

Color As a Sign of Emotion: A Semiotic Approach in The Film Inside Out 2015 by Peter Hans Doctor

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Through a semiotic perspective, this research explores how each color in each film's character functions as a sign of emotion in the movie Inside Out 2015. This research aims to determine the effective role of color as a tool to represent different emotions and discover the semiotic meaning of the colors used to depict character emotions in the film. The qualitative research revealed that strategic colors not only help in character differentiation but also serve as visual shorthand for emotional states. Important findings show that the meaning of each color describes different emotions. The bright yellow color of Joy denotes happiness and positivity. In contrast, the blue color of Sadness is symbolically associated with negative feelings such as sadness, depression, and melancholy. The red color describes the feelings and emotions of anger. The color purple is associated with the characteristics of fear and anxiety. The color green is used to describe the emotion of disgust or dislike. Another result of the research is that the emotion that most dominates Riley's life is Joy or yellow. This research highlights the importance of visual semiotics in film, showing that color is not only an aesthetic but also a fundamental aspect of emotional communication in Inside Out 2015. This research contributes to the understanding of how colors can reflect and influence emotions that help individuals express feelings more effectively. Overall, this research not only enriches semiotic theory and strengthens Roland Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation but also has a positive impact on understanding and managing emotions through visual representations.

INTRODUCTION

Color is a powerful force in visual communication, acting as a symbol that can express complex shades of emotion and meaning. “Color is an important cue for object recognition. Additionally, color may cause an observer to experience emotion and feeling. Because objects necessarily exhibit colors, and the emotions elicited by colors affect everyday life, colors’ emotional associations are consequential.” (Hanada, 2018). In the context of the film, the use of color often goes beyond mere beauty and becomes a means to express the emotions and psychological state of characters. “color has the ability to affect the audience emotionally, mentally, and even physically, without being aware of it. A well-designed cinematic color palette generates emotion and establishes the tone for the characters in the movie.” (Hasiana et al., 2024). Color in film plays a crucial role in conveying emotions and creating an atmosphere. “Color is an important design element that can meet a variety of human needs.” (Manav, 2007).

The movie *Inside Out* is interesting to be used as a research object. The film can be a bridge to explore how color in real life affects our emotions and relate it to the context of psychology and design. Combining psychological, narrative, and cultural elements, this research provides an opportunity to better understand how colors convey and influence emotions both on screen and in everyday life. Therefore, the background of this research is to analyze how color functions in representing emotions, which can provide in-depth knowledge of how films affect the audience's experience and perception and discover the most dominant emotions displayed by the main character, Riley. The right choice of color can reinforce the message the filmmaker wants to convey and influence the audience's feelings. Film itself is a form of art and entertainment that combines visual movement, sound, and often music to tell a story or express a concept. “Film is something that has the ability to play space and time and develop and shorten freely within the limits of a fairly roomy area. Films are distinguished according to their nature, which generally consists of the types of films including feature films (story films), news films (newsreel), documentaries, and animated films.” (Hendarsyah, 2020).

In addition, “Some scenes in movies are not ordinary scenes made with a combination of sound, movement, background or whatever, but when people analyze them in-depth, a movie has a strong character in conveying information and meaning through the scene” (JOESOEF, 2020). In this case, the researcher uses a movie titled *Inside Out* 2015 by Peter Hans Doctor as the object of research. *Inside Out* 2015 is an animated

film produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures. The movie explores the emotional life of a young girl named Riley through personifications of her emotions, which have their roles and characteristics that affect the way Riley reacts to life situations, especially when Riley faces major changes when her family moves to a new city. “Everyday life is rife with examples of interpersonal influence produced by emotional expressions” (Van Kleef et al., 2011). In this study, semiotic analysis is used to help understand how color and other visual elements are used as signs to express specific emotions. A semiotic study of the use of color in film can reveal the relationship of color to feelings in the movie and how the concept is created and maintained. “Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. The semiotic tradition explores the study of signs and symbols as a significant part of communications” (Winona Emelia, 2018). Semiotics provides a structure for understanding how meaning is shaped, interpreted, and understood in different types of communication. “From a semiotic viewpoint, signs are the core units of information and communication” (Priss, 2017).

Research related to semiotics, entitled “An Analysis of Semiotic Signs in Romance Movie Posters.” (Mechanics, 2020). This study aims to characterize and categorize the various meanings of the signs depicted in fifteen posters using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar theory. This research utilizes a qualitative method. The results of this study show that the fifteen posters cover most of the visual grammar theory, with each poster covering different components. The fifteen romance movie posters display a wide range of emotions, such as feelings of love, hope, affection, struggle, desire, and sadness. Another study, titled “A Semiotic Analysis of Diary of a Wimpy Kid Movie Posters.” (Amri & Pratiwi, 2023). The object of this research is Childhood's Diary poster series. This research uses descriptive research methods and semiotic studies. The research aims to analyze the semiotic signs in both posters, relating to signs, identification of symbols, emblems, language, codes, and Saussure's history, Peirce's Semiotics Perspective, Barthes, and Danes. The results of the analysis in this study found eight signs (4 for each poster) with a more detailed analysis of the signs, indexes, symbols, codes, and legends on each sign.

The next previous research, entitled “Analysis Of Semiotics Representation Of Feminism In The Molan Film 2020” (Susanti et al., 2022). This research aims to find out how the portrayal of feminism in the 2020 Mulan film is semiotically analyzed. The

research methodology combines semiotic analysis developed by Roland Barthes with a qualitative approach. The results of this study show that the film *Mulan* 2020 has several sequences that can be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and illustrate how feminism is portrayed. The meanings and signs that have been researched and examined through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory show how feminism is represented.

Although there are previous studies that discuss semiotic studies of films or posters, there is no research that specifically discusses color as a sign of emotion in semiotic analysis using the object of the film *Inside Out* 2015 by Peter Hans Doctor. Then, although the film *Inside Out* 2015 uses colors in a structured way to describe emotions, further and in-depth research needs to be done to understand how these colors affect the way the audience responds and interprets emotions. This research can explain how and why colors are chosen to represent various emotions and also how these choices play a role in the overall context of *Inside Out* 2015. Taking this issue as its background, this article aims to investigate and examine the way colors are used as indicators of emotions in the film “*Inside Out*” and the significance and consequences of their use in a semiotic context.

In connection with the explanation of the research background above, the researcher formulates this research problem. Among other things, how color is used as a sign of emotion in the *Inside Out* 2015 film through a semiotic approach and what emotions are most dominantly used in the *Inside Out* 2015 film. Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the use of color in representing different emotions in the *Inside Out* film and to find the most dominant emotion used in the *Inside Out* 2015 film.

This research uses semiotic theory to focus on the meaning of signs, connotations, and denotations. According to Barthes, semiotics has several core concepts, such as signification, connotation, and denotation, as well as myth or metalanguage. First, the signifier According to Barthes, the signifier can be understood as a process in the form of an action that brings together a signifier and a sign to produce a sign. Second, Denotation and connotation. Denotation is our idea of something as literal, stable, and has a meaning that has been universally agreed upon in the dictionary. Meanwhile, connotation is the second order of signification that changes the meaning of words associatively. Third, Myth. According to Barthes, semiological analysis involves two activities: dissection and articulation. Meanwhile, what will be taken in this research focuses on the signs, meanings, connotations, and denotations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative method. A qualitative approach was chosen to explore the semiotic analysis of how elements of color and emotion relate to create meaning. The data in this study are visual data from the entire Inside Out movie from beginning to end and data sources from the Loklok platform. The main instrument in this research is the 2015 Inside Out film analysis using semiotic studies with Roland Barthes' theory, which focuses on signs, meanings, connotations, and denotations. Some of the data collection processes in the study are as follows: researchers reviewed and observed the Inside Out movie in detail. The researcher focused on the color scheme used: red, yellow, blue, green, and purple. The researcher made notes and tables to analyze using Roland Barthes' theory and connect with semiotic studies. Then, the researcher concluded the most dominant emotion used in the movie.

RESULT

Table 1. Color semiotic meaning

No.	Color	Semiotic meaning	Function
1.	Red	Anger	Red is used to represent Riley's emotions when she is angry.
2.	Blue	Sad	Blue is used to represent Riley's emotions when sad.
3.	Yellow	Joy	Yellow is used to represent Riley's happy, joyful emotions and represents Riley's positive feelings.
4.	Purple	Fear	Purple is used to represent Riley's emotions when she feels scared.
5.	Green	Disgust	Green is used to represent Riley's emotion of disgust.

Table 2. The color frequency used by Riley's character

No.	Emotions	Frequency	Description
1.	Anger	10	Anger arises when Riley feels frustrated or unfairly treated.
2.	Joy	24	Joy is the emotion that dominates Riley's life the most, especially at the beginning of the movie.
3.	Sadness	19	Sadness began to show its important impact on Riley's development.
4.	Fear	15	Fear helps Riley make wise decisions.
5.	Disgust	4	Disgust helps Riley make good choices.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the research will discuss Table 1 regarding the five colors of Inside Out 2015 characters to be analyzed. These colors are Red, Blue, Yellow, Purple, and Green. Roland Barthes' theory is used to find out the meaning of each color in semiotic analysis. Barthes' theory in the context of color as a sign does not directly discuss color in his work, but Roland Barthes' semiotic theory can be applied to analyze and understand how color functions as a sign in visual communication.

Red



Red is the color used to describe the trait of Anger. It is a color choice that is easily recognizable and consistent with the meaning of anger in many cultural contexts. “The emotional connotation of red switches between negative and positive, but in both emotional extremes, red signals the presence of a significant stimulus and thus should require an attentional shift towards it.” (Kuniecki et al., 2015). In the animated film *Inside Out 2015*, created by Pixar Animation Studios, the color red plays a major role in depicting the feeling or emotion of anger. In *Inside Out*, the color red is specifically associated with the character's Anger and depicts Riley's emotions when she is angry. The character is depicted with a striking bright red color, and her appearance reflects the strength of the emotion of anger. This creates a direct connection between the color red and anger in the context of the film. The connotations of the color red in this film include feelings of anger, disappointment, and emotional overwhelm.

The color red, in this context, not only expresses anger directly but also increases the ferocity and strength of the feeling. In the context of cinema, the color red, which is often associated with anger, is part of a broader cultural myth where the color red is often connoted with anger, risk, or power. The movie communicates the idea that anger is a powerful emotion capable of influencing decisions and actions. In this film, the use of the color red on the character Anger creates a strong visual impact and can influence the audience to feel the same level of anger. The color red acts as a tool to generate an intense emotional response from the audience and helps in conveying the message of the story. Anger is depicted with a square and upright posture, similar to a block or cube. This solid and rigid shape highlights the turbulent and unyielding nature of anger. The character displays a resemblance to fire, with the design resembling the shape of a blazing fire, which emphasizes its irritable and explosive nature. His eyes and lips often express clear anger, with eyebrows raised downwards and lips parted wide when angry. Anger wears a dark suit, red tie, and white trousers. This outfit conveys an official and stern impression, which also suits the image of anger, which is often perceived as a powerful feeling. The Anger Personality is not only visually striking but also emotionally, giving viewers a powerful picture of how anger can affect one's thoughts and behavior.

Blue



The blue color used for the character Sadness is the color seen directly on the screen. Symbolically, the color blue is often associated with negative feelings such as sadness or depression. In research, Atika, 2021 Says that overusing blue makes us uncomfortable and cold. Overuse of blue can lead to sadness and depression. The character named Blue, or “Sadness,” has a significant role in conveying sadness, tenderness, and unhappiness. The character sadness is used to represent the emotions when Riley is sad. In terms of connotations, the color blue associates the character with deep and complicated emotions. The color blue is often associated with sadness or feelings of alienation. The color blue, in the context of the character Sadness, operates as an iconic symbol of sadness. By coloring this character blue, the film shows the audience that Sadness is a manifestation of these feelings. The color blue, as a visual signifier, associates the character with the connotative meaning of sadness in the cultural context. This helps the audience to instinctively connect the character with the emotion in question, enhancing the understanding and emotional appeal of the film.

The sad outfit is navy, which matches the main color and reflects the feeling of sadness in the film. This blue color also reinforces the character's image as a symbol of sadness. Sadness wears a large, baggy, dark blue collared sweatshirt. This sweater creates the impression that the character is uncomfortable or depressed, in keeping with her role of reflecting the emotion of sadness. The knitwear worn by Sadness has a high collar or turtleneck. This adds a sense of familiarity and protection, which could symbolize the way the character is trying to protect herself from feeling uncomfortable. Sadness' outfit has a very relaxed and simple style, with no flashy decorations. This shows the aloof and melancholic nature of the character. Overall, the Sadness costume not only visually depicts the theme of sadness but is also designed to reflect the personality and nature of the character.

Yellow



Joy is depicted with the bright color yellow. In a semiotic context, the color yellow is often associated with joy, vitality, and hope. “Joy: An often relatively brief feeling felt in the present moment. Excitement: A happy feeling that involves waiting for something with positive anticipation theories of the color blue according to experts” (Kendra Cherry, 2024). Yellow is a color that visually shows a feeling of excitement. Atika, 2021 says that Yellow is a color that evokes happiness and joy. It has a great impact on people, both psychologically and psychologically. The use of the perfect yellow pattern in a room can have a friendly effect and increase creativity. Yellow is also a special example of relieving anxiety and boosting self-confidence. The character Joy plays a major role as a representation of the emotion of happiness in the mind of a young girl named Riley. Joy, in connotation, depicts not only joy but also various cultural meanings and aspirations related to happiness and optimism. Joy as a sign expresses the meaning of joy through her appearance and her interactions with other characters.

Joy's yellow color not only signifies happiness but also conveys an energy and cheerfulness that is almost contagious to the other characters and the audience. In Barthes' context, Joy as a yellow character acts as a clear and direct symbol of happiness (denotation), while the yellow color also reflects a broader meaning of cheerfulness and optimism (connotation). By using bright and attractive colors, Joy not only conveys joy explicitly but also portrays an optimistic and passionate attitude toward life. The outfit worn by Joy is a simple dress with a neat and minimalist design. The dress does not have many intricate details, which reflects her pure and uncomplicated nature. Joy's dress has an A-line cut, which gives the impression of lightness and curves. This makes her look energetic and lively, which suits Joy's active and playful nature. The use of brightly colored clothes reinforces Joy's personality as a symbol of positive and energetic feelings that play an important role in Riley's mind.

Purple



In color psychology, purple is often associated with feelings of anxiety and doubt. Purple is a mixture of red and blue. Red is often associated with strong emotions, while blue provides a sense of calm. This combination can cause mixed feelings, between tension

and calm. In addition, purple is also often associated with spirituality and mystery, which can create an atmosphere of uncertainty. This can be caused because purple is often used as a symbol of things that are uncertain or confusing. Darmawan (n.d.) said that the color purple is depicted with a deep sense of depth. So, the color purple in the film expresses emotional depth and complexity. In addition, Fatahilah, 2023 also argues that the color purple gives the impression of mystery, frustration, despair, gloom, inferiority, and introversion.

In a denotative context, the color purple is often associated with certain characteristics, such as strangeness and fear. In the film “Inside Out,” the color purple in fear can be considered as a visual representation of a deeper fear, which has aspects of mystery and emotional complexity. Fear shown in purple can indicate that the feeling is not only physical but also mental and psychological, reflecting a deeper and more contemplative anxiety. Fear uses purple as part of a visual coding system that conveys fear in a more complex way than just facial expressions or body language. The character Fear wears clothes that are predominantly purple. The use of this color visually emphasizes Fear's mood and emotional function. Fear wears a purple collared shirt dark-colored trousers, and is paired with a tie. These darker trousers contrast with the lighter color of the shirt and tie, creating the impression that although she is trying to look presentable, there is a sense of discomfort. In general, Fear's dressing style tends to be stiff and ill-fitting. This reflects his anxious and worried nature. The clothes he wears not only reflect his character's appearance but also add layers to his personality and emotions.

Green



The color green is often associated with health. Darmawan (n.d.) said that green is often associated with health and harmony. The color green is commonly used in parks or hospitals. The color green in the film, Disgust plays a role in keeping Riley from something strange and disgusting so that Riley is always protected. In many cultures, the color green can symbolize feelings of discomfort, disappointment, or disgust. For example, the color green is often associated with nausea or pain, which makes it very appropriate to describe Disgust, a character who responds to everything with disgust and rejection.

Disgust's outfit is dominated by the color green. Green, in this context, symbolizes disgust and discomfort, in keeping with his character traits. There are several shades of green in her outfit, ranging from dark green to bluish-green, which adds depth to her appearance and enhances the impression that she is uncomfortable or disturbed. Disgust wears a long flowing skirt, and her long hair gives her a formal and slightly stiff look, keeping with her talkative and critical nature. The headband he wears shows that Disgust cares about details and has high standards when it comes to appearance. Disgust's clothing is often depicted with flashy or shiny visual effects, highlighting his observant nature and frequent overreaction to things he finds inappropriate or disgusting. The combination of the striking green color and the elegant design creates the impression that Disgust is a character who pays great attention to appearance and details, in keeping with his nature of often being offended or annoyed by things he finds inappropriate.

Discussion of Table 2. In the movie *Inside Out* 2015, The most dominant emotion sequences used by Riley that researchers found were:

1. Happiness - this emotion emerges and becomes a real driving force in Riley's life.
2. Sadness - Although often overlooked, sadness plays an important role in Riley's emotional experience.
3. Fear - Fear exists to protect Riley from problems and dangerous situations.
4. Anger - Anger often arises as a reaction to negative situations.
5. Disgust - Disgust serves to protect Riley from evil and inappropriate things.

This sequence shows how these emotions interact in Riley's experience, especially when facing major changes. Each emotion plays a significant role in Riley's adaptation to her new environment. Happiness, or Yellow, is the primary driver, while sadness helps Riley cope with change and loss. Fear, anger, and disgust complete Riley's emotional spectrum, providing a more complex picture of how humans respond to and experience life experiences. In the film, the emotion that Riley uses most is Joy, which is bright yellow. At the beginning of *Inside Out*, Riley lives in Minnesota. She lives a happy life there with friends, interesting experiences, and happy memories. Her family life in Minnesota is comfortable, and she is very attached to this place. Then, everything changes when her family decides to move to San Francisco. And that is the starting point for many of the emotional challenges she faces. However, by the end of the story, Riley can learn to accept her feelings and express them in a healthy and better way.

CONCLUSION

The above research shows that the meaning of each color explains different emotions. The bright yellow color of Joy shows happiness and positivity. In contrast, the blue color of Sadness is symbolically associated with negative feelings such as sadness, depression, and melancholy. The color red describes the feelings and emotions of anger. The color purple is associated with the characteristics of fear and anxiety. The color green is used to explain the emotion of disgust or dislike. This research highlights the importance of visual semiotics in film, which shows that color is not only aesthetic but also a fundamental aspect of emotional communication in the film *Inside Out* (2015). This research contributes to the understanding of how color can reflect and influence emotions that help individuals express feelings more effectively. It was found that of the five emotions consisting of anger, Joy, sadness, fear, and disgust, the most dominant emotion in influencing the life of Riley's character from childhood to adolescence is the emotion of Joy or happiness, which is marked by the color yellow. Overall, this research not only enriches semiotic theory and strengthens Roland Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation but also has a positive impact on understanding and managing emotions through visual representation. In addition, the above colors are an important aspect of everyday life, as they serve as an important tool in shaping communication, identity, emotions, and social interaction in society.

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