


Representation Of Violence In The Film Malignant 2021

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Violence Malignant Semiotics	Violence refers to physical, verbal, or psychological behaviors carried out to injure or harm others or other beings, including acts of physical abuse, bullying, and warfare. Its impacts often harm societies and individuals, violating human rights principles. Violence can affect the mental and physical conditions of individuals who are victims of it. The purpose of this research is (1) to analyze the meaning conveyed in the film "Malignant" and (2) to analyze the representation of violence depicted by actors within the film "Malignant." The method used by the researcher is a qualitative approach, where the film "Malignant" by James Wan, released in 2021, serves as the primary data source analyzed. The analysis technique used is semiotic analysis from Charles Sanders Peirce, consisting of signs, objects, and the use of signs (interpretant). The analysis results show that the film "Malignant" combines supernatural horror elements with mystery and thriller elements to create a gripping story with many surprises. "Malignant" creates a tense atmosphere with various captivating scenes. It narrates the life of a woman who often receives visions of gruesome murders, which disrupt her peace. These murders are carried out by a terrifying figure. The woman named Madison, portrayed by Annabelle Wallis, also experiences violence from her husband while she is pregnant, leading to a miscarriage. Additionally, at the beginning of the story, her husband is also killed by the same terrifying figure.
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INTRODUCTION

Representation is a production of conceptual meaning in the mind through language, which forms relationships depicting objects, people, and even physical entities (Hall, 1997). Representation is also the ability to depict or imagine something existing in the mind and then translate it into language (Hall, 2005). Communication is an activity or process carried out by humans every day (Rotinsulu & Hartono, 2015). One of the ongoing phenomena of mass communication is film. Films are used to convey messages in the form of stories aimed at influencing the audience watching them. A film is a moving picture presented with various colors and sounds, then arranged into a story. A film is inevitably linked with a communication process to support the progression of the storyline.

Electronic mass communication packaged into audiovisual media, displaying sounds, words, and combined images, constitutes a film (Sobur, 2006). Films, also known as moving pictures, are a dominant form of visual mass communication worldwide (Elvinarto, 2014). Films are artistic creations produced creatively and contain both positive and negative values, thus carrying profound meanings (Sari & Haryono, 2019). Films are considered a means of communication because of the information conveyed by communicators to the audience. Through films, viewers can gain new knowledge and analyze the film to derive experiences for life (Ghaisani, 2020). Collectively, films are commonly referred to as cinema. The term "cinema" derives from "kinematik" (motion). Literally, the meaning of film (cinema) is cinematography, originating from Cinema + tho = phytos (light) + graphie = grhap (writing = picture = image), meaning to paint motion with light (Ginanti, 2020). A frame containing an image estimated through a projector lens, making the image come to life, is the essence of film (Arsyad, 2014). A film can become a cinematic medium when there is interaction between the film's objects and the audience. It is only fitting for a film to be imbued with cultural values. Interpreted as an audio-visual in mass media communication intended to convey social and moral messages to its audience, a film can be made to seem as though the audience is experiencing what is depicted, thus fostering a sense of reality within society. This is aimed at allowing viewers to feel an emotional connection with the film after watching it.

Film is a presentation with visual and acoustic aspects, aiming to illustrate events in the form of cultural-historical research, information processes, and the discovery of new ideas (Arsyad, 2014). Described in the book "Understanding Film," films can be divided into three types: documentary films, fiction films, and experimental films. Fiction films are structured with a clear narrative, unlike documentary films and experimental films that lack a clear storyline (Pratista 2017). Deputy Head of Bekraf, Ricky Joseph Pesik, stated that Indonesia ranks 16th as a box office film market among various countries worldwide, hence it's not surprising to see many foreign films of various genres frequently appearing in Indonesian cinemas and television screens (Priherdityo, 2018). The film industry is currently at its peak, with global box office reaching record highs in 2019. It's evident that the creative and innovative world is a driving factor, according to the Head of the Promotion and Distribution Division of the Indonesian Film Companies Association (APFI), HB Naveen. Violence depicted in a film or advertisement can be a factor advantageous to the film industry. The presence of violence in a film can even lead to the film receiving a high film rating, thus bringing financial benefits.

The production of films containing violence often disregards aspects such as life consequences or the traumatic effects experienced. The presence of violence in a film can influence an individual's behavior and thinking. This eventually leads viewers to become desensitized to the violence depicted in film scenes. When someone watches a film containing violent scenes and derives pleasure from it, they can be said to have lost sensitivity to the suffering of victims (Haryatmoko, 2007).

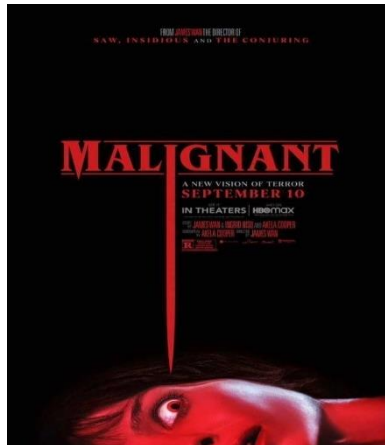


Figure 1. Original Poster of the Film "Malignant Source: Retrieved from IMDb, 2021

The poster for *Malignant* depicts a figure with a worried expression looking towards something about to pierce their eyes. With a black and red color scheme, it further evokes a frightening sensation for viewers. Researchers are interested in analyzing the representation of violence in a film. The object of study is the film *Malignant*, which exhibits elements of violence. Based on previous research findings, researchers analyzed the meaning of films with cartoon elements. One such study was the Content Analysis of Violence Messages in Children's Animated Films Oscar Winners 2015-2019. *Malignant* is the latest film from director, writer, and producer James Wan, released in 2021. This film falls into the categories of crime, horror, and mystery. Annabelle Wallis plays the main character, Madison, who has visions of gruesome murders, and these visions torment her as they become terrifying realities. The plot of *Malignant* reveals a person who has a twin but was killed in the past and then absorbed into the body of the woman, turning into a parasite. The storyline of *Malignant* is unlike typical horror plots. This film showcases a lot of violence, particularly murders committed by a parasite within the actor's body. Researchers chose this film because of its many meanings and elements of violence that could be analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. He was an American philosopher who emphasized the logic of visible signs. The three main dimensions proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce are the sign, object, and use of the sign (interpretant) (Af'idah, 2021).

This research focuses on the violence in the film *Malignant*, which features numerous murder scenes to avenge past grievances. The novelty of this research lies in the explanation of verbal and nonverbal violence. Previous research rarely included the concepts of verbal and nonverbal violence when discussing violence. One example is a study (Hutasoit & Wijaksono, 2022) analyzing violence in the film *Silent Forest* but not providing explanations of verbal and nonverbal violence elements in the research. According to (Lusianukita & Sunarto, 2020), a study on violence did not identify verbal or nonverbal elements. Verbal violence tends to involve physical violence, while non-verbal violence pertains to harassment. Both elements are crucial in discussing the representation of violence in films (Ayuningtyas et al., 2019). This disparity is the reason why researchers want to delve deeper into the representation of violence in the film *Malignant*, which has not yet been studied by other researchers.

METHODS

The research is conducted using a qualitative method. Qualitative method is an empirical method based on interactive conditions in real-life situations. This research is sourced from the film *Malignant*, released on October 31, 2021. It focuses on sixty-five scenes containing violence. *Malignant* is distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures and can be accessed through Apple TV and Google Play Movies & TV. Data collection will be done by extracting scenes from the film *Malignant*. The selection of the film is done by determining several scenes containing elements of violence. The selection of these scenes depends on the elements of film selection that show sharp objects, blood, fear, and words containing elements of violence. This research uses Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics method to analyze the meaning of signs and signifiers in the film *Malignant*. Peirce classifies signs into icons, indexes, and symbols, which are important in understanding communication. In a social context, Peirce's semiotics helps in analyzing social dynamics through language and visual signs, including in popular culture such as horror films. Peirce also emphasizes the importance of context in interpreting signs. In the film *Malignant*, violence is depicted in detail, raising questions about how these signs are understood in semiotic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings have been summarized into excerpts describing categories such as scenes of violence, violent words, elements of fear, criminal elements, and blood elements. This analysis is conducted using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, which consists of signs, objects, and interpretants.

Scenes Containing Acts of Violence

Several scenes depict acts of violence that cause harm to others and evoke fear. Violence is not always focused on humans but can also occur in the surrounding environment, which may be unpredictable.

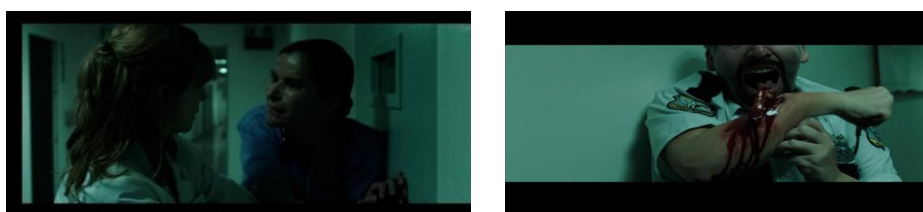




Figure 2. Scene 02.10 - 02.23

Table 1. Scene Code Violence Scene 02.10 - 02.23

Sign	Objექ	Interpretant
	Doctor attempting to enter but being forbidden	Viewers interpret the object as a woman in blue indicating to a doctor attempting to enter the room that there is danger inside, thus preventing him from entering.

Sign	Objek	Interpretant
	Sound of a monster and a man with bloody hands	In this scene, viewers can interpret that security personnel become targets in the riot, being attacked by a monster in the darkness and sustaining a cut on the hand. This cut serves as a warning sign from the monster in the darkness that there will be further attacks.


The opening scene depicts a riot occurring, causing doctors and security personnel to approach the room. The object in the sign indicates a prohibition due to the presence of violence that may endanger the doctor's life. In this scene, the doctor is protected from immediately encountering the parasite. The sign of the doctor being prohibited from entering by the woman in blue can be interpreted as the woman in blue warning that there is danger inside the room, thus forbidding the doctor from entering to protect him.


Then, the scene continues with the object of a security guard whose hand is bleeding from a cut. This image indicates violence and an accident. The object is shown through the sound of a monster coming from inside the room. When the door is opened, a security guard is immediately attacked on the hand, resulting in injury and harm. From this scene, it can be inferred that the man becomes a target of the attack, so when he enters the room, he is immediately attacked, injuring his hand. The attack experienced by the man can also be interpreted as a warning that anyone who dares to enter the room will experience the same attack as the man, or even worse, because a "parasite" trapped inside the room begins to move by attacking.



Figure 3. Scene 08.46 - 10.04

Table 2. Scene Code Violence Scene 08.46 - 10.04

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	The husband pushes Madison until her head hits.	This scene is interpreted as the husband warning his wife about what's happening and threatening her with violence.

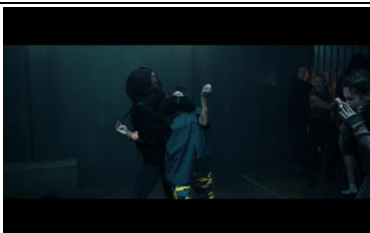
Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Madison experiences silence and contemplation.	Madison reflects on what has happened and describes the trauma of what her husband has done to her, resulting in bleeding from the head.


The scene depicts signs of violence stemming from a dispute between both parties. It shows a hand striking the head against the wall, causing Madison's head to bleed. As a result of this incident, the parasites behind Madison's head reappear. The image demonstrates the quality and meaning of the sign corresponding to the situation. The meaning contained in this scene is violence resulting from conflict. This scene interprets an element of violence non-verbally. From the image, pushing the head against the wall signifies violence that negatively impacts the victim. The signs shown in the scene correspond to the facts and indicate the reasons for resorting to violence. However, this should not escalate to the extent of causing injury. The image also depicts signs of fatal violence resulting in death. In that scene, the quality of the sign is seen from the shot showing the neck bent to the left or broken. Then, a dark figure is shown behind the corpse. This dark figure is someone who has murdered Madison's husband. Thus, the interpretation drawn from the image is of non-verbal violence inflicted on the victim until the neck is broken. This action is taken as a result of the blow inflicted on Madison's head by her husband. Scene Code Violence Scene 08.46 - 10.04 can be interpreted as the man warning Madison (his wife) about something in a cruel manner, namely by slamming her head against the wall until it bleeds. Madison's ordeal causes her to reflect on what happened and experience trauma, as seen in the image in the table.



Figure 4. Scene 1.31.20 - 1.31.25

Table 3. Scene Code Violence Scene 1.31.20 - 1.31.25

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Woman gagged and dragged Parasite	In this scene, it is interpreted that the man wants to show to other prisoners that this is a warning to them; if they dare to do anything strange,

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Woman attacked by Parasite	they will experience the same fate as the woman. The scene is interpreted as the parasite expressing its emotions by attacking the woman as an act of violence and attempted murder.


The above scene shows signs of violence from a dangerous scene where the parasite begins to take over Madison's body and mind. In this scene, Madison is in prison and is continuously attacked by another prisoner, awakening the parasite. The first scene depicts the beginning of the murders. In this scene, the parasite begins to harm every prisoner in the police station. The interpretant indicates that the parasite, in the form of a man, expresses emotions by committing violence and hurting the woman as a warning to other prisoners. In this case, the reason the parasite takes control of Madison is due to the continuous attacks by another prisoner, causing Madison pain and injury. In this scene, the violence is depicted non-verbally. Non-verbal violence leans more towards situations where an individual hits, pinches, or throws the victim, resulting in injuries to the body (Rezki & Mukramin, 2023). The violence scenes in the movie "Malignant" are terrifying due to the brutal nature of the violence depicted. In this film, the perpetrator dares to commit violence aggressively, causing injuries and bloodshed. Overall, the elements of violence scenes in this film are present in the opening, middle, and end parts.


The scene contains verbal violence



Figure 5. Scene 07.54 – 08.22

Table 4. Scene Code Verbal Violence Scene 07.54 – 08.22

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Dialogue "don't get pregnant"	A threat to the woman not to get pregnant, indicating that the man does not want his wife to become pregnant and have children. This is a form of mental and psychological violence against the woman.

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Man stares sharply at the woman	The man in the image, as the husband, shows strong anger towards Madison, the woman in the scene.

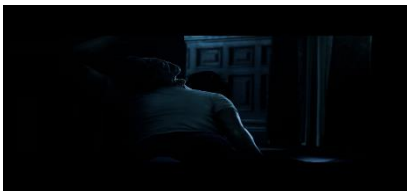

The scene depicted is a sign of verbal violence where Madison's husband shows emotions and words that indicate violence and can hurt the feelings of a pregnant mother. The sentence used by Madison's husband is "don't get pregnant," which would hurt Madison who is pregnant. This sign is formed from the conflict between the two partners. The husband feels that Madison is not showing respect because she immediately turns off the television. From here, Madison's husband starts to show reasons for using foul language towards Madison. Madison's response is shocked and angry, leading to a dispute between them. This scene contains elements of verbal violence. According to (Fitriani, 2023), verbal violence is a form of violence related to words uttered without physical touch. This violent act can take the form of insults, inappropriate language, or mockery directed at the interlocutor. The verbal violence in this scene shows insulting words directed at a pregnant mother that can be hurtful. As is known, a pregnant mother has more sensitive feelings. Therefore, the verbal violence in this scene leans more towards words that should not have been uttered.

The scene contains elements of fear



Figure 6. Scene 14.53 – 15.42

Table 5. Scene Code Elements of Fear Scene 14.53 – 15.42



Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Black figure	A black figure attempting something on someone.
	Woman in white attire and black figure	In this scene, it signifies that the woman is already powerless and the black figure is attempting to assess her condition.

This scene shows the presence of elements of fear. The object in the first scene is the black figure behind the corpse. This is interpreted as the black figure having taken some action resulting in someone's death. In this case, the victim suffered injuries and died instantly. This incident occurred because the black figure killed Madison's husband as he had already harmed Madison. Madison's husband was killed at night, resulting in a broken neck. Madison, witnessing this situation, becomes frightened and starts to run. Then, in the frame of this scene, there is a woman who witnesses the incident and faints, becoming powerless. The black figure holds the woman and assesses her condition, interpreted as the black figure being concerned about the woman. In this scene, Madison runs upstairs to lock herself away from being attacked, but she is thrown off by the push from the black figure at the door, causing Madison to faint and fall. Madison's fear renders her unable to think clearly and she only wants to save herself.



Figure 7. Scene 31.33 - 32.18

Table 6. Scene Code Elements of Fear 31.33 - 32.18

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Woman with mouth gagged and empty stare	In this scene, it signifies a woman being held captive with her mouth gagged. The woman has an empty stare indicating submission to what she is experiencing.
	Man with his hands tied	In this scene, it signifies a woman being held captive with her mouth gagged. The woman has an empty stare indicating submission to what she is experiencing.

The scene depicts the object of a woman with her mouth gagged and a man with his hands tied. This scene interprets that the woman is being held captive and her mouth is gagged. The woman has an empty stare indicating submission to what she is experiencing. And the second object is interpreted as a man undergoing torture inflicted by the black figure.

In the image, the abducted victim shows fear and confusion upon awakening in an unknown dark place. Additionally, the victim is bound and unable to do anything. The fear displayed in the scene indicates a meaning that corresponds to the facts of life.



The element of fear is often found in violence because it signifies the need for protection. In this case, anyone facing violence will show fear and hope for survival. Fear is used as a tool to weaken others (Putra & Jati, 2024). In the scenes depicted in the movie "Malignant," the element of fear is shown whenever acts of violence occur. The forms of fear displayed by the characters are evident during murders and kidnappings.

The scene contains elements of crime



Figure 8. Scene 46.50 – 46.54

Table 7. Scene Code Elements of Fear 46.50 – 46.54



Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Black figure standing over the bed of a sleeping couple	The black figure expresses its emotions and vengeance towards the sleeping man on the bed.
	Black figure pulling out a knife	The black figure attempts to torture and kill the man as a manifestation of emotional overflow, anger, and vengeance.

The image depicts the black figure attempting to kill a couple sleeping in bed. The murder is committed brutally by stabbing with a knife. The scene shows elements of crime where a dark figure begins to pull out a knife to commit a crime. The room shown is a bedroom where Madison witnesses a past crime that resulted in the grandfather's death from a brutal stabbing. This action is part of the element of crime where murder is committed brutally. In the next scene, the black figure begins to stab repeatedly, causing blood to spread everywhere and making Madison scream in fear. The interpretation shows the parasite killing the grandfather and Madison being shocked by the sight.



Figure 9. Scene 1.01.16 - 1.31.20

Table 9. Scene Code Elements of Fear 1.01.16 - 1.31.20

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Corpse placed in the bathtub with blood all around	A murder committed by the black figure is done brutally, leaving the victim covered in blood.
	Man with a gun in the bathroom where the murder occurred	The man with a gun knows about the black figure's actions and tries to stop the black figure by shooting at it as a warning.

The scene shows a sign with a corpse in the bathtub and blood around the walls. This sign indicates an icon similar to the object. The image interprets that a brutal murder has taken place in the bathroom with the victim covered in blood. In this scene, the corpse is shown openly according to the quality of the sign. In the first image, the sign shows blood to indicate the crime. In the next scene, there is an image of a man pointing his gun. This is interpreted as the man being a police officer who knows about the black figure's actions and tries to stop the black figure by shooting at it as a warning. The police are conducting a search, so they are not alert to the surrounding conditions that may indicate another crime. This scene shows resistance between the black shadow figure and the police.



The element of crime is found in violence because of the element of harm. Violence is considered a crime because it can harm others. In this case, violence considered a crime is physical violence where there is stabbing, beating, murder, and so on that cause pain or loss to others (Sasmita & Kurniawan, 2024). Scenes in the movie "Malignant" depict criminal scenes because there are several scenes that lead to murder and cause harm to others. Additionally, in the "Malignant" scene, there is a desire from the black figure to commit brutal murders against others.

The scene contains blood elements



Figure 10. Scene 37.22 – 38.15

Table 10. Scene Code Blood Element 37.22 - 38.15

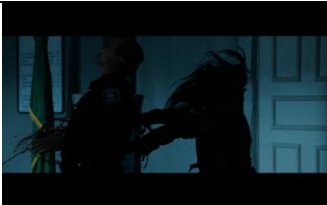

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	A dark room with a woman lying face down.	An elderly woman pushed by the black figure in a dark room, causing her to fall to the floor and sustain injuries, experiencing pain.
	The woman was choked by the black figure's hand.	The black figure attacked the woman by threatening her and attempting to kill her by strangling her.

In the second clip, the interpretation is that the elderly woman is the target of the black figure. The black figure pushes the woman, causing her to fall to the floor. Then, the black figure threatens the woman and attempts to kill her by strangling her. The scene takes place in a dark room with a massacre, resulting in visible blood. In this scene, a significant amount of blood is shown to depict nonverbal violence. In this scenario, the victim has already been injured, and there is blood on her face due to the injuries inflicted by the parasite.



Figure 11. Scene 1.35.10 – 1.35.25

Table 11. Scene Code Blood Element 1.35.10 - 1.35.25

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	The parasite and the police	The police were unable to stop the actions carried out by the black figure. In fact, the police themselves became victims and targets of the black figure.
	There is a hand amputation.	The black figure continues to attack and eliminate all police officers who try to stop its actions. From these actions, it is interpreted that the black figure wants to demonstrate how ruthless it is towards anyone who tries to thwart its plans.

The scene is interpreted as the black figure being extremely sadistic towards anyone, and they will act even more cruelly towards anyone who tries to stop their actions. The image shows the black figure attacking and murdering the police officers. In this situation, the parasite begins to defend itself by killing all the police officers who come to attack. In terms of violence, blood is present when others are harmed. The concept of violence itself is broad, where if the violence is extremely cruel and deadly, blood will be visible (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022). Several scenes in the movie "Malignant" depict sadistic violence, hence blood is visible. The presence of blood in violence indicates actions that are extremely fatal and can kill and harm others.

The scenes depicted in the film "Malignant" show scenes of violence, violent language, elements of fear, elements of crime, and blood. These five elements are shown in the table to demonstrate the meaning of each scene. In scenes of violence, it is shown that Madison experiences violence from her husband, triggering the emergence of the parasite. At night, Madison's husband has to be killed due to the violence he inflicted. In scenes of violent language, threats are made against Madison by her husband. In scenes of fear, several terrifying scenes occur involving abduction and murder. In scenes of crime, the murders committed by the parasite are extremely sadistic, using a knife to stab a sleeping grandfather directly. Additionally, there is a scene where the grandfather is placed in the bathtub with blood splattered everywhere, even on the walls. In this incident, the parasite appears to attack a police officer, showing elements of fear and crime due to the sudden attack. In scenes of blood, several scenes show blood everywhere due to the murders committed by the parasite against the police officers conducting the siege.

Overall, the scenes are able to show different elements through camera angles, dark rooms, and the actors' expressions. In the film, the use of violent language is minimal, with more scenes depicting violence and crime that harm others. Scenes containing elements of fear, crime, and blood are found in two scenes each. Based on the analysis conducted, the filmmakers were able to depict fear through facial expressions and create terrifying scenes to demonstrate the role of violence in the scene. According to (Petricia & Pramegia, 2019), it is important for a writer to convey the correct meaning to avoid giving the wrong impression. Each scene depicted in a film should show different meanings to demonstrate the purpose of making the film. In this film, the writer and director were not afraid to show blood as a consequence of prominent violence in a thriller film. Blood has a strong connection with violence. If violence is committed, there will be consequences, namely the spilling of blood. Violence committed lightly will result in minimal bloodshed, but conversely, if violence is committed severely, a large amount of blood will be shed.

CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion of the film "Malignant" indicates that the movie portrays the theme of violence, both verbally and nonverbally, leading to acts of murder as a result of prior aggression. Although initially these violent actions may seem like acts of defense, they ultimately lead to death, as seen in various scenes throughout the film. The movie contains numerous elements of violence, such as violent scenes, violent language, elements of fear, crime, and blood, adding elements of brutality and horror to the story. The implications of this

analysis highlight the importance of understanding the psychological and emotional impact of violence representation in film, as well as identifying the motifs and messages that filmmakers aim to convey through the use of violence. Further research recommendations include the necessity for additional studies on the social and cultural impact of violence representation in film on society, as well as further analysis on how the use of violent elements affects the experiences of viewers and their interpretations of the film. Thus, further research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role and impact of violence in visual media.

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