



Cognitive Semiotic Analysis to Map the Sociological Trends

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Indonesian society is domestically diverse and unique because it shows the sociological trend of dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths. The cognitive semiotic study reported that some people prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths if they want to get political positions, treasure, revenge, romance, sexual pleasures, and the promise of an instant process. On the other hand, they will prioritize the dominant myth if they want to obtain safety or feel regret for their sins. In some cases, this phenomenon can be a social problem. Semiotically, this trend is comprehensively reflected in two contemporary Indonesian horror movies, *Pengabdian Setan* and *Suzanna: Bernapas Dalam Kubur*. Therefore, since there is an integration between micro-and macro level analysis, this study aims to explain comprehensively how the semiotic approach can be transformed into an academic tool to portray the latest trends in contemporary society and structure a new film model. In conclusion, this study shows that semiotic analysis can be expanded to new fields that not only can map the latest sociological trends in society semiotically and cognitively but also create the new (horror) film model practically that not only consists of the triadic relationships among the protagonist, antagonist, and a pious person but also promotes tolerance and labels corrupt practices as detrimental behaviors.

Keywords: Cognitive semiotics, dialectical reconciliations, film model, sociological model.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the theoretical frameworks and background, conventionally, the semiotic can be conceptualized as a theory of signification that correlates with the signs that can be seen in daily life, and those signs produce different meanings according to some contexts as the elemental structures of signification, like cultural, political, social, psychological context, etc [1]. In the same way, semiotic analysis is the academic tool to check the sign's sub-elements, which can be categorized as the signifier (which contains the visual component and the sound) and the signified (which contains concepts and meanings) [2]; examine the hidden meaning or representation inside the sign, namely, the interpretant; inspect how language (as a system of signs) affects the mind of people [3]; investigate how the process of semiosis influences the naturalness of people's behavior[4]; or find out in which direction the sign brings change to human behavior[5].

Other studies reveal that there is a correlation between the music and sounds in movies and trailers and the audience's emotions when they watch them, so the findings can be applied in education, specifically in the relationship between teachers and students [6].

Another concept and purpose of semiotics are explained by a semiotician, namely, Roland Barthes, who is known as a leader of the new discourse of thinking. He remarks that the semiotic is a study of examining the patterns of mass culture that belong to the Bourgeoisie people and are used to control society and stress conformity to the dominant paradigm [7]. The semiotician must then decipher the myth, which functions as the superstructure of all signification processes [8].

Until this point, there are some general roles of the semiotic that can be used to achieve some objectives, like exploring the correlation between signs and their particular contexts (from Barthes); deciphering the signifiers and signified that are contained in the signs (from Saussure); understanding the hidden meaning that exists in the sign (from Peirce and Saussure); seeing how a system of signs influences the human mind, emotion, and imagination (from Saussure); investigating how the sign affects the naturalness of people's interactions (from Eco) and brings change to human behavior (from Morris); and digging the myth as a system of belief inside the sign or the system of signs (from Barthes).

However, those conventional roles only focus on examining a sign or system of signs and exploring the hidden meaning behind them in any form commonly used.

Since a good study is one that can connect holistically between micro- and macro-levels (comprehensive micro-macro integration) [9], this study tries to extend the conventional semiotic roles into further positions. This target is possibly reached by examining two contemporary Indonesian horror movies (*Pengabdian Setan* and *Suzanna*

Bernapas Dalam Kubur) not only semiotically but also cognitivistically. Therefore, the examination will produce two versions of the sociological models: the model from the semiotic analysis and the model from the cognitivist analysis. In other words, those movies are very good.

In addition, *Pengabdil Setan* and *Suzanna: Bernapas Dalam Kubur* are selected as units of analysis because of the fact that they have some scenes that contain counter-myths and dominant myths, the collisions of dominant myths and counter-myths and vice versa, and the dialectical reconciliations of dominant myths and counter-myths; both of them obtained more than 3,000,000 audiences (*Pengabdil Setan* and *Suzanna: Bernapas Dalam Kubur*), and one of them won the international award at the international film festival (*Pengabdil Setan*).

To do so, the following research questions (RQ 1–6) must be answered:

1. By what modes are the dominant myths described in those two Indonesian horror movies?
2. By what modes are the counter-myths described in those two Indonesian horror movies?
3. In what ways do the counter-myths break the dominant myths, as they are portrayed in those two Indonesian horror movies?
4. In what ways do the dominant myths break the counter-myths, as they are portrayed in those two Indonesian horror movies?
5. How are the audience's symptomatic interpretations formed when they watch the counter-myths break the dominant myths in two Indonesian horror movies?
6. How are the audience's symptomatic interpretations formed when they watch the dominant myths break down the counter-myths in those two Indonesian horror movies?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretically, this study uses the combination of the Barthes's semiotic theory, which is combined with the thought of Berger, Barker [10] [11], and Darmaprawira [12] [13] (to support the semiotic analysis), Bordwell's cognitivist theory (to support the cognitivist analysis) [14], and the idea of the postmillennial gothic [15].

According to Barthes, a myth is a type of speech, and it can be seen as a message in forms like cinema, oral speeches, and publicity [16]. Barthes's semiotic theory consists of two kinds of levels and ends by producing a myth as the end product. The first level is a denotative level that can be seen as a level that contains closure meanings. The second level is a connotative level that consists of hidden meanings of the signs [17]. Yet, Barthes's semiotic theory has a weakness because it cannot produce an opposition to dominant ideologies [18]. Therefore, Reid extends the term "myth" into two kinds of concepts, namely, dominant myth (which naturalizes and justifies the position of dominant groups) and counter-myth (which opposes the dominant myth) based on some cases in South Africa [19]. However, instead of breaking each other, the contradictory interplay between dominant myth and counter-myths ends in the (dialectical) reconciliation of dominant myth and counter-myth, which is not always enlightening and contradicts the Hegelian dialectic [20], according to the materialist Adorno [21].

Yet, there is still a weakness in general since semiotics produces problems in intersubjective viewpoints because, of course, every person views the signs differently [22]. Therefore, the concept of symptomatic interpretation is applied to perfect the theoretical framework.

This concept is used because it has a strong psychoanalytic and hermeneutic base and represents the hidden desires of the audience [14]. Moreover, the concept can solve the troubles that exist in the communication process since it can increase people's understanding of meanings [23]. Besides that, the semiotic and cognitivist analyses are interrelated [24] and similar [25] [26]. Therefore, Bordwell's cognitivist theory, particularly the concept of symptomatic interpretation, is used in this study.

In other words, the symptomatic interpretation, as a concept, combined with the modification of Barthes's semiotic theory, which can be classified as cognitive semiotics [27], can bridge the arts, humanities, and social sciences well and ease researchers in checking on the densification and solidification of both counter-myths and dominant myths in a particular area [28].

3. METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, it is supported by the qualitative content analysis [29] and the focus group discussions (FGD) [30]. The qualitative content analysis can be categorized as an inductive analysis and is very suitable to analyze movies since it encompasses broad frameworks [31]. In this study, this method is applied by using three kinds of coding, namely, open, axial, and selective [32], which are similar to the two-stage process of QCA, including the implications and interpretations [29]. On the other hand, focus group discussions (FGD) can be academically seen as an activity to get and produce information by implementing flexible and unstructured discussions in a small group that commonly consists of eight participants [33]. Absolutely, this method is beneficial since the process is comprehensively supervised by a researcher, not expensive, and practical [34]. Furthermore, all participants will be displayed in anonymity [35], and the FGD is implemented online due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2021. Moreover,

this research uses the three kinds of coding steps that have been applied previously, namely, open, axial, and selective [32], as part of its methodological process.

All data are processed using *NVivo 21 Plus* software to guarantee their accuracy [36]. The results of the selective coding from the qualitative content analysis and the focus group discussions will then be checked meticulously by the supervisor as part of the implementation of “expert review” [37].

In addition, the participants in the focus group discussions are divided into three categories: group 1, which consists of two people whose status is that of senior high school students; group 2, which contains three people whose status is that of university students; and group 3, which consists of three people whose occupations are Indonesian film directors. All of them are members of *Komunitas Cinta Film Indonesia (KCFI)*, the legally incorporated organization. Before the discussions, all participants were required to watch two Indonesian horror movies online via the *Netflix* platform and were given some money to subscribe to the premium (ultra-HD) plan on that platform for a month.

The triangulation process in the semiotic analysis is based on the sum of horror movies, with a maximum of two movies. The triangulation process in the cognitivist analysis is based on the FGD’s groups, with a maximum of three groups and a minimum of two groups.

Overall, by academically describing the process of extending semiotics as the photographer that can map the current social trend; this effort will increase the attractiveness of semiotic analysis as a promising approach in the future.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The structure of the explanation for this chapter is based on micro-macro integration. Since micro- and macro-level analyses are inseparable, the explanation will use patterns like the micro-macro (for RQ 1, 2, 5, and 6) and macro-micro analysis (for RQ 3 and 4). In fact, both of them are the same.

4.1. The Semiotic Analysis for RQ 1 and 2 (The Micro-Macro Analysis)

It must be noted that the discussion is done descriptively and is divided into four parts: the semiotic analysis of dominant myths and counter-myths; the semiotic analysis of counter-myths breaks dominant myths and vice versa; the cognitivist analysis of counter-myths breaks dominant myths and vice versa; and the sociological implications of the findings of the cognitive semiotic analysis (the semiotic analysis plus the cognitivist analysis). The discussion will be framed into two paths, the micro- and macro-level analyses, because there must be a relationship between the micro- and macro-level analyses [38]. The reason is that a good movie review is one that covers the explanation of the cultural and social aspects or positions the movie as a “window” to see the broader cultural and social aspects of society [39]. It is a complex explanation, but the semioticians must begin their analysis with the signs connected to complex things [40]. However, the explanation about the sociological trend does not represent the behavior of all Indonesian people; it is just the latest social trend that is captured in this study.

For instance, in *Pengabd Setan*, there are some scenes that represent the dominant myths, like the ones below:



Figure 1 Hendra meets the demon [41].

Denotatively, the scenes show Hendra chatting privately with Rini, and he tells Rini that he sees someone who is very similar to Mother but is not Mother. Hendra then explains that he saw that supernatural figure during the mother’s burial and near the window in Rini’s house. For him, it is the evil spirit that stays in the human body for a long time. Rini responds surprisingly by saying that Hendra is the son of a pious person, but he still believes in superstition. Hendra then replies that he is the son of a pious person, but he is open to other theories and thoughts.

Connotatively, the scenes describe the strong personal relationship between Rini and Hendra. Moreover, Hendra’s actions as the son of a pious person who still believes in superstition show that he adopts the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths since he prioritizes supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism) over Islamic teachings, triggered by a romance. Therefore, the scenes produce the dominant myth that the soul of the dead person cannot go back to the human realm, but the demon can masquerade similarly as the dead person. On the contrary, there are some scenes in *Suzanna Bernapas Dalam Kubur* that represent the counter-myth, like:



Figure 2 Satria hugs Suzanna [42].

Denotatively, Satria hugs Suzanna, and he apologizes to her because he cannot take care of their child well. At that moment, Satria does not want Suzanna to leave the human realm. However, Suzanna convinces Satria that their realms are different and she cannot stay longer in the human realm since her business is over.

Connotatively, there is an intimate relationship between Satria and Suzanna as husband and wife, and their love is pure love. Those scenes represent the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths, particularly the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism), since Satria prioritizes supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism) over Islamic teachings, which are stimulated by romance. Therefore, the scenes produce the counter-myth that the soul of a dead person can visit the human realm to finish unfinished business and go back to the *Barzakh* realm after the trouble is over.

In addition, the semiotic analysis (the micro-level analysis) shows that there are three modes of dominant myths (in the form of scenes) in two Indonesian horror movies. They are the scenes that position Islamic teachings as dominant myths (five references), those that show Islamic teachings can defeat the demon completely (five references), and those that show the dialectical reconciliation of two opposite things (four references). Those categories answer the first research question: By what modes are the dominant myths described in those two Indonesian horror movies? Figure 3 shows the data briefly.

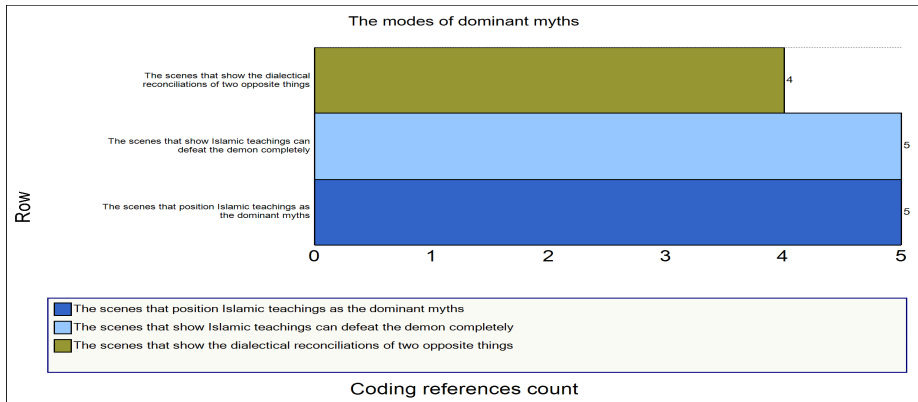


Figure 3 The modes of dominant myths.

Moreover, the semiotic analysis (the micro-level analysis) shows that there are several modes (in the form of scenes) of counter-myths that appear in three Indonesian horror movies, like the scenes that show this demon can attack or annoy people (11 references), those that show the demon can come back to the human realm (5 references), those that show the dialectical reconciliations of two opposite things (4 references), and those that show the demon can become a hero (3 references). Those attributes answer the second research question: In what ways are the counter-myths described in those three Indonesian horror movies? Figure 4 shows the modes, in the form of scenes, of counter-myths in three Indonesian horror movies:

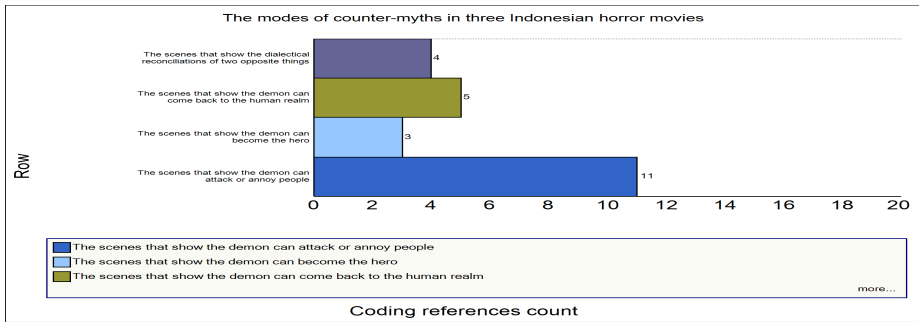


Figure 4 The modes of the counter-myths.

Macro-level analysis produces some uncommon findings, like the trend of dialectical reconciliation of the dominant myths and counter-myths, specifically the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism) (eight references) and the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and witchcraft (five references). This trend is discovered not only in the examination process of the dominant myth but also in the counter-myth. Figure 5 shows the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths when the authors examine the dominant myth.

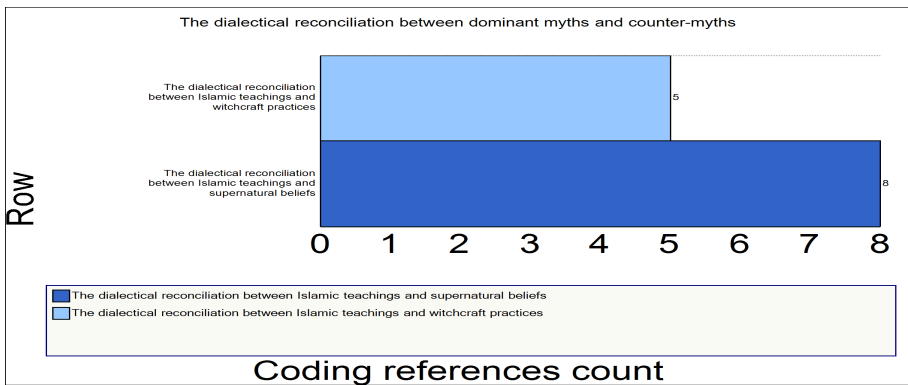


Figure 5 The dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths (RQ 1 and 2).

According to the data, when the dominant myths in three Indonesian horror movies are checked, there are two motives that stimulate people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths: the economic (three references) and sexual pleasure motives (four references). On the other hand, there are two motives that trigger people to prioritize dominant myths over counter-myths: the safety (two references) and regret motives (two references). Figures 4 and 5 describe those kinds of motives comprehensively.

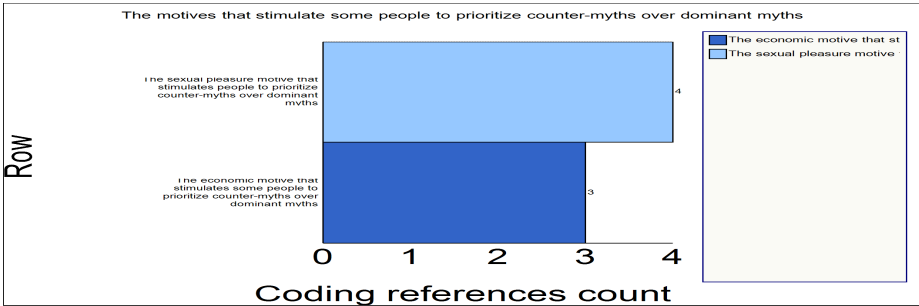


Figure 6 The motives that stimulate some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths (RQ 1 and 2).

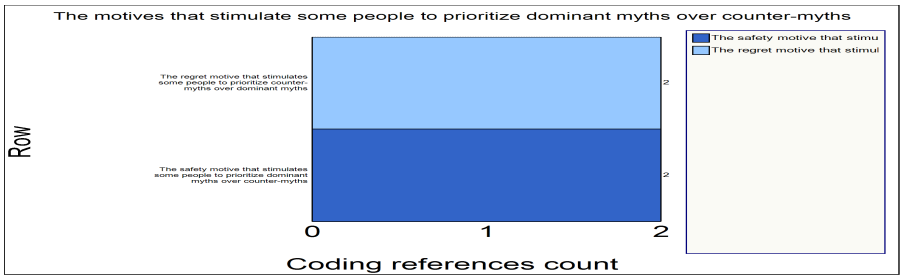


Figure 7 The motives that stimulate people to prioritize dominant myths over counter-myths (RQ 1 and 2).

Overall, according to the semiotic analysis, there are some Indonesian people who practice dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths (Islamic teachings) and counter-myths (supernatural beliefs and witchcraft). If they want to fulfil their economic needs or sexual pleasures, they prioritize counter-myths. On the other hand, if they want to fulfil their safety needs or regret their sins in the past, they prioritize dominant myths.

4.2 The Semiotic Analysis for RQ 3 and 4 (The Macro-Micro Analysis)

When the semiotic analysis is directed to examine the collisions between dominant myths and counter-myths and vice versa in three Indonesian horror movies, it is found that the trend of dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths is still evident, in the forms of the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism) (seven references), the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and witchcraft (seven references), the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and corrupt practices (four references), and the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and adultery (four references). Figure 6 shows the trend of dialectical reconciliations between dominant myths and counter-myths.

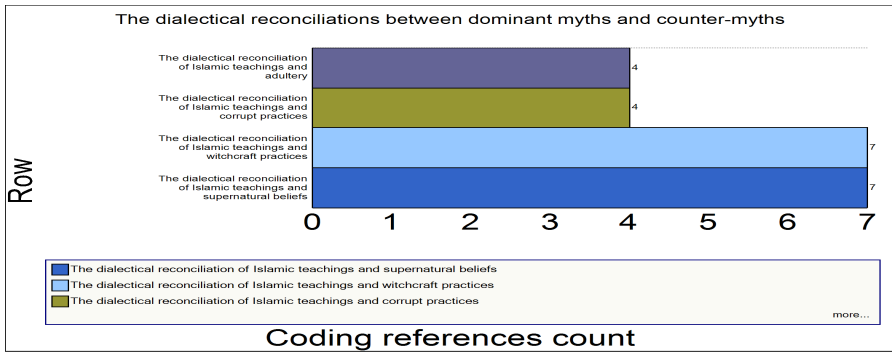


Figure 8 The dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths (RQ 3 and 4).

In addition, there are two motives that trigger people to prioritize the dominant myths over the counter-myths: the safety (seven references) and regret motives (two references). Figure 7 displays the motives that stimulate people to prioritize dominant myths over counter-myths when the authors examine the dominant myths while breaking the counter-myths in three Indonesian horror movies.

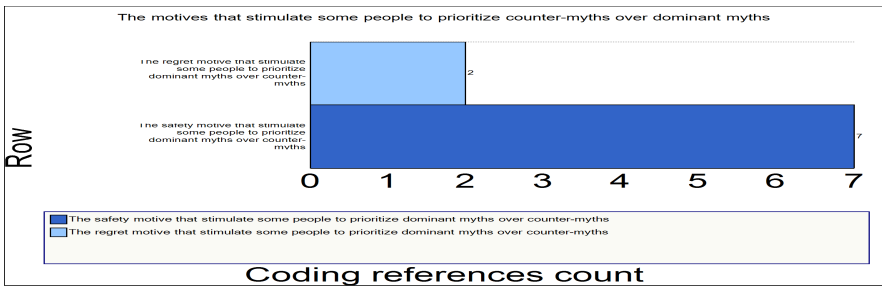


Figure 9 The motives that stimulate people to prioritize dominant myths over counter-myths (RQ 3 and 4).

On the contrary, there are four motives that stimulate people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths: the political (16 references), economic (6 references), and sexual pleasure (4 references), and romance motives (4 references). Figure 8 portrays the motives that stimulate people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths, and this result is gathered when the authors check the counter-myths while breaking the dominant myths in three Indonesian horror movies.

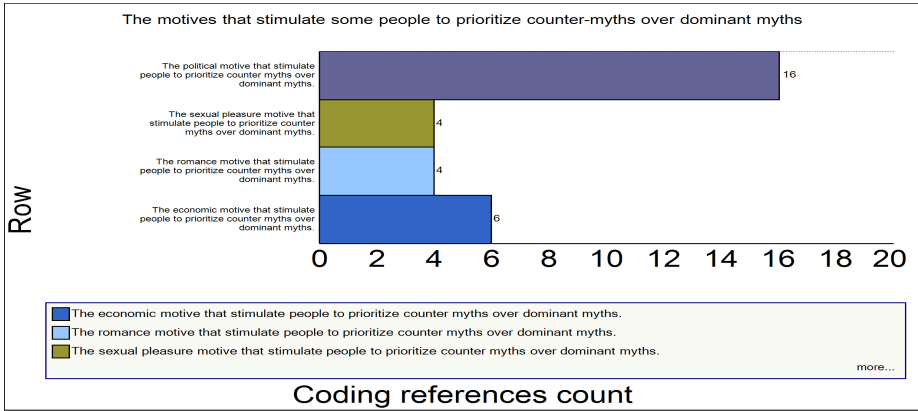


Figure 10 The motives that stimulate people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths (RQ 3 and 4).

In micro-level analysis (answering the third research question), there are three ways the counter-myths break the dominant myths in three Indonesian horror movies: the scenes that show supernatural beliefs break the Islamic teachings (17 references), the scenes that show the dialectical reconciliation between two opposite things, and those that show witchcraft breaks the Islamic teachings (3 references). Figure 11 shows the ways counter-myths break dominant myths.

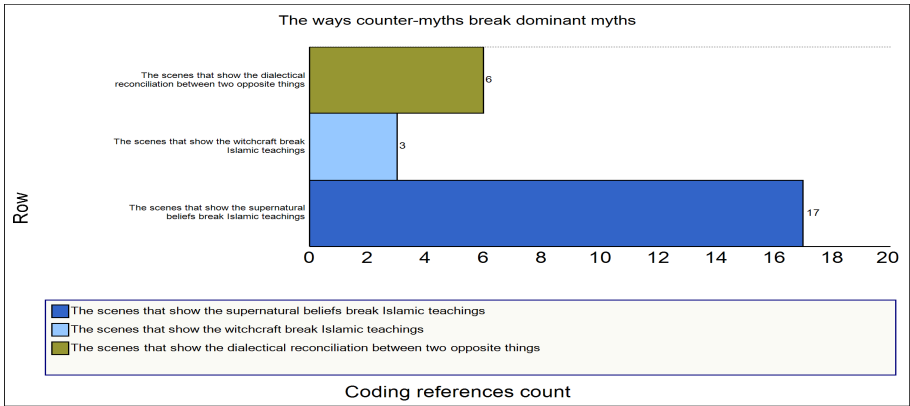


Figure 11 The ways counter-myths break dominant myths.

In contrast, in micro-level analysis (answering the fourth research question), there are two ways the dominant myths break the counter-myths, like the scenes that show Islamic teachings breaking supernatural beliefs, which obtain three references, whereas the scenes that show the dialectical reconciliation between two opposite things get two references. Figure 12 shows how Islamic teachings break supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism):

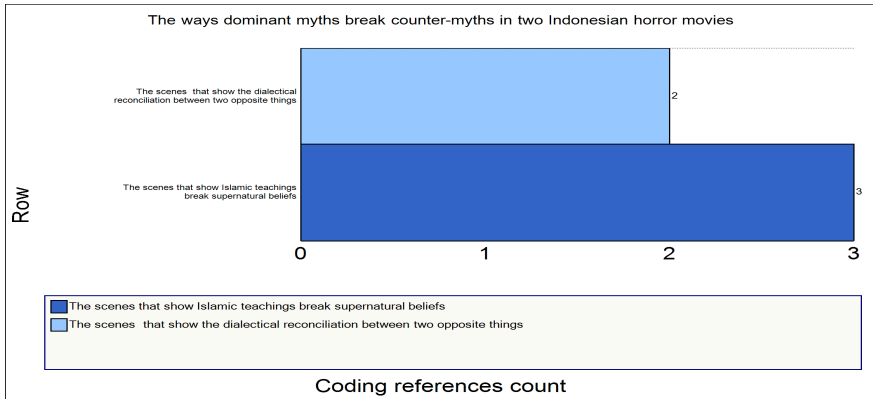


Figure 12 The ways dominant myths break the counter-myths.

For instance, the scenes in *Pengabdian Setan* show denotatively that there is a conversation among Rini, Tony, and Hendra. At that time, Rini asks Tony whether the creature that she sees is a mother. But Tony is sure that it is not a mother. Suddenly, Hendra adds that it is not a mother but a supernatural creature that has existed before the first human appeared on the globe and is more powerful than humans, namely, a demon.

Connotatively, there is a close relationship among Rini, Tony, and Hendra, and Hendra’s statement is an answer to Rini’s doubt. In the end, the scenes produce the counter-myth that the demon is more powerful than a human. These are the scenes:



Figure 13 Rini discusses the poltergeist phenomenon with Tony and Hendra [41].

Moreover, the scenes break the dominant myth that the five-time prayer is effective in defeating the demon. This dominant myth exists denotatively in the scenes that show the pious person, accompanied by Hendra, visiting Rini’s family to solve the poltergeist problem. After the pious person checks the situation, he tells Rini and Tony to apply the five-time prayers to get rid of the demon. Connotatively, there is a strong personal relationship between the pious person and Hendra, as well as Rini and Tony. A pious person is also positioned as a person who wants to help the family purely. These are the scenes:



Figure 14 The pious person visits Rini’s house [41].

From this pattern, therefore, based on the semiotic analysis, there are four kinds of dialectical reconciliations among dominant myths and counter-myths, like the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs (animism and dynamism), the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and witchcraft, the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and corrupt practices, and the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and adultery. If they want to fulfil their political, economic, sexual, and romantic needs, they prioritize counter-myths. On the contrary, if they feel regret about their sins in the past or want to obtain safety, they prioritize dominant myths.

Overall, from the semiotic analysis that is implemented to answer the first, second, third, and fourth research questions (RQ 1, 2, 3, and 4), all of the macro-level analysis forms the sociological model that portrays the current social trend in contemporary Indonesian society and explains the phenomenon of dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths.

Figure 15 The dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths, according to the semiotic analysis.

4.3 The Cognitivist Analysis for RQ5 and RQ 6 (The Micro-Macro Analysis)

In micro-level analysis (to answer the fifth and sixth research questions), after the FGD’s data from *Pengabdi Setan* and *Suzanna Bernapas Dalam Kubur* are checked cognitively, there are several categories that can be explored, like the satisfying scenes, the unclear scenes, the unsatisfying scenes, the expectations, the audience’s views, the audience’s feelings, etc. For instance, there are three kinds of feelings when the audiences watch the counter-myths break the dominant myth in *Suzanna Bernapas Dalam Kubur* (answering RQ 5): the tense (five references), sadistic (three references), and horrible feeling (three references). Figure 16 displays those three feelings comprehensively.

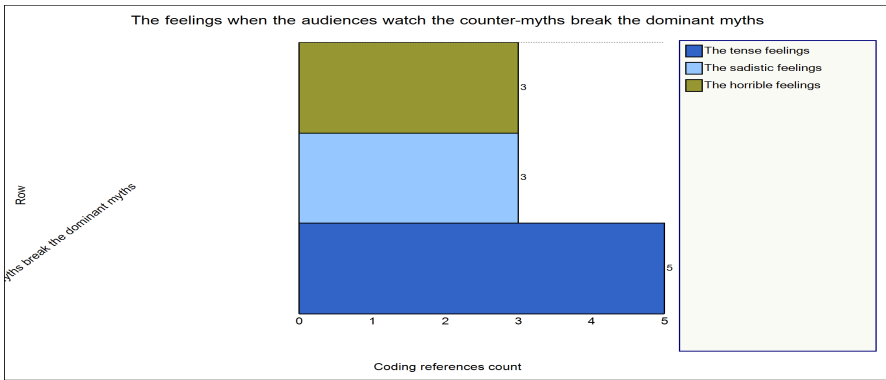


Figure 16 The feelings when the audiences watch the counter-myths break dominant myths.

In the same way, some Indonesian audiences believe that some Indonesian people still believe in witchcraft (a counter-myth) when they watch dominant myths breaking counter-myths. This data was obtained from the focus group discussions for the *Pengabdi Setan* movie. Specifically, the professional group contributes 2.76%, followed by the university student group with 2.68%. On the other hand, the high school student’s category has 0.67% for the statistic. Figure 17 displays the sociological trend.

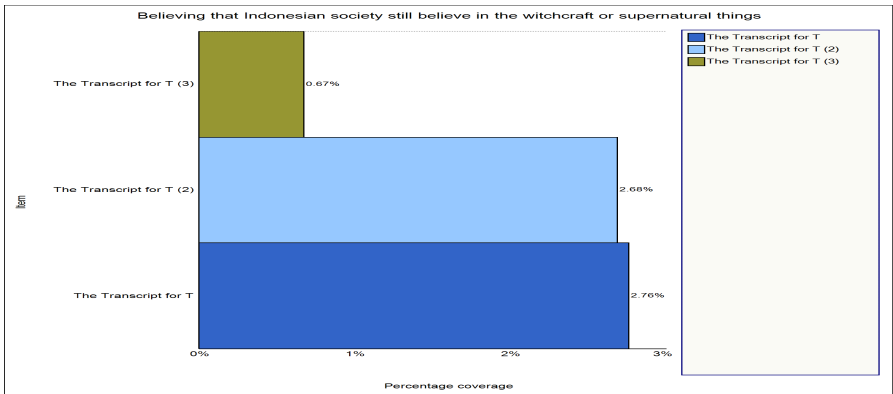


Figure 17 Believing that Indonesian society still believes in witchcraft or supernatural beliefs.

Furthermore, in macro-level analysis, the authors obtain identical results as in semiotic analysis when all the data from the focus group discussion’s participants is examined comprehensively.

For example, if FGD’s data from the *Pengabdian Setan* movie is examined, the trend of the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths, particularly the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and witchcraft (three references) and the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs (animism) (two references). Figure 14 describes that social trend.

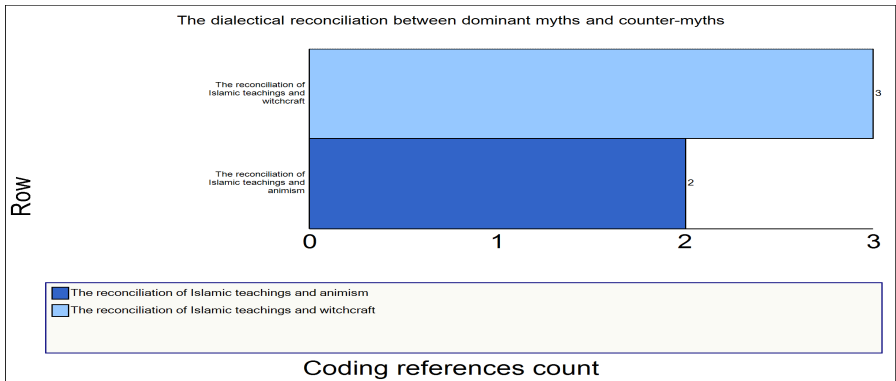


Figure 18 The dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and the counter-myths from the cognitivist analysis.

There are several examples of the participants’ comments when they follow the focus group discussions (FGD) for the *Pengabdian Setan* movie. When the data of participants in the focus group discussions is examined and tabulated, they admit that religion (Islamic teachings) and witchcraft can walk together without breaking each other. It is the symptomatic interpretation from participant ATA, from the high school student’s group, during the FGD’s session:

Participant ATA: I think religion, magic, and sorcery can walk together in Indonesia. Since good magic and sorcery can help other people, and humans live with other supernatural creatures, the power of magic and sorcery exists in this world. The sorcery can be good or bad. For instance, *ruqyah* is a good sorcery to help people.

In the same way, participant PPD from the professional group remarked (when he followed the FGD for *Pengabdi Setan* movie) that religion can walk together with sorcery or witchcraft in society. It is his statement during the focus group discussions:

Participant PPD: The dualism between religion and animism can exist in Indonesia; I would say, why not? Several decades ago, dualism was all right. There are people who do *pesugihan*, and at the same time, there are people who pray at the church and the mosque.

In addition, the FGD data from *Pengabdi Setan* captures motives that trigger someone to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths: the promise of instant process (two references) and economic motive (three references). Therefore, the graph shows two motives comprehensively:

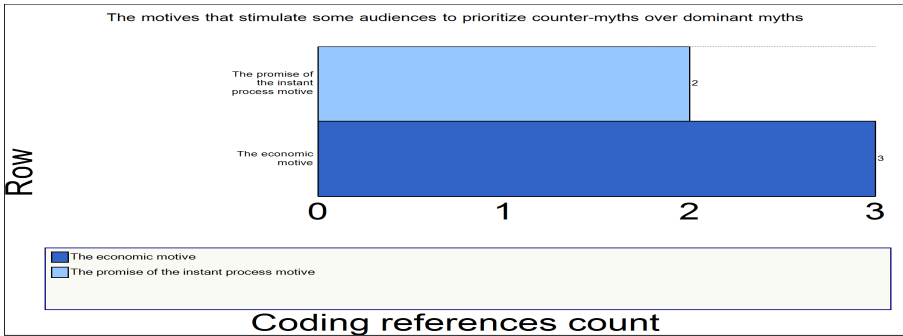


Figure 19 The motives that trigger people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths.

In the same way, the FGD data from *Suzanna: Bernafas Dalam Kubur* movie shows that there are three motives that trigger some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths: the revenge (ten references), economic (five references), and political motives (three references). Figure 16 shows the result qualitatively.

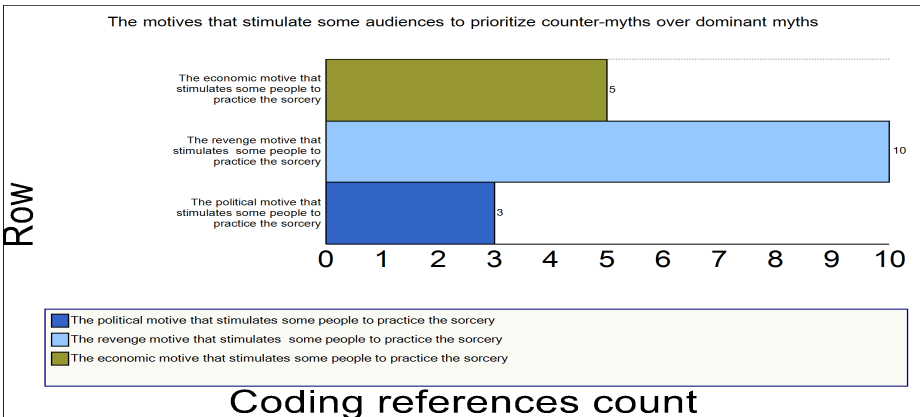


Figure 20 The motives that stimulate some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths.

Moreover, one of the participants in the university student category said a similar thing. She also mentions that one of the motives that trigger people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths is an economic motive. It is the symptomatic interpretation from participant AMR during the focus group discussions for the *Pengabdi Setan* movie:

Participant AMR: Besides the economic factor, there are other factors explaining why people practice supernatural matters like this. One of them is the culture, in which there are several people who have access to supernatural things. Other factors are that they believe they get the hidden message (*fitroh*) from the supernatural entities, so they do the supernatural practices. For instance, several Javanese apply the supernatural practices, even though we must ask meticulously: "Which Javanese."

In the same way, participant BPS from the working people category says that the economic motive is a stimulant that pushes some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths. It is his statement during the focus group discussion for the professional group:

Participant BPS: Mr. Gibraltar, I have spoken with several people who have undergone *the pesugihan*, and one of the factors that make them do that and deny their faith is the economic factor.

Besides the economic matter, another motive that stimulates people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths is the promise of the instant process. This is a statement from participant RMA from the university student category during the focus group discussions for the *Pengabdi Setan* movie:

Participant RMA: Besides the economic matter, many people want to get something instantly without considering the process. In fact, many people want to obtain higher ranks and social status. Other factors that make people go into black magic are economics, envy, etc.

Similarly, participant RJN from the professional category thinks that the promise of the instant process is the reason why people prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths. It is his statement during the focus group discussions (FGD) for the *Pengabdi Setan* movie:

Participant RJN: In my opinion, one of the factors that make people do the *pesugihan* is their desire and dissatisfaction. Perhaps the people want a spouse who is more handsome or prettier, and they want it instantly. Something like that in the realm of the movie. Perhaps this element can increase the logic of the narrative.

Moreover, other motives that trigger some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths are political position, revenge, and romance. It is an opinion from participant AMR during the focus group discussions for *Suzanna's Bernapas Dalam Kubur* movie:

Participant AMR: Moreover, aside from envy, for example, in order to attract a person, he treats it as an implant and keeps attracting people to like him. What's the matter? This is what people hear from such people. In other words, the patterns are the treasure, the political power, the romance, the revenge, and the envy. Those factors make people practice sorcery.

In the same way, participant PPD from the professional category says that the political position, revenge, and romance trigger some people to prioritize counter-myths over dominant myths. It is an opinion from her during the focus group discussions for *Suzanna's Bernapas Dalam Kubur* movie:

Participant PPD: Speaking of revenge, I think humans have the tendency to do good and bad. When someone is in a lucky position, he supports the existence of the Almighty God. However, when he is in an unlucky position, he questions the existence of the Almighty God. I speak about it as a tendency, and there are many factors, like romance and political position, that make the human switch from religion to sorcery. So, it is rational that when someone has revenge, they switch to sorcery. I think it is not only revenge since there are other factors that make someone switch to sorcery, like richness, since there are cases where someone pets the *Tuyuls* in order to become rich.

In other words, based on the cognitivist analysis, there are two dialectical reconciliations between dominant myths (the Islamic teachings) and counter-myths (supernatural beliefs and witchcraft). Some people prioritize counter-myths if they are stimulated by motives like treasure, political position, revenge, and the promise of the instant process.

If all explanations of macro-level analysis are combined into a diagram, it can reflect the current social trend in contemporary Indonesian society like this:

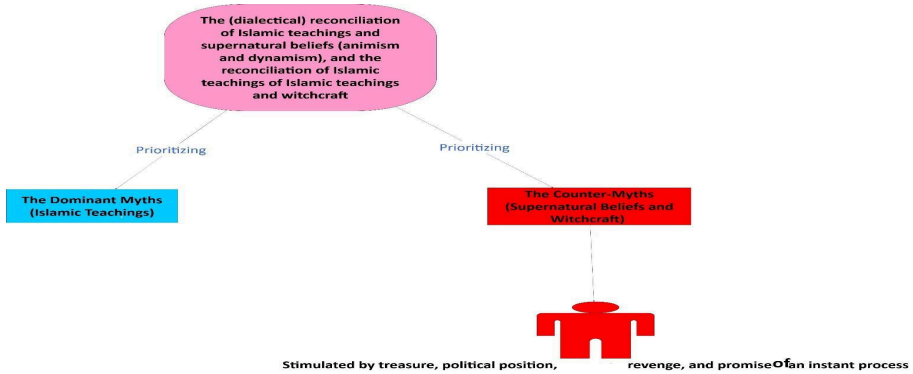


Figure 21 The dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths, according to the cognitivist analysis.

In summary, there is a resemblance between the sociological model from the semiotic analysis (Fig. 11) and the sociological model from the cognitivist analysis (Fig. 17), even though there are slight differences in terms of motives and types of reconciliations in the macro-level analysis. Yet, the combination between semiotic and cognitivist analyses maps not only the sociological trends that happen in Indonesian society successfully but also some small phenomena in scenes in three Indonesian horror movies that can be analysed at the micro-level, like the modes of counter-myths and dominant myths, the ways the counter-myths break dominant myths and vice versa, and the audience’s interpretation when they watch counter-myths break dominant myths and vice versa in the form of feelings and satisfying scenes.

Until this point, it’s been seen that semiotics has been scientifically expanded (the science expansion) from its conventional roles into its new role as an academic tool that can map the current sociological trend that happens in contemporary society. Then, this finding can be used to create the Horror Film Model.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Semiotics must undergo academic expansion and development in order to make this study more attractive and able to make a bigger contribution to the academic and practical worlds. Previously, in micro-level analysis, there were some conventional roles of semiotics that centred on the constellation of signs. When it is brought into macro-level analysis, this conventional semiotic can produce a myth, bring about changes to the naturalness of people’s interactions, etc.

Semiotic analysis is a fascinating academic approach since it can be used for any kind of academic or practical need. Although it starts with the signs, as the smallest unit of analysis in a social study that usually contains scenes in film, this analysis can reveal the complex social trends that happen in contemporary society. In other words, a good sociological analysis is one that contains integration between the micro- and macro-level analyses. In addition, since the scope of this article is film studies, perhaps the data from cognitive semiotics can be used to produce the new film model.

From this standpoint, semiotics can be extended academically as a tool to map the current sociological trends that happen in a society. The data is then used to formulate the new horror film model. It should be done since semiotics must be able to analyze the complexity that exists in contemporary society.

This academic extension can be realized by studying semiotically and cognitively two contemporary Indonesian horror movies: *Pengabdian Setan* and *Suzanna Bernapas Dalam Kubur*. In fact, those two movies were

selected since they contain scenes that show dominant myths and counter-myths, the collisions between dominant myths and counter-myths and vice versa, and the dialectical reconciliations between dominant myths and counter-myths. They also obtained more than 3,000,000 audiences. Lastly, one movie (*Pengabdi Setan*) won awards at international film festivals.

Well, since those movies came from the years 2017 and 2018, this study can only map the social trends that happen nowadays, not the social changes that happened within the previous periods.

This study is equipped theoretically with the modified Barthes semiotic theory to answer the first, second, third, and fourth research questions. Afterward, the Bordwell cognitivist theory (the symptomatic interpretation) is used to theoretically answer the fifth and sixth research questions (the combination of Barthes's semiotic and Bordwell's cognitivist can be considered the cognitive semiotic). Methodologically, RQs 1–4 are supported by qualitative content analysis (QCA), whereas RQs 5–6 are supported by focus group discussions (FGD). It must be noted that those methods apply three kinds of coding stages, namely, open, axial, and selective, which are processed by the NVivo 12 Plus software. If the academic effort wants to be continued with the establishment of the new (horror) film model, the idea of the postmillennial gothic can be applied theoretically.

There is harmony and integration between the micro-level analysis (answers from RQs 1-6) and the macro-level analysis (the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths). In other words, the sociological trend that happens in contemporary society is reflected comprehensively in the scenes of two Indonesian horror movies (*Pengabdi Setan* and *Suzanna: Bernapas Dalam Kubur*), and this harmony is strengthened by the cognitivist analysis, whose result is similar and supports the findings from semiotic analysis. Afterward, the findings are utilized to arrange the film model. In other words, the proposition is that the expansion of semiotics as a science can be done by mixing semiotic analysis and cognitivist analysis comprehensively.

For the recommendation, the authors suggest that it should contain the triadic relationship among the protagonist (who is beautified and rehabilitated by using the idea of postmillennial gothic, and this character does the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and witchcraft and the reconciliation of Islamic teachings and supernatural beliefs), the main antagonist (who does all forms of the dialectical reconciliation between dominant myths and counter-myths), and the pious person as a supporting character (who always teaches the pure Islamic teachings, but this character never pushes anyone to follow him). The reason is that all of these characters represent the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian society.

In the end, this study underlines that if the semiotic analysis is combined with the cognitivist analysis (as cognitive semiotics), it can map the latest social trends and formulate the new horror film model that can stimulate tolerance and stigmatize corrupt practices as wicked behavior.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

There are no conflicting interests in the publication of this study in the international journal.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

There are three authors in this article. The first author is me, Muhamad Gibraltar, and I am a graduate from the PhD program at the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), *Universiti Malaya*. Right now, I am working as a lecturer at the Faculty of Vocational Studies, Program of Broadcasting and Multimedia, *Universitas Indonesia*. Furthermore, this article is one of the findings and results of his PhD thesis. After that, the second author is Hamed Mohd Adnan, and he is a professor in communication and media studies at the Department of Communication and Media Studies, *Universiti Malaya*, and he is a supervisor of my PhD study. I always consult on the development of this article with him comprehensively, and he always checks the manuscript before it is sent to the committee of the international conference. Lastly, the third author is Mohamad Saleh Rahamad, and he is a senior lecturer at the Department of Communication and Media Studies, *Universiti Malaya*. In fact, he constantly gives recommendations about where this article should be developed.

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