

Representation of Gretel's Crisis of Trust in the Secret Magic Control Agency's Fairy Tale Adaptation

Pradypta Nurziyah Prameswari^{1*}; Dicky Samudra Alamsyah²; Rizal Bagus Sanjaya³

¹State University of Malang, Indonesia, pradypta.nurziyah.2202416@students.um.ac.id

²State University of Malang, Indonesia, dicky.samudra.2202416@students.um.ac.id

³State University of Malang, Indonesia, rizal.bagus.2202126@students.um.ac.id

**Corresponding author:*

E-mail:

pradypta.nurziyah.2202416@students.um.ac.id

Abstract

This research analyses the representation of Gretel's crisis of trust in the film Secret Magic Control Agency using Roland Barthes' theory. The main focus of this research is to identify how the crisis of trust is reflected in Gretel's behaviour and character interactions. This research reveals the factors that influence the crisis of trust, including environmental influences and relationship dynamics with other characters, as well as experiences inspired by the classic story of Hansel und Gretel from the Brothers Grimm. In addition, this research also discusses the role of film as a learning medium. Referring to Weisarkurnai's (2017) opinion, films are considered aesthetic works and information tools that are entertaining and educational. On the other hand, the moral, ethical, and ethical values contained in fairy tales function as a means of learning for children, as explained by Setiawan (2018). Through this analysis, it is expected to understand the complexity of Gretel's character and the relevance of the values contained in the narrative.

Keywords: *Crisis of Trust, Secret Magic Control Agency, Film as Learning Media, Hansel und Gretel*

Introduction

Film is an essay created by humans based on environmental factors and aspects of life (Ramadhani et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Weisarkurnai (2017) argues that film is an aesthetic work and information tool that has an entertaining nature and can be an educational tool for its viewers. As an educational tool, films have a unique way of conveying moral messages and explaining the storyline. This is explained by Anwar (2022) that in its own way, film has the ability to deliver messages uniquely; it can also be used as a means of exhibition for other media and also as a cultural resource that is closely related to books, cartoons, television stars, film series, and songs. Apart from its role in educational facilities, film has its own role as a mass communication medium, this is in accordance with the opinion conveyed by Kartini, et al (2022) that in mass communication, media are means and means of communication such as newspapers, magazines, banners, posters, radio, television, films and others.

The depiction of something in a film is a form of recording life called representation. This opinion is reinforced by the opinion of Yusuf, et al (2023) that representation is a form

of representation or depiction of something in life through a medium. Meanwhile, Stuart Hall (1997) argues that representation is used to explain the meaning that arises from a sign or symbol. Supported by the opinion of Yusuf, et al (2023) that film is believed to be a medium of representation, because film is a work of art that can represent or describe 'something' and convey meaning to the audience. Meanwhile, Fauna (2022) states that representation has a simple meaning as a description of something in everyday life depicted through a medium.

As a learning media, not all films can be used as learning media. In accordance with the opinion of Hanny, et al (2020) about films can inspire part or all of the lifestyle of its viewers, especially teenagers and students through vocabulary. This shows that films used as learning media must have good words, have content that inspires the audience, to make the audience understand many words in their native language or foreign language. In its use as a learning medium, films are often associated with the meaning of words, visuals, storylines, and character portrayals in each film. The elements contained therein can act as educational media (Azizah, 2023). Apriliany, et al (2021) argue that the happy or sad effect that can be caused when and after watching a film is the most important reason for the attractiveness of a film. The happy or sad effect in the film cannot be separated from the plot of the story and the author of the story.

The Brothers Grimm are famous as master storytellers who wrote many famous legendary fairy tales (Chang & Luh, 2022). Hansel and Gretel is one of the German folktales collected by the Brothers Grimm in Grimm's Fairy Tales (1812) that influenced world culture. (Suryani, et al 2023). In today's life, many fairy tales and feature films are inspired by Hänsel und Gretel. One of the feature films adapted from the Hänsel und Gretel fairy tale is Secret Magic Control Agency. The film was produced by Wizart Animation, CTB Film Company and QED International, and released by Sony Pictures Productions and Releasing (SPPR) in 2021. Secret Magic Control Agency is a British and Russian family comedy based on a popular fairy tale. (Suryani, et al, 2023).

The first article was written by Eli Suryani, Bedjo Riyanto, and Sarwono (2023) with the title "Analysis of Design Elements on Secret Magic Control Agency Movie Poster". The results showed that the design of the Secret Magic Control Agency movie poster has two elements of design preparation, namely visual elements and verbal elements. Visual elements needed for movie posters are typography, illustration, colour, and layout elements. While the verbal elements are the title and text description in the poster.

The second article was written by Ludy Putra Anwar (2022) with the title "Semiotic Analysis of the Representation of Family Dysfunction in Boyhood Film". The results showed that the representation of family dysfunction contained in the film Boyhood is a picture of several families that often occur in the reality of life today which shows how both parents and children do not live their roles properly.

There are several similar studies on film analysis using Roland Barthes' theory. The first article was written by Selvi Yani Nur Fahida (2021) with the title "Roland Barthes Semiotics Analysis of Angga Dwimas Sasongko's Film Nanti Kita Cerita Hari Ini' (NKCTHI)". The results showed that there are many denotation, connotation, and mythical meanings used in the film. From the five scenes used as research material, there is a denotation meaning which is the direct meaning of each scene, then there is also a connotation meaning which is the indirect meaning of each scene including the five data samples used, namely myth.

This research is important because it illustrates the crisis of trust represented through the character Gretel in the film Secret Magic Control Agency. Using Roland Barthes'

semiotic theory, the research examines visual and narrative signs that reflect inner conflict, reveal hidden meanings, and convey moral messages relevant to the audience, especially children. The research also aims to make a sustainable contribution to the storyline as a support for future German language learning.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with the content analysis method. This method is because it is in accordance with the film *Secret Magic Control Agency* which is one of the literary works, as well as the adaptation of the famous fairy tale *Hansel und Gretel* by Brothers Grimm. Suryasuciramdhan, et al (2024) elaborated that qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from informant sources, and conducted in a natural setting. While the content analysis method is a research technique to make replicates and valid translations from text to the context that needs to be studied (Prima, 2022). Azzahra, et al (2025) also explained that content analysis in other sciences, such as theology, language, literature-art, and history, content analysis methods are often used as methods in examining scriptural texts, works of literature and art, photographs, drawings, paintings, books, song verses, and manuscript records. Roland Barthes' theory was further developed by Azzahra, et al (2025) in the form of a table as follows:

<i>Type of Content Analysis</i>	<i>Study Start With</i>	<i>Timing of Defining Codes or Keyword</i>	<i>Sources Codes & Keywords</i>
<i>Conventional Content Analysis</i>	<i>Observation</i>	<i>Code are defined during data analysis</i>	<i>Codes are derived from data</i>
<i>Directed Content Analysis</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Codes are defined before and during data analysis</i>	<i>Codes are derived from theory/r <u>elevant</u> research findings</i>
<i>Summative Content Analysis</i>	<i>Keywords</i>	<i>Keywords are identified before and during data analysis</i>	<i>Keywords are derived from <u>interest of researcher</u>/review of literature</i>

Table 1. Content Analysis

Results

In the *Secret Magic Control Agency* film that has been analysed by the author, there are several findings that will be associated with the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in the following tables:

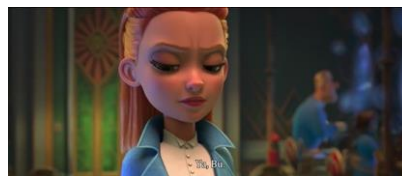


Figure 1. Scene of Gretel's character when she gets the task of catching Hansel

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:08:21 – 00:08:23	The scene shows Gretel's <u>sombre expression when she is tasked by her agency director to capture Hansel</u> . Visuals are <u>clearly visible</u> : a. Gretel's grim expression b. Visual Colour and Focus Level	This scene <u>represents</u> confusion, doubt, and a <u>little</u> emotion on Gretel's face. But in the context of the whole film, Gretel's expression shows more annoyance when she has to communicate directly with Hansel.	In their daily lives, women have to play a masculine role by suppressing their own emotions when they are at work. The famously versatile character Gretel <u>has to bear a relatively heavy and shocking burden, and still look 'strong and capable' when she gets the task of capturing her brother, Hansel.</u>

Table 2. Analysis of the Secret Magic Control Agency Film Based on Barthes' Theory



Figure 3. Meeting of Hansel und Gretel

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:12:49 – 00:12:59	The meeting of the Hansel und Gretel characters is characterised by bickering, arguing, and disharmony in a brotherly relationship. The focus of this part of the film is shown in : a. The dominance of purple colour in the following scene. b. The existence of a heat fight between Gretel who is carrying out his duties, and Hansel who is surprised by Gretel's sudden arrival to catch him.	The purple colour in this scene is used as a magical symbol in the tricks that Hansel has mastered. The camera position focusing on Hansel und Gretel alternately with their angry expressions shows the equal power between the two brothers.	The colour purple as a magical symbol is often associated with the symbol of one's emotional turmoil. Similarly, Hansel's body position can be likened to a position of protecting himself from danger.

Table 3. Hansel und Gretel Meeting Scenes

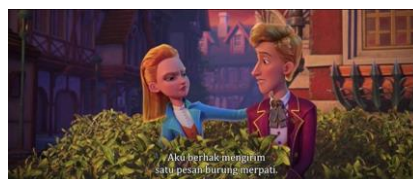


Figure 4. Hansel und Gretel's fight

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:13:40– 00:13:48	The quarrel between Hansel and Gretel goes outside Hansel's castle. The scene where they fight in the middle of the bushes until Gretel finally catches Hansel is also presented. And it shows Hansel's dialogue which is successfully translated as, "I have the right to send one dove message."	The scene of the argument that continues in the bushes represents family problems that shouldn't be shown to the public. The bush is represented as a place or home, while the scene of Gretel catching Hansel represents the end of family problems can be 'caught' or solved within the family, without the help of others. Hansel's dialogue about the 'dove' represents a message that must be kept secret by the parties concerned, and can represent sending prayers to God Almighty when having problems that want to be resolved privately / alone.	There is a representation of cultural and social meanings such as the idea of privacy and independence in maintaining honour and family matters.

Table 5. Arrival at Gretel's Office**Figure 6. The Continued Fight of Hansel und Gretel**

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:16:52– 00:17:10	The fight scene between Hansel und Gretel continues in the office of Gretel's boss. Gretel started the fight by bringing up the topic of family and pounding on the desk in front of Hansel who was sitting casually on the red chair.	The Red colour of the chair indicates anger. In addition, the background colour of the building is a sombre colour that represents doubt, gloom, or as a representation of fear. Gretel's angry expression, which raised family issues, eventually provoked Hansel to anger.	In the culture of life, the colour red is a well-known symbol for anger, and a warning of danger. While the sombre colours of Gretel's office are colours that are common to negative atmospheres, such as family quarrels.

Table 6. Family Fights**Figure 7. Delayed Secret Handshake**

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:18:35–00:18:49	The scene of Gretel rejecting Hansel's invitation indirectly with the gesture of hitting Hansel's face 'by accident'	Rejection of an invitation is one form of petty fights in a relationship.	In society, indirect rejection (not done verbally) is a form of rejection or unwillingness in a relationship.

Table 7. Rejection of Secret Handshake**Figure 8. Hansel und Gretel on his Way to One of the Rooms**

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:19:03–00:19:17	The scene where Gretel is always patronising Hansel's work and his character. Gretel's expression looks like she is disgusted with Hansel's presence around her. And the green colour is shaped like smoke, and tends to be faint.	Gretel's expression shows dislike, tension, anger, and unwillingness to communicate with Hansel.	In a relationship context, a faint green colour like smoke can signify tension, reluctance or conflict in the relationship.

Table 8. Gretel is Angry at Hansel**Figure 9. Hansel und Gretel on their Way to One of the Rooms**



No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	00:24:02–00:24:21	Gretel's expression that seems to mock Hansel's knowledge of a place he can go to for guidance	Gretel's expression represents disdain, distrust, and even a sense of superiority over Hansel. While a place can represent hope, guidance, a path, even a solution to a problem.	In today's life, mocking is often done by people who feel they are superior to others. As a result, they tend to ignore things that can actually be a solution for themselves.

Table 9. Gretel Teasing Hansel

Figure 10. *Hansel und Gretel on their way to one of the rooms*

No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	01:16:30–01:17:51	The scene shows the peak of Gretel's anger towards Hansel because he did not manage to save the King. The orange colour coming from the tinder below them makes the atmosphere look even hotter.	The hot atmosphere of the orange colour depicts a mounting anger, aided by the image of the tinder beneath them which represents that the situation between them has reached its peak.	In the world of health, anger can be a form of expression when a person feels disappointed at not being able to fulfil expectations, or when they are exhausted from stress or are in a dangerous situation.

Table 10: The peak of Gretel's anger

Figure 11. Gretel and her difficulty in trusting Hansel



No	Time Scene	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Mythical
1.	01:17:32– 01:17:51	Gretel was shocked when she heard all of Hansel's explanations about his scholarship. After not believing Hansel's story, Gretel fell silent and put on a speechless face and cried because she had felt bad for Hansel for a long time.	Gretel's expressions of surprise, speechlessness, and incompetence when she heard Hansel's story represent Gretel's confusion, guilt, and regret when she realised her mistakes and emotions that turned out to be wrong towards Hansel.	In today's society, shock and regret are considered natural reactions when one realises the mistakes one has made. Meanwhile, crying is the body's natural response to remorse, and is a reflection of inner conflicts related to prejudices that need to be changed within each individual.

Table 10: The peak of Gretel's anger

Based on the analysis of the findings in each scene in the film Secret Magic Control Agency, it was found that the film succeeded in presenting Gretel's crisis of trust in Hansel through visualisation, dialogues chosen by the characters, and the use of different wars in each scene in the film. Thus, the film Secret Magic Control Agency is not only entertaining, but also an effective learning tool to build empathy, critical thinking, and social skills among students.

Discussion

The purple colour in scene 00:12:49 - 00:12:59 can be interpreted as a symbol of the magical world as well as Gretel's emotional turmoil. Hansel's protective posture shows his insecurity and defensiveness towards Gretel. The dominance of the colour red in scenes 00:16:52 - 00:17:10 reinforces the atmosphere of conflict and emotional tension between the two characters. Gretel's refusal to shake hands and make their secret gesture indicates a deep emotional distance. Gretel's verbal conflict and fatigue in communicating with Hansel reflect a fractured brotherly relationship. The culminating scene of Gretel's anger and distrust emphasises the deep, unresolved inner conflict between the brothers. This is reinforced by scenes 00:18:35 - 00:18:49 which represent indirect rejection (non-verbal rejection), and scenes 00:24:02 - 00:24:21 when Gretel's character shows the expression of a person who feels superior to Hansel. Anger in scenes 01:16:30 - 01:17:51 shows a form of disappointed expression, as well as fatigue due to the pressure obtained in dangerous situations. While surprise, or even regret in scene 01:17:32 - 01:17:51 is a picture of a person's reaction or the result of reflection of inner conflict when a person has realised the mistakes he has long made and found a way to change or repair what has been damaged before.

In addition to showing a crisis of trust, and family conflict in the film, the film Secret Magic Control Agency can be used as an idea in discussing lessons in the classroom. Topics of ideas such as family relationships, crisis of trust, and the desire to achieve goals can be used as a reference for students to find their way in life with the help of educators, and parents as supporters. It can also be used in teaching German language, literature, and history subjects by introducing students to Brother Grimm's original work in the form of a fairy tale, Hansel und Gretel, especially in medieval material.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis table that has been made and implemented with Roland Barthes Theory, Gretel's character experiences signs of a crisis of trust in Hansel's character presented in several scenes. The first scene, 00:08:21 - 00:08:23 when Gretel was confused about accepting a new task related to Hansel's arrest. This is represented through facial expressions, body gestures, and dialogue chosen by Gretel when she successfully meets Hansel. The next scene occurs at 00:18:35 - 00:18:49, the rejection of the secret handshake, in the scene 00:19:03 - 00:19:17 when Gretel clearly shows her fatigue in communicating and raises her voice to Hansel, and when Gretel clearly shows a mocking expression when Hansel is explaining something in the scene and 00:24:02 - 00:24:21. The peak of the crisis of trust is finally expressed in her anger when Gretel cannot achieve her expectations and is associated with the scholarship she gets in scene 01:16:30 - 01:17:51 which further shows how deep Gretel's crisis of trust in Hansel is.

In the course of the film *Secret Magic Control Agency*, the main factor of Gretel's crisis of trust in Hansel is the difference in character, knowledge, and background of Hansel and Gretel. Hansel's past experiences that forced him to give up his desire to become an Agent like Gretel were kept to himself, and required him to lie to Gretel and consequently leave Gretel to find a better life. The visuals in *Secret Magic Control Agency* such as the dominance of purple and red colours support the conflicted emotional atmosphere of Hansel and Gretel's brotherly relationship.

In addition to successfully representing the crisis of trust, showing the factors that form the crisis with visuals, character selection, colours in the film, as well as the adaptation of famous fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, the film *Secret Magic Control Agency* is found to be one of the fairy tale adaptations that can play an important role as a learning medium. The conflict and self-reflection process presented by two characters named Hansel and Gretel can be utilized by learners to build learners' understanding of the dynamics of family relationships, both in maintaining trust and how to properly resolve family conflicts without having to involve others. Learners can also explain the meaning of colours, visual signs, verbal signs, and develop learners' critical thinking skills through discussion and reflection after watching the *Secret Magic Control Agency* film.

Recommendations (if necessary)

In future research, there is a need for further research on costume visualisation, the relationship between family conflict and work, and the role of fairy tale adaptation in the 21st century.

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