

ANALISIS SEMIOTIKA TERHADAP REPRESENTASI KORUPSI DALAM FILM PENDEK *PIRATES OF SEPULUH RIBUAN* OLEH FIKTIVE STUDIOS

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ABSTRACT

Corruption is a social issue that can be depicted through various media, including short films. The film Pirates of Sepuluh Ribuan by Fiktive Studios features various scenes that portray acts of corruption in a simple form through a children's adventure story. This study aims to examine how corruption is represented in the short film Pirates of Sepuluh Ribuan. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis method. The research subjects are ten scenes from the film Pirates of Sepuluh Ribuan, analyzed across three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Data collection was conducted through observation of scenes, dialogue, and visual symbols in the film, which were then analyzed descriptively based on Roland Barthes's concept of the sign. The results indicate that the film Pirates of Sepuluh Ribuan represents corruption through acts of manipulation, abuse of trust, trading of positions, misuse of facilities, abuse of authority, and violations of rules. On the denotative level, the film depicts children's play activities with a pirate theme. On the connotative level, these activities represent deviant practices in social life. On the mythical level, the film establishes the understanding that corruption can stem from small acts that have become normalized in everyday life. The conclusion of this study indicates that the short film Pirates of Sepuluh Ribuan represents corruption as a form of manipulation, breach of trust, the buying and selling of positions, abuse of power, and the justification for a violation in the interest of certain purposes.

Keywords: representation, corruption, semiotics, short film., pirates

I. PENDAHULUAN

Corruption is still one of the serious social problems in Indonesia because it not only causes economic losses, but also weakens public trust in public institutions and hinders development. Based on data from the Indonesian Corruption Perception Index (GPI) released by Transparency International, the level of corruption perception in Indonesia still shows challenges that need serious attention. This condition shows that efforts to eradicate corruption not only require law enforcement, but also preventive approaches through education and public communication.

One of the preventive efforts carried out by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) is to utilize creative media as a means of anti-corruption education. The media has an important role in building a culture of integrity because it is able to reach a wide audience and influence social behavior. Suwastika et al. (2025) stated that the media and technology play an important role in building a culture of integrity through the dissemination of information about the values of honesty, transparency, and responsibility.

Figure 1. Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index



Film is a form of mass communication media that has the ability to convey social messages effectively through a combination of visuals, dialogue, characters, and storylines. In addition to functioning as a means of entertainment, films can also be an educational medium that is able to instill values and moral messages in society. Therefore, films are often used as a medium to convey social issues, including corruption and anti-corruption values.

One of the films that raises this theme is *Pirates of Ten Thousand* by Fiktive Studios. This short film won the Best Movie award in the Short Film Story Ideas category at the 2024 Anti-Corruption Film Festival (ACFFEST) organized by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Through the adventure story of children that is packaged in a simple way, this film presents various actions that represent corrupt practices in daily life.

Figure 2. Best Movie Short Film Story Ideas ACFFEST 2024 Post



The *Pirates of Ten Thousand* movie features various acts such as manipulation, abuse of trust, abuse of authority, and rule violations that symbolically depict corrupt practices. This representation shows that corruption is not always present in the form of large-scale abuse of power, but can start from small actions that are considered normal and continue to be normalized in social life.

Roland Barthes' semiotics is used in this study because it is able to reveal the meaning of signs at three levels of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, film is read not only as a series of scenes, but also as a system of signs that shape social and ideological meaning. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the representation of corruption is constructed in the short film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* through the visual elements and dialogues that appear in the scenes

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. *Mass Communication in the Context of Film*

Film is a form of mass communication that is effective in conveying social, moral, and cultural messages through visual language, symbols, and narratives. In the research of Peranginangin and Lubis (2025), mass media is described as a social system that functions to form the collective consciousness of society through the dissemination of social values and ideas constructed in public spaces.

As a medium of mass communication, film not only functions as a means of entertainment, but also as a medium of education and social reflection. Films are able to convey messages to the audience through a combination of images, sounds, and stories so that various social realities can be represented in an attractive and easily understood way by the audience. This ability makes film an effective medium in conveying social messages to the public.

1. *Short Films as Anti-Corruption Campaign Media*

Short films are audio-visual media that are able to convey messages in a concise, concise, and focused manner. As a communication medium, short films can be used to convey various social issues to the public, including the issue of corruption. Through packaging stories that are close to everyday life, short films are able to build social understanding and awareness of a problem.

According to Suwastika et al. (2025), media and technology have an important role in building a culture of integrity because they are able to disseminate information about the value of honesty, transparency, and responsibility to a wide audience. Therefore, short films can be one of the effective anti-corruption campaign media because they are able to convey moral messages and anti-corruption education persuasively to the public.

1. *Anti-Corruption Representation*

Anti-corruption representation is a depiction of values that support the formation of integrity behavior in social life. These values can be realized through an attitude of responsibility, honesty, caring, and moral awareness to prioritize the common interest over personal interests.

Wajdi (2024) stated that anti-corruption education aims to instill moral awareness, responsibility, and build integrity through a learning process that emphasizes behavior change and the restoration of social values. In film media, anti-corruption representation can be shown through consequences for deviant actions, moral accountability, social solidarity, and trust restoration efforts.

2. *Representation of Corruption*

Corruption comes from the Latin *corruptio* or *corruptus* which refers to the change from a just, righteous, and honest state to the opposite. In general, corruption is understood as an act of abuse of power, position, or trust for personal or group gain. According to Syauket and Wijanarko (2024), corruption is a form of deviation that can be studied from various perspectives, such as politics, economics, sociology, and law. Therefore, corruption is not only understood as a violation of the law, but also as a moral and social problem that has an impact on people's lives.

Corruption can manifest in various forms, such as bribery, extortion, embezzlement in office, conflicts of interest, gratuities, abuse of power, and betrayal of the trust given. Syauket and Wijanarko (2024) explain that corruption can occur at various levels, ranging from *material benefits*, *abuse of power*, to *betrayal of trust*. This shows that corruption does not always manifest itself in the form of major crimes involving state officials, but can also be present in everyday actions that neglect responsibility, break the rules, or abuse trust for personal gain.

In the context of the media, corruption can be represented through various signs, symbols, dialogues, and actions of figures that illustrate the practice of abuse of power and trust. The representation allows the audience to understand the form, process, and impact of corruption through the stories shown. Through films, corrupt behavior can be portrayed more closely with the reality of life so that the message conveyed becomes easier for the audience to understand.

The representation of corruption in films not only shows corrupt acts, but also shows the consequences caused to individuals and groups. Thus, films can be an effective medium to build public awareness about the dangers of corruption while encouraging the growth of the values of integrity, responsibility, honesty, and social concern as part of efforts to prevent corruption.

1. Semiotics Roland Barthes

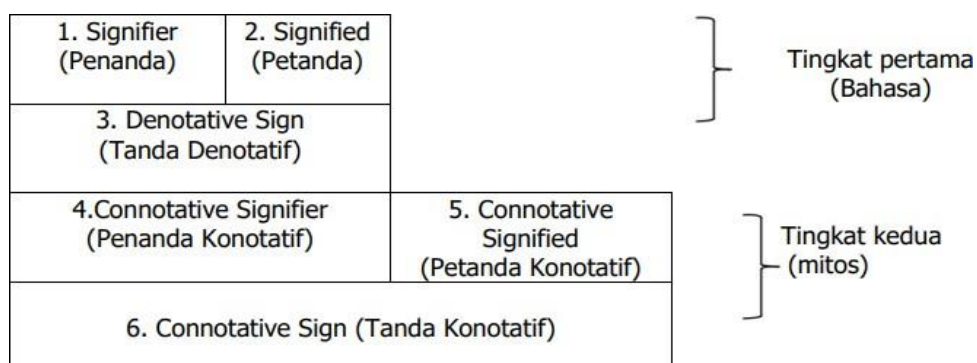
Semiotics is a science that studies signs and the process of meaning signs in social life. Signs can be in the form of language, images, symbols, gestures, or various other forms of representation that humans use to convey messages. According to Rorong (2024), semiotics is used to understand how signs work in shaping meaning and conveying messages kepada khalayak. Dalam kajian media, semiotika membantu mengungkap makna yang terkandung di balik simbol, dialog, maupun tindakan yang ditampilkan dalam suatu teks media.

Roland Barthes mengembangkan teori semiotika yang berangkat dari pemikiran Ferdinand de Saussure mengenai hubungan antara penanda (*signifier*) dan petanda (*signified*). Barthes argues that signs not only have a direct meaning, but also contain meanings that are influenced by social and cultural values. Therefore, a message can be interpreted differently according to the background and experience of the individual receiving it.

According to Barthes, the process of meaning takes place through two stages of significance that produce three levels of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation is a literal meaning or meaning that appears directly from a sign. Connotation is a meaning that arises due to the influence of values, experiences, and culture attached to the sign. Meanwhile, myth is a second-level system of meaning that develops into a belief or ideology that is accepted and considered reasonable by society.

Barthes explained that myths are not only found in folklore or legends, but can also be present in various forms of modern representation such as film, advertising, photography, and mass media. In this study, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is used to analyze the representation of corruption in the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* through the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths that appear in the film's scenes and dialogues. The analysis was carried out to uncover how corrupt practices are represented and how these meanings are constructed through the signs contained in the film.

Figure 3. Map of the Roland Barthes Sign



The image shows the process of meaning that starts from the relationship between signifiers and *signifieds* that produce denotative meaning. Subsequently, this meaning develops into a connotative meaning and forms a myth or ideology that lives in society. This model is used as the basis for analysis to uncover the representation of corruption in the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand*.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand and interpret the meaning of signs, symbols, dialogues, and actions that represent corruption in the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* by Fiktive Studios.

The object of the research is in the form of scenes that contain representations of corruption in the film *Pirates of Ten Thousands*. The determination of the scene is carried out purposively by selecting scenes that show acts of manipulation, abuse of trust, abuse of authority, transactions of interests, and violations of rules related to corrupt practices. Based on the selection results, there are ten scenes analyzed in this study.

The research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation of the film *Pirates of Ten Thousands*, while secondary data was obtained from books, scientific journals, documents, and literature relevant to mass communication, representation, corruption, and Roland Barthes' semiotics. The data collection technique was carried out through observation and documentation in the form of screenshots of scenes, dialogues, and notes related to the focus of the research.

Data analysis was carried out using Roland Barthes' semiotics model which includes three levels of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. Each scene is analyzed based on the visual and verbal cues that emerge to identify the representations of corruption built into the film. The results of the analysis are then interpreted to understand the meaning contained behind the representation of corruption and the anti-corruption values conveyed through the film

1. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher seeks to identify and analyze the representation of corruption and anti-corruption in the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* produced by Fiktive Studios and directed by Muhammad Azhar through the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes. The analysis was carried out by examining the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths in scenes that featured deviant practices and efforts to restore moral values. Based on the results of the analysis, the researchers found that the *Pirates of Ten Thousand* movie represents corruption through simple actions that are close to daily life, such as manipulation, abuse of trust, transactions of interests, violation of rules, and abuse of authority. Meanwhile, anti-corruption representation is displayed through the social consequences of deviance, accountability enforcement, second chances, and social reconciliation that emphasizes the importance of moral restoration.

In the first scene, the film introduces a goldsmith who claims to be a former pirate and offers a treasure map to the children in exchange for money. At the level of denotation, this scene features a simple transaction between an adult and a child. However, at the level of connotation, the act represents a manipulative practice that exploits popular cultural symbols for personal gain. Gold platters use adventurous narratives and treasure map symbols to build children's trust so that they hand over money without rational consideration. On a mythical level, this scene represents a deceptive practice that is normalized through interesting symbols and stories. Meanwhile, the value of anti-corruption in this scene is present through an implicit message about the importance of a critical attitude towards the information received, so that individuals are not easily caught up in harmful manipulation.

In the second scene, the representation of corruption is shown through the determination of group leadership based on resource ownership. Denotatively, this scene shows the process of appointing captains and vice-captains in the game. At the level of connotation, this scene represents a power relationship built not on the basis of ability, responsibility, or collective legitimacy, but on the basis of capital ownership and facilities. The myth built is that leadership is naturally inherent in individuals who have greater resources. In the context of anti-corruption, this scene contains criticism of the practice of abusing the legitimacy of power and emphasizes the importance of the principles of justice and meritocracy in determining authority.

The third scene shows Halim's act of giving money to obtain a higher position in the group. At the level of denotation, this scene only shows an anarchic transaction. Connotatively, however, the act represents the practice of negotiating status through material rewards. On a mythical level, this scene confirms that social positions can be negotiated and obtained through economic transactions. This representation of corruption shows the normalization of buying and selling positions in a simple form. Meanwhile, anti-corruption representation comes through criticism of the legitimacy built through transactions, because positions gained through material do not have a strong moral basis.

In the fourth scene, the film shows the process of recruiting new members which requires giving a certain amount of money. Denotatively, this scene appears to be a regular game rule. However, connotatively, the practice represents informal levies as a condition for gaining access in groups. On a mythical level, the film reproduces a critique of the culture of slippery money that is often considered normal in social life. The anti-corruption value built through this scene is the affirmation that access to rights or membership should not be determined by material transactions, but rather by the principles of equality and justice.

The fifth scene features the use of pirate attributes such as toy guns, red cloth, and black flags, including the use of parent-owned facilities without permission. At the level of connotation, this scene represents the abuse of property rights for the sake of group. The action shows how violations can be normalized when framed as part of a shared goal. On the anti-corruption side, this scene emphasizes that collective goals cannot be used as an excuse to ignore the principles of honesty and respect for the property rights of others.

In the sixth scene, a representation of corruption emerges through Iman's actions of taking advantage of his position as vice-captain to solicit payments from other members. At the connotation level, this act represents an abuse of authority for personal gain. The film shows that corruption can grow from small authority when power is not exercised as a trust. Meanwhile, the anti-corruption value present through this scene is a criticism of the arbitrary use of power and the affirmation that authority must be exercised responsibly.

The seventh scene shows the decision of the group leader who violated the ship's capacity rules for a certain interest. At the connotation level, this action represents a relaxation of rules by those in power. The myth built is that leaders have the flexibility to interpret the rules according to their interests. The representation of anti-corruption in this scene is present through criticism of the flexibility of the rules which actually opens up space for deviations, and emphasizes the importance of consistency with the rules as the foundation of shared justice.

The eighth scene features a ship that leaks and eventually sinks. At the level of denotation, this scene is the culmination of the conflict in the film. At the level of connotation, a sinking ship represents the failure of a system built on compromise against deviation. The film confirms that the slightest corrupt act will produce real consequences. The value of anti-corruption in this scene is shown through the message that every violation must have an impact, not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire group involved.

The ninth scene shows the *walk the plank punishment* given to Iman. At the level of connotation, this scene represents the enforcement of social sanctions against violations committed. The presence of Father Lutfi expands the meaning of the scene by showing that the impact of corruption does not stop at perpetrators and internal groups, but also harms other parties. The representation of anti-corruption in this scene is present through the affirmation that every deviation must be followed by moral and social accountability as an effort to restore the damaged order.

The tenth scene is the strongest representation of anti-corruption in the film. Iman's efforts to correct his wrongs by pulling the ship show a moral responsibility for the impact of his actions. Lutfi's decision to re-invite group members and carry out mutual cooperation represents social reconciliation and giving a second chance to individuals who show good faith. The film confirms that anti-corruption is not only oriented towards punishment, but also on behavior change, the restoration of trust, and the rebuilding of collective solidarity.

Overall, the results of the study show that the *Pirates of Ten Thousand* film represents corruption as a practice that grows out of manipulation, abuse of trust, material transactions, and laxity to normalized rules in daily life. On the other hand, anti-corruption representation is displayed through critical awareness, enforcement of consequences, moral responsibility, social solidarity, and reconciliation as a form of redress for irregularities that occur. The film shows that anti-corruption education can be effectively delivered through simple representations that are close to children's social experiences.

1. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* by Fictive Studios, this study found that the film represents corruption through various forms of behavior, such as manipulation, abuse of trust, transactions of interests, buying and selling positions, abuse of authority, abuse of facilities, and violation of rules. The representation is displayed through symbols, dialogues, and actions of the characters that are packaged in children's adventure stories so that they are easy to understand by the audience.

At the level of denotation, the film features adventure and treasure hunt activities carried out by a group of children. At the level of connotation, the various actions carried out by the figures represent corrupt practices that are often found in social life. Meanwhile, on a mythical level, the film builds an understanding that corruption does not always start with a big act, but can start from simple behaviors that are normalized in everyday life, such as manipulation, dishonesty, abuse of trust, and disregard for rules.

In addition to representing corruption, the film *Pirates of Ten Thousand* also conveys anti-corruption values through the consequences received by the characters and the importance of responsibility, honesty, and cooperation in resolving conflicts. Thus, this film not only functions as an entertainment medium, but also as an educational medium that is able to convey anti-corruption messages and foster awareness of the importance of integrity in public life.

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