that reflects human experiences, beliefs, values, and social realities. Along with the development of technology and media, literary works have increasingly been adapted into films, allowing stories to reach wider audiences through audiovisual representation. Different from textual media, films communicate meaning not only through dialogue and narrative but also through visual elements such as costumes, colors, lighting, settings, and character appearances. These elements help audiences interpret characters, events, and moral values presented in a story. As a visual medium, film relies on signs to convey meaning, making it

an important object of semiotic analysis.

Semiotics is the study of signs and how meaning is produced through signification. In film studies, semiotics provides a useful framework for examining how visual elements communicate ideas beyond their literal appearance. Roland Barthes expanded Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic model by introducing three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, connotation refers to the cultural and emotional associations attached to it, and myth refers to broader cultural meanings and ideologies that become naturalized through repeated representation (Barthes, 1972; Barthes, 1977). Barthes' framework is particularly relevant for analyzing films

because cinematic images often communicate deeper meanings through visual signs that audiences interpret consciously and unconsciously. Barthes' semiotic approach is frequently applied in film studies because it helps reveal how visual sign create cultural meanings through processes of representation and interpretation (Hakim & Purba, 2021)

One of the most common themes in fantasy narratives is the opposition between good and evil. Traditionally, good characters are associated with attractive appearances, bright colors, elegance, and kindness, while evil characters are commonly portrayed through dark clothing, intimidating appearances, dramatic visual styles, and threatening environments. These visual conventions have become familiar cultural codes that help audiences identify a character's moral position within a story. Since audiences often form judgments about characters through appearance before understanding their actions or personalities, visual aspects such as costumes, hairstyles, colors, accessories, facial expressions, and settings play an important role in communicating moral meanings.

Visual representation in fantasy films often uses symbolic codes, including costumes and colors, to construct specific identities and communicate differences between characters (Pambudiasih, 2023)

The School for Good and Evil, directed by Paul Feig, presents a fantasy world where visual appearance strongly contributes to the distinction between good and evil. The film follows Sophie and Agatha, two friends who are transported to a magical institution where students are trained to become heroes or villains. Throughout the film, characters associated with goodness are frequently shown through bright colors, elegant clothing, refined hairstyles, and harmonious environments, whereas characters associated with evil are often depicted through darker colors, gothic aesthetics, dramatic makeup, and intimidating visual features. These visual contrasts make the film a suitable object for semiotic analysis.

Several previous studies have examined The School for Good and Evil from different perspectives. Mifta Hujana (2024) analyzed symbolic representations in the film using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic

theory, while Rosyidah (2024) focused on the moral values conveyed through character actions and relationships. Dhimas Gustin Ariesandi (2025) employed Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze visual signs and their cultural meanings. However, these studies have paid limited attention to character appearance as a source of meaning. Therefore, this study focuses on how costumes, colors, hairstyles, accessories, facial expressions, and visual settings function as signs that communicate good and evil. Using Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth, this study aims to analyze the meanings embedded in character appearances and contribute to a deeper understanding of visual signification in contemporary fantasy films.

Literature Review

Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and the processes through which meaning is produced and interpreted. The term semiotics originates from the Greek word *semeion*, meaning sign. Signs can appear in the form of words, images, colors, gestures, sounds, objects, and other visual elements that convey particular meanings within a

cultural context. In visual media, signs are analyzed as elements that carry meanings through the relationship between representation and cultural interpretation (Sudariyah, 2022).

In media and film studies, semiotics is widely used to analyze how meaning is constructed through visual and auditory signs. Films communicate messages not only through dialogue and narrative but also through costumes, colors, lighting, settings, facial expressions, and other cinematic elements. These cinematic elements function as visual signs that construct meanings related to characters, social values, and cultural identities represented in film (Wahyudi & Fadilla, 2025). Visual signs in films operate as systems of meaning that allow audiences to interpret character representations, emotions, and cultural messages beyond their literal appearance (Setiawan & Sari, 2023).

Among the scholars who significantly contributed to semiotic studies, Roland Barthes remains one of the most influential figures. Barthes expanded earlier semiotic concepts by proposing that signs operate on multiple levels of meaning. His theory enables researchers to analyze not

only what is visible in a text but also the cultural and ideological meanings embedded within it (Barthes, 1977). Recent studies applying Barthes' semiotic framework demonstrate that film images contain denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings that reflect broader cultural beliefs and social ideologies (Noza et al., 2025). For this reason, Barthes' semiotic framework is particularly suitable for examining visual representations in films.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Roland Barthes developed a model of signification that expands Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the sign. According to Barthes, a sign consists of two inseparable components: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of a sign, while the signified refers to the concept or meaning associated with that sign. The relationship between these two components produces meaning through different levels of signification (Barthes, 1972).

Denotation

Denotation is the first level of signification and refers to the literal or descriptive meaning of a sign. At this level, signs are interpreted based on

what is directly visible without involving cultural or emotional associations. In film analysis, denotation focuses on identifying observable visual elements such as clothing, colors, hairstyles, facial expressions, objects, actions, and settings (Barthes, 1977).

For example, a character wearing a white dress can be denotatively described as a person dressed in white clothing. Similarly, a character standing in a dark environment can be described as being positioned within a dimly lit setting. Denotative analysis provides the foundation for understanding deeper levels of meaning because it identifies the signs that are visually present within a scene.

Connotation

Connotation is the second level of signification in which signs acquire cultural, emotional, and symbolic meanings. Unlike denotation, connotation depends on cultural knowledge and shared social understandings. Through connotation, visual signs communicate values, emotions, and ideas that extend beyond their literal meanings (Barthes, 1977).

For example, white is often associated with purity, innocence, elegance, and goodness, while black may be associated with mystery, power, danger, or evilness. Likewise, luxurious costumes may connote nobility and privilege, whereas dark and gothic clothing may connote intimidation or moral corruption. Connotative meanings play an important role in shaping audience interpretations of characters and their moral identities within a film.

Myth

Myth is the third level of signification proposed by Roland Barthes. Myth refers to broader cultural meanings and ideologies that become naturalized through repeated representation. According to Barthes, myths transform socially constructed beliefs into seemingly natural truths, causing audiences to accept particular values and assumptions without questioning them (Barthes, 1972).

In visual representation, myths often emerge through recurring cultural associations. For example, the belief that beauty represents goodness or that darkness signifies evilness can function as cultural myths because these associations have been repeatedly reproduced through

literature, folklore, and popular media. By analyzing myths, researchers can identify the ideological meanings embedded within visual representations and understand how cultural values are communicated through signs.

Visual Appearance

Visual appearance refers to the physical and visual characteristics through which a character is presented on screen. In film, visual appearance plays a significant role in constructing character identity and influencing audience perception. Before audiences learn about a character's personality through dialogue or actions, they often form initial impressions based on visual appearance (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019).

Visual appearance consists of several elements, including costumes, colors, hairstyles, accessories, facial expressions, and settings. These elements function as visual signs that communicate information about a character's personality, social status, emotions, and moral identity. Visual elements in films, such as costume, color, and character appearance, operate as symbolic signs that help audiences interpret identities, roles,

and meanings represented within cinematic narratives (Nugraha & Suryadi, 2022). Costumes can indicate character roles and backgrounds, while colors often carry symbolic meanings that influence audience interpretation.

In fantasy films, visual appearance plays an important role in constructing character identities and communicating symbolic meanings. Elements such as costume, color, make up, and other visual features function as signs that help audiences interpret characters and understand the values represented within the narrative. Therefore, visual representation becomes an essential aspect in conveying concepts such as morality, identity, and the opposition between good and evil in cinematic texts (Mariam et al., 2025)

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the visual representation of good and evil through character appearance in *The School for Good and Evil* (2022). A qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring and interpreting meanings embedded in visual and cultural phenomena, allowing researchers to

understand how individuals construct meanings from particular contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Qualitative research is also suitable for analyzing media texts because it focuses on interpreting meanings, symbols, and representations within specific social and cultural contexts (Mohajan, 2020).

The data source of this study was *The School for Good and Evil* (2022), directed by Paul Feig. The data consisted of selected screenshots depicting the visual appearances of characters associated with good and evil. Only eight screenshots were selected as the primary data: four extracts representing good characters and four extracts representing evil characters. These screenshots were chosen based on their relevance to the research objective and their ability to represent significant visual characteristics related to costumes, colors, hairstyles, accessories, facial expressions, lighting, and settings.

Data were collected by watching the film repeatedly, identifying scenes relevant to the representation of good and evil, capturing screenshots, and classifying them into categories of good and evil characters. The selected data were then analyzed

using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which includes three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth (Barthes, 1972; Barthes, 1977). At the denotative level, the researcher described the visual elements appearing in each screenshot. At the connotative level, the visual signs were interpreted based on their cultural and symbolic meanings. Finally, the mythic level was used to reveal broader cultural values and ideologies associated with the representation of good and evil. Qualitative data analysis was conducted through the processes of organizing, interpreting, and presenting findings descriptively to generate meaningful explanations of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The findings were presented descriptively to explain how visual appearance functions as a system of signs in constructing character identities within the film.

C. Findings and discussion

Findings

This study analyzes the visual representation of good and evil in the film *The School for Good and Evil* through the visual appearance of the characters using Roland Barthes'

semiotic theory. The analysis focuses on how visual signs such as costumes, colors, hairstyles, accessories, facial expressions, and settings construct meanings related to goodness and evilness. According to Barthes, meaning operates through three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. At the denotative level, the analysis describes the literal visual elements appearing in each scene. At the connotative level, these elements are interpreted based on their cultural and symbolic associations. At the mythic level, the analysis reveals broader cultural beliefs and ideologies that become naturalized through repeated visual representations.

Based on the selected data, the findings are divided into two categories: the visual appearance of good characters and the visual appearance of evil characters. Each category consists of four extracts that represent the dominant visual patterns used in the film to construct the binary opposition between good and evil.

1. Visual Appearance of Good Characters

This section analyzes the visual appearance of characters associated with goodness in the film. The analysis

demonstrates how bright colors, elegant costumes, floral decorations, soft lighting, and harmonious settings function as visual signs that construct the representation of good characters.

Extract 1 (Time 00:04:36)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sophie wears a luxurious pastel dress with styled blonde hair and stands between two guards in a flower-decorated hall with warm lighting.	The pastel dress, floral decorations, and warm lighting connote beauty, femininity, elegance, and high social status.	The scene reflects the fairy-tale myth that female goodness is naturally associated with beauty, luxury, and an elegant appearance.

At the denotative level, the scene shows Sophie as the central figure wearing a long pastel pink dress with puffed sleeves and lace details. Her blonde hair is styled in a formal updo decorated with small flowers. She stands in a large hall with high arches, tall windows, warm yellow lighting, and pink and white floral decorations. Two guards in silver armor stand on both sides of her.

At the connotative level, the pastel pink dress, soft makeup, and floral decorations are culturally

associated with gentleness, romance, femininity, and refinement. The grand hall, warm lighting, and guards signify wealth, royalty, and power. These visual elements construct Sophie as a character who embodies the conventional image of a “good” fairy-tale heroine.

At the mythic level, the scene reinforces a cultural belief commonly found in fairy tales: that a woman’s goodness is reflected through her physical beauty, luxurious clothing, and graceful appearance. Through repeated visual conventions, the film naturalizes the association between beauty and moral virtue. Barthes (1972) explains that myth works by presenting cultural values as natural and unquestionable.

Extract 2 (Time 00:19:57)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Five female students stand in a flower garden wearing elegant pastel-colored dresses, with a large	The pastel dresses and floral setting connote femininity, gentleness, beauty, harmony, and wealth.	The scene reinforces the myth that goodness is linked to physical beauty, graceful appearance, and an

building visible behind them.		elegant lifestyle.
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At the denotative level, the scene depicts five female students standing together in an outdoor area filled with pink flowers in front of the School for Good building. They wear long elegant dresses in soft colors such as pink, cream, and light blue, with styled hair and accessories.

At the connotative level, the pastel dresses and flower-filled setting symbolize gentleness, romance, traditional femininity, and social refinement. The elegant clothing and harmonious environment signify beauty, grace, and high social status. This representation is consistent with recent studies showing that fairy tales continue to associate female characters with beauty, grace, and stereotypical feminine qualities (Berlianti, 2021).

At the mythic level, the scene reproduces the traditional fairy-tale ideology that a woman's goodness is naturally connected to physical attractiveness, elegant clothing, and a refined lifestyle. This myth perpetuates the belief that outward beauty reflects inner moral goodness. This myth reinforces the traditional fairy-tale ideology that outward beauty

naturally reflects moral goodness, a stereotype that continues to be reproduced in contemporary fairy-tale narratives (Berlianti, 2021; Kadekoh, 2025).

Extract 3 (Time 00:20:08)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A fairy wearing a long white dress floats above the school grounds with a serious facial expression	The white dress and floating posture connote purity, elegance, magic, sacredness, authority, and control	The scene reflects the myth that good and virtuous characters are represented through white clothing and a graceful appearance.

At the denotative level, the scene shows a fairy floating in the air above the school grounds. She wears a long flowing white dress, has neatly styled hair with a decorative headpiece, and displays a focused expression against a bright outdoor background.

At the connotative level, the white dress signifies purity, innocence, holiness, and virtue, while the act of floating suggests magical power and sacredness. Recent studies also note that white continues to symbolize purity, holiness, and virtue in visual

and literary representations (Liu, 2024). Her serious expression and upright posture indicate authority and control.

At the mythic level, the scene reinforces the cultural myth that white clothing is a natural marker of goodness and moral purity. In fairy-tale narratives, characters dressed in white are often positioned as symbols of virtue and righteousness.

Extract 4 (Time 00:24:15)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Professor Dovey wears a golden gown with large jewelry in a bright cream-and-gold room while smiling.	The golden gown, jewelry, and bright lighting connote wealth, nobility, importance, warmth, and kindness.	The scene reinforces the myth that good and noble characters are represented through beautiful clothing, bright appearances, and friendly attitudes.

At the denotative level, the scene shows Professor Dovey inside a bright room with cream and gold tones. She wears a golden gown, large jewelry around her neck, and has neatly styled

golden-blond hair while smiling and speaking.

At the connotative level, the golden gown and jewelry signify wealth, prestige, authority, and high social status. The bright lighting and her smile connote warmth, friendliness, kindness, and benevolence.

At the mythic level, the scene reproduces the fairy-tale myth that good and noble characters are naturally associated with beauty, luxury, brightness, and a welcoming personality. Through these visual signs, the film constructs goodness as an attractive and socially prestigious identity.

2. Visual Appearance of Evil Characters

This section analyzes the visual appearance of characters associated with evilness in the film. The analysis demonstrates how dark colors, gothic costumes, dramatic lighting, intimidating appearances, and threatening settings function as visual signs that construct the representation of evil characters.

Extract 5 (Time 00:02:57)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Rafal wears dark red clothing and displays an angry expression while using destructive magic in a dark setting.	The dark red clothing, anger, and destructive magic connote power, aggression, danger, and hostility.	The scene reflects the myth that evil characters are naturally associated with darkness, violence, and destructive power.

At the denotative level, the scene shows Rafal wearing dark red clothing during the opening conflict. He displays a serious and angry expression while using magical powers against his twin brother, with a dark background and red blood imagery surrounding the scene.

At the connotative level, the dark red and black colors symbolize aggression, danger, violence, and hostility. Rafal's angry expression and destructive magic signify power, domination, and moral threat. His serious facial expression, destructive magic, and the blood-filled background further construct him as a threatening figure, reflecting the common cinematic representation of

villains through visual signs of violence and intimidation (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen et al., 2021).

At the mythic level, the scene reinforces the cultural myth that evil is naturally connected with darkness, blood, violence, and destructive power. The visual signs position Rafal as a threatening antagonist whose appearance immediately signals danger to the audience.

Extract 6 (Time 00:19:11)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A werewolf in black iron armor stands before a dark stone castle holding a double-bladed axe.	The black armor, axe, and dark castle connote strength, intimidation, violence, danger, and hostility.	The scene reinforces the myth that monstrous bodies and threatening appearances signify moral danger and evilness.

At the denotative level, the scene depicts a werewolf standing firmly in front of a large dark stone castle. The creature wears black iron armor with gold ornaments, holds a large double-bladed axe, and displays an angry expression in a cold blue-grey atmosphere.

At the connotative level, the werewolf's large body, sharp fangs, black armor, and weapon symbolize physical strength, intimidation, violence, and domination. The visual representation of characters in films uses physical features, costumes, and symbolic objects as signs that construct meanings related to identity, power, and character roles (Rahim et al., 2025). The werewolf's monstrous appearance functions as a visual marker of danger, encouraging the audience to perceive the character as frightening and potentially hostile. The dark castle intensifies the ominous and threatening atmosphere.

At the mythic level, the scene reproduces a common fantasy myth in which monstrous bodies represent fear, danger, and evil. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, repeated visual representations of monsters can create cultural myths that associate abnormal appearances with negative identities and moral threats (Rahim et al., 2025). Through repeated cultural representations, physical abnormality and threatening appearances become naturalized as signs of moral corruption.

Extract 7 (Time 00:22:31)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Lady Lesso wears a black dress, holds a staff, and stands beside two armored werewolves in a dimly lit environment.	The black dress, staff, dim lighting, and werewolves connote authority, control, intimidation, power, and domination.	The scene reflects the myth that evil authority figures maintain power through fear, military presence, and coercion.

At the denotative level, the scene shows Lady Lesso standing in front of the students of the School of Evil. She wears a black dress, holds a staff, has red hair styled upward, and is accompanied by two giant armored werewolves in a dimly lit environment with candles. Visual elements such as costume, color, and character appearance function as signs that communicate identity, personality, and narrative roles within film representation (Nugraha & Suryadi, 2022).

At the connotative level, Lady Lesso's black dress and staff symbolize authority, control, and magical power. The armored werewolves signify discipline,

vigilance, intimidation, and the potential use of force. The dim lighting creates a cold and oppressive atmosphere.

At the mythic level, the scene reproduces the fairy-tale myth that evil rulers are characterized by stern leadership, dark visual elements, armed guards, and power maintained through fear rather than compassion or wisdom. Repeated representations of villains through darkness, aggression, and threatening visual features contribute to cultural myths that associate physical appearance with moral identity.

Extract 8 (Time 00:63:08)



Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Hester releases a fire-breathing dragon spell in a dark classroom while wearing dark clothing and heavy makeup.	The fire magic, dark clothing, tattoos, and heavy makeup connote destructive power, intensity, danger, rebellion, and mystery.	The scene reinforces the myth that dark magic, fire, and gothic appearances are inherently linked to evilness and moral suspicion.

At the denotative level, the scene shows Hester in a low-lit classroom

releasing a large fire-breathing dragon spell toward Sophie. She has messy black hair, thick dark eye makeup, wing-shaped tattoos on her arms, and wears a dark grey outfit while smirking.

At the connotative level, Hester's dark appearance and fire-based magic symbolize power, intensity, aggression, rebellion, and danger. The surrounding darkness highlights the destructive energy of the spell and reinforces her antagonistic identity.

At the mythic level, the scene reproduces a recurring fantasy myth that associates dark magic, fire, tattoos, and gothic physical features with evilness and moral danger. Through these visual signs, the film naturalizes the assumption that power connected with darkness is inherently suspicious and threatening.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the representation of good and evil characters in *The School for Good and Evil* is primarily constructed through visual appearance. Visual elements in film, such as clothing, colors, facial expressions, and composition, function as sign that communicate meanings and help audiences

interpret character identities (Fikriyah & Hasbi, 2024). Chandler (2022) argues that visual signs function as cultural codes that guide audiences toward particular interpretations. Through semiotic analysis, visual representations in films can reveal cultural meanings embedded within cinematic elements and show how signs construct particular interpretations of characters and narratives (Pratiwi et al., 2024). At the denotative level, good characters are depicted through pastel-colored dresses, white garments, golden gowns, floral ornaments, bright lighting, and luxurious settings, while evil characters are represented through black or dark red costumes, gothic-inspired clothing, heavy makeup, armor, weapons, and dimly lit environments. At the connotative level, these visual signs signify contrasting cultural meanings: the bright and elegant appearance of good characters conveys purity, beauty, femininity, kindness, nobility, and social prestige, whereas the dark and intimidating appearance of evil characters conveys power, danger, aggression, rebellion, mystery, and moral threat. Through these visual contrasts, the film guides the audience

to immediately distinguish the moral identity of the characters before their actions or personalities are fully revealed.

At the mythic level, the film reinforces a conventional fairy-tale ideology that associates physical beauty, elegance, and brightness with moral goodness, while associating darkness, monstrous appearances, and destructive power with moral evilness. Barthes' concepts of denotations, connotation, and myth demonstrate that the visual signs in films can transform cultural beliefs into meanings that appear natural and widely accepted by audiences (Hasanah & Ismail, 2023). This binary opposition demonstrates how visual appearance functions not merely as aesthetic decoration but as a semiotic system that communicates cultural and ideological meanings related to morality. By applying Roland Barthes' framework of denotation, connotation, and myth, the analysis shows that *The School for Good and Evil* naturalizes the association between beauty and virtue, as well as between darkness and villainy, through culturally familiar visual codes that shape audience perceptions of good and evil.

D. Conclusion

Based on the semiotic analysis of the visual appearance of characters in *The School for Good and Evil*, this study concludes that the film constructs the representation of good and evil through a systematic use of visual signs. At the denotative level, good characters are represented through pastel-colored dresses, white and golden garments, floral ornaments, bright lighting, and luxurious settings, while evil characters are represented through black and dark red costumes, gothic-inspired clothing, heavy makeup, armor, weapons, and dimly lit environments. These visual elements create a clear distinction between the School for Good and the School for Evil, allowing the audience to recognize the characters' moral positioning through their appearance.

At the connotative level, the visual signs associated with good characters signify purity, beauty, femininity, kindness, nobility, and social prestige, whereas the visual signs associated with evil characters signify power, danger, aggression, rebellion, mystery, and moral threat. Furthermore, at the mythic level, the

film reinforces conventional fairy-tale ideologies that associate physical beauty, elegance, and brightness with moral goodness, while associating darkness, monstrous appearances, and destructive power with moral evilness. Therefore, through Roland Barthes' framework of denotation, connotation, and myth, this study demonstrates that visual appearance functions not merely as aesthetic decoration but as a semiotic system that communicates cultural and ideological meanings related to morality. The film naturalizes the binary opposition between good and evil through culturally familiar visual codes, shaping audience perceptions of character identity and moral values within the fantasy narrative.

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