### Representation of Bullying in the French Movie "*Respire*" and Countermeasures through the Correlation of Character Education

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#### ABSTRACT

This research explores the representation of bullying in a French film entitled "Respire" by Anne-Sophie Brasme in 2014. This research uses a qualitative analysis and the Roland Barthles semiotic method by examining the denotation, connotation, and mythical signs contained in the movie scenes. Furthermore, this study also classifies the types of bullying in the movie and discusses how to countermeasures the bullying through character education. The results show that the film Respire depicts the dynamics of bullying, including the factors that influence the perpetrator's behavior and the victim's response. The types of bullying in the film are verbal bullying, non-verbal bullying, physical bullying, cyber bullying, and social/psychological bullying. This movie is used as a means to discuss the issue of bullying in the context of character education, relying on the importance of the role of parents and teachers as role models for students to implement character education. The activities that can be carried out to prevent bullying in educational institutions include school orientation activities, class socialization about bullying, and parent meetings with the teachers to provide psychological studies of child development. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of bullying and the importance of integrating character education to form a more resilient and empathetic student character to avoid bullying behavior.

Keywords: Roland Barthles Semiotics Representation, Bullying, Character Education.

#### INTRODUCTION

Bullying is one of the critical issues that often arise in many aspects of social life, including in the context of education. In Indonesia, KPAI noted that in a period of 9 years, from 2011 to 2019, there were around 37,381 complaints of violence against children for bullying cases both in education and social media, the number reached 2,473 reports and continues to increase to date. According to the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* in 2019, 41.1

percent in Indonesia claimed to have experienced bullying. Indonesia ranks fifth highest in bullying cases in the world after the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Dominican Republic, and Morocco out of 78 other countries that have the most bullying cases (Jayani, 2019). This phenomenon is not only limited to the school environment, but also spreads in various forms of media and artistic expression.

The French film "*Respire*", which means to breathe, adapted from the novel by Anne-Sophie Brasme, is one of the mediums that depicts the reality of bullying in a deep and reflective way. The film was adapted from the novel of the same name and directed by Mélanie Laurent, produced by Gaument and first released on May 17, 2014 at the *International Critics Weeks* at the *Cannes* Film Festival. The movie not only highlights the psychological and social aspects of bullying, but also provides insight into how this phenomenon can affect the development of an individual's character.

Bullying is often perceived as part of growing up, but in reality, the impact is much more complex and long-term. This drives the need for prevention and intervention efforts, particularly in the context of character education. Character education, which aims to form individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have integrity and empathy, is key in preventing and overcoming bullying (Munandar *et al*, 2023).

Through this study, the researcher examines the representation of bullying in the French film "*Respire*", analyzing the elements that make this film an effective tool in visualizing the impact of bullying. Furthermore, it also discusses the classification of types of bullying that occur in the film and how character education can be integrated in bullying prevention efforts, by taking examples and inspiration from the film using Roland Barthles' semiotic theory in examining denotation, connotation and mythical signs in the film. The purpose of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of bullying and the role of character education in overcoming this problem, as well as to provide a new perspective on the use of film as an educational tool in discussing important social issues that are rampant in the school environment.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Previous Related Studies**

This research refers to previous research that has existed before, that there have been many studies on the representation of bullying in films, but for research on a French film entitled "*Respire*" has never been done at all. For this reason, researchers will provide another review to find out what the differences are and then gain broader knowledge and compare what has been found so far. Here are some previous related research studies;

First, Tjitra *et al.* (2022) analyzed a study entitled Representation of Bullying in the film "*The Greatest Showman*". This study focuses on examining the bullying that occurred in the film which raises the issue of bullying in the 18th century. In this study, the method used is the qualitative method and John Fiske's semiotic analysis. In addition, this research also examines how the level of television codes such as the level of reality, the level of representation and the level of ideology. Based on the results of this study, there are four factors that cause bullying to occur, namely because of physical differences, differences in social status, the influence of mass media, and the circus which is considered a show for the lower classes. The ideologies found in this research are Egalitarism, Liberasm and Capitalism.

Second, Immanuel & Winduwati. (2023) make research studies entitled Representation of Bullying in "*The Emoji Movie*". This research focuses on examining the bullying that occurs in *The Emoji Movie* in the form of discrimination, intimidation, and self-discovery of the main character. This research uses qualitative analysis method and Roland Barthles semiotics. The result of this study is to construct the meaning of bullying which should have a negative meaning into a positive meaning that can bring confidence to the main character in finding his identity.

Third, Maliki & Fuady. (2022) carried out research entitled Representation of Bullying in the Korean Drama "*The Penthouse*". This study focuses on examining bullying that occurs in a Korean drama entitled *The Penthouse* where the background of the incident occurs in the school environment and social environment due to differences in social status. This study uses qualitative analysis and Roland Barthles semiotics to examine denotation, connotation, and mythical signs in the drama. The results of this study show that strength, power and wealth are a way of seeing and how a person acts. Countermeasures of bullying that has been considered commonplace shows the need for cooperation between the government, private sector, educational institutions and the community to break the habit of bullying that occurs.

#### **Semiotics Roland Barthles**

Etymologically, semiotics in Greek means *Semeion* which means sign (Nurdin, 2021). Roland Barthles semiotics examines signs in social events or society and culture. Barthles idea of studying signs uses Sassure's theory which he developed into a 'sequence of meanings', namely denotation, connotation, and myth (Fahida, 2021). Semiotics can be used in an unlimited variety of applied fields such as literature, comics, novels, news in the mass media, advertising, non-verbal signs, music, and also movies (Kusuma & Nurhayati, 2017).

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis framework, this research will also dig deeper into the aspects of denotation, connotation, and myth in the movie "Respire". Semiotics, as the study of signs and symbols, provides a tool to understand how bullying is represented and perceived through various film elements (Riwu & Pujiati, 2018).

For the first stage, denotation is studied, which examines the point of view of language or meaning. After gaining an understanding of language, we can proceed to the connotation stage which is subjective so that its presence is not realized, which functions as the second stage to describe the interaction that takes place when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of its users and cultural values. In Barthes semiotic theory, there is also myth as the second level of meaning system. Myth is a form of ideology that arises through assumptions based on crude observations and is not profound. Simply put, myths only represent the meaning of what appears to be not what is actually so that myths are not realities but communication systems or messages that function to express and provide justification for dominant values. Myths are created by someone as an ideology that functions to naturalize a belief so as to make certain views seem impossible to oppose, because that's the way it should be (Septiana, 2019).

# Film Respire

'*Respire*' adapted from Anne-Sophie Brasme's 2014 novel, follows the emotional journey of two teenage girls, Charlie and Sarah, who develop a complex and ultimately toxic friendship. In this movie, the characterizations of Charlie and Sarah are central. Charlie, who initially appears passive and controlled, slowly undergoes a transformation as the tension in their relationship increases. On the other side, Sarah, who is initially seen as attractive and full of life, slowly shows aspects of darkness and manipulation in her character. The dynamic between these two characters is key in telling the story of bullying and manipulation. The film's key themes of bullying, jealousy, betrayal, emotional instability and mental health are explored with nuance and depth. This film explores how bullying is not only manifested.

# Bullying

Bullying is something that is very prevalent wherever we are, be it in an educational environment, home environment, work environment, or social environment in society. Bullying is an act of hurting the victim by insulting, ostracizing, threatening, or even physically hurting him such as hitting, for no reason in order to seek pleasure for the perpetrator or want to look strong by the people around him (Pangabean *et al*, 2023)

There are several types of bullying, namely the first is verbal bullying, in this form of verbal bullying the perpetrator does it through words, such as insulting, giving nicknames that can offend the victim, and providing psychological pressure that can hurt the victim. Second, non-verbal bullying, in this form of bullying the perpetrator intimidates the victim, damages the victim's belongings, or can also insult the victim through scribbles on paper, tables, blackboards, and other items that the victim can

see. Third, physical bullying, in this form of bullying the perpetrator physically injures the victim such as hitting or injuring the victim with certain tools so as to make scars on the victim's body. Fourth, social bullying, in this bullying the perpetrator carries out group bullying against the victim by ostracizing, spreading disgrace so that the victim is disliked by the people around him. The fifth type of cyber bullying is bullying in digital form. Perpetrators usually use several types of internet platforms to give hate speech to victims in cyberspace. Sixth, sexual bullying, which is bullying in the form of sexual harassment against victims that causes trauma and hurts victims physically or psychologically (Haru, 2022).

The impact of bullying is very bad for the victim. There are several kinds the impact of bullying in several aspects. Academically, the victim can become unfocused on learning, decrease their grades, not want to attend school, and even want to transfer from the school. Then there is also the social impact, namely the victim becomes withdrawn from his friends because of a sense of insecurity, embarrassment, unable to express his own opinion, often ridiculed, laughed at, hit, and hurt in various forms, making the victim afraid to start friendships in the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, the physical impact of victims who experience bullying is continuous pain all over their body, sleeplessness, nausea, dizziness, stuttering, and appear weak and helpless. Finally, the impact on the victim's mood or emotional state is anxiety, fear, moodiness, sadness, mood swings, sensitivity, and often blaming themselves. In a dangerous special note, there is an emotional impact that can make the victim have a sense of revenge full of anger towards the perpetrator to avenge the bullying treatment with the same or worse pain so that the victim becomes one of the bullies also because of this. Therefore, there is a need for immediate response to the victim to avoid the negative impacts of bullying (Haryana et al, 2018).

# **Character Education**

Character education is an effort to shape one's character into a better personality in daily life and apply ethical morals both to oneself and to others. In character education, each individual is expected to understand the values of policy in behaving as a good individual character standard, such as building a character that can apply good manners, courtesy, patience, sincerity, good character, and intelligence in dealing with a problem and can also think of good solutions to solve it. In achieving this, of course, there are several strategies to build character education so that it can be applied to each individual, which involves moral education, values, and also religion (Hamdi et al, 2023).

#### METHOD

#### **Design and Sample**

This research uses descriptive qualitative method and Roland Barthles semiotics in examining denotation, connotation and mythical signs. The sample in this research is a French movie titled "*Respire*".

### Instruments and Procedures

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative research method conducted in depth and detail. Data was collected through various sources, including movie scripts, scene sequences, and images. This provided a diverse and in-depth perspective on the way bullying is portrayed in the movie and its relevance in the context of character education. Data analysis was conducted with the application of Roland Barthes semiotic analysis, which allows for a deeper understanding of the denotations, connotations, and myths in the film. This approach emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the symbolism and broader meanings of bullying representations.

The findings are presented in the form of a table containing denotations, connotations, and myths in several scenes of the movie "*Respire*" by describing in detail how bullying is represented, then there is a classification table of the types of bullying in the movie containing what forms of bullying are in the movie and finally the implications for character education. This research also connects the findings with relevant character education theories, with ways to countermeasures of bullying in educational institutions. Overall, the descriptive qualitative research method in this study provides an in-depth and layered understanding of the issue of bullying, applying a comprehensive and multidimensional approach in analyzing the film and its relevance in character education for character education.

# Data Analysis

Researchers identified data and searched for representations of bullying using Roland Barthles' semiotic theory by watching the movie being studied, namely the French film entitled "*Respire*". Researchers looked for every detail of dialog and scenes related to bullying. Then the researcher analyzed the data using Roland Barthles semiotic theory to examine what are the denotations, connotations and myths in the French film entitled "*Respire*". The researcher also classified the types of bullying and forms of bullying that exist in the *Respire* film scene and then correlated it with character education as an effort to overcome bullying behavior in educational institutions. Finally, the researcher made a conclusion from the findings of the analysis.

# **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the research used Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in examining denotation, connotation, and mythical signs. This research allows for a more holistic and in-depth approach to understanding the representation of bullying in the film "Respire". It provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how films can contribute to discussions about bullying and character education, providing valuable insights that can be applied in educational practice and social intervention.

This approach enriches film analysis by adding a deeper dimension of understanding how film elements communicate symbolically and how this is relevant to the wider social context. The following is a form of semiotic analysis using Barthles' method for several scenes in the movie:

*Picture 1. Scene 00.53.03* 



Source: Researcher Documents (2024)

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sarah threatened to kill	Sarah feels threatened	Well-meaning to help
Charlie because she	because her secret is	someone does not
knew the secret that she	known by Charlie even	guarantee that the
was actually living with	though he only wants to	problem will be solved
her alcoholic and	help Sarah. She didn't	well.
mentally illnes mother,	want the secret to get out	
not with her aunt as she	so she threatened Charlie	
had told everyone.	to shut up or she would	
	kill Charlie.	

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis 1

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

Picture 2. Scene 00.59.56 - 1.00.00



Source: Researcher Documents (2024)

Table 2. Semiotic Analysis 2

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Charlie's bench and the	Charlie received insult	The public's favorable
school's blackboard were	and accusations that she	view of Charlie
scrawled with	was a "slut" and her	immediately changed
pornographic insults.	telephone number was	after seeing the indecent
	distributed with	graffiti against Charlie,
	pornographic insult	which was all a lie.
	written on it.	

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

Picture 3. Scene 01.01.10



Source: Researcher Documents (2024)

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sarah didn't want to	Sarah did not want to be	Sarah's fear of what her
walk with Charlie to	seen by her friends at	friends would think if
school for fear of her	school walking with	she was seen with
friends seeing.	Charlie even though she	Charlie made her not
	had previously	want to walk to school
	approached Charlie at his	together because she had
	house for help.	ruined Charlie's
		reputation.

Table 3. Semiotic Analysis 3

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

Picture 4. Scene 01.18.39 - 01.20.05

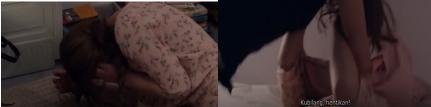


Source: Researcher Documents (2024)

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sarah insults and blames	With all the bullying that	Comparing the future
Charlie because	Sarah has done to	with others by imagining
everyone now hates her.	Charlie, she still blames	that you will have a
Sarah thinks Charlie	Charlie for mistakes that	worse fate than yourself
always feels like a	Charlie has never made.	because you feel far
victim. Sarah states that	Sarah also always	superior when the future
Charlie will not have a	compares Charlie to her	cannot be predicted by
beautiful and exciting	new friend Isa who she	humans.
future like herself and	considers better than	
her new friend Isa who	Charlie.	
will be studying in Paris		
and living in an		
apartment together		
there.		

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

*Picture 5. Scene 01.21.14 - 01.21.39* 



Source: Researcher Documents (2024)

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sarah was pushed to the	The emotions that	Underestimating
ground and her bloody	Charlie had been holding	someone who looks
head hit the table by	back as long as he was	weaker doesn't mean
Charlie because Sarah	bullied by Sarah	they can't reciprocate.
did not want to stop	suddenly overflowed	
bullying Charlie. But	because he couldn't stand	
instead of stopping	all of Sarah's words that	
Sarah then laughed	always degraded and	
loudly which made	belittled him.	
Charlie depressed and		
emotional then		
committed an accidental		
murder by pressing a		
pillow hard against		
Sarah's face until she		
ran out of breath.		

Table 5. Semiotic Analysis 5

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

In addition to studying through Roland Barthles semiotics, researchers analyzed the types of bullying and forms of bullying from the French film *Respire*. The findings of the data analysis of bullying according to the classification of verbal bullying, non-verbal bullying, physical bullying, cyber bullying, and social or psychological bullying in the French film titled *Respire* are summarized using a table so that it is easy to understand what and how bullying occurs in the film. The following table analyzes the bullying data in the movie Respire:

Types of Bullying	Forms of Bullying	Bullying Analysis in "Respire" Movie
Verbal Bullying	<ol> <li>Insulting</li> <li>Threatening</li> <li>Comparing</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Sarah insults Charlie with the term 'slut'.</li> <li>Sarah threatens to kill Charlie if she reveals her secret.</li> </ol>

Non-Verbal Bullying	<ol> <li>Intimidating with disdainful looks and satisfied smiles</li> <li>Damaging belongings</li> <li>Scribbling offensive and pornographic messages on desks and announcement boards</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Sarah compares Charlie to her new friend Isa, suggesting Charlie is inferior.</li> <li>Sarah smirks in satisfaction as she watches Charlie fall on the field due to running too fast, triggering her asthma.</li> <li>Charlie's belongings and books in the locker are soaked with spilled black ink.</li> <li>Desks and announcement boards are vandalized with pornographic messages, and Charlie's phone number is</li> </ol>
Physical Bullying	<ol> <li>Shoving shoulders</li> <li>Pushing body</li> <li>Pressing a pillow to the face</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>spread around.</li> <li>1. Sarah pushes Charlie's shoulder to keep her away, refusing to walk to school together.</li> <li>2. In response to Sarah's continuous insults, Charlie pushes Sarah, causing her to fall, resulting in a bleeding head from hitting a table corner.</li> <li>3. Charlie presses a pillow to Sarah's face due to emotional distress caused by relentless laughter, leading to Sarah running out of breath and tragically passing away.</li> </ul>
Cyber Bullying	<ol> <li>Spreading phone number</li> <li>Unknown caller terror</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Charlie's phone number is spread on desks and announcement boards with pornographic words.</li> <li>Due to the spread of her number, many unknown callers harass Charlie for amusement.</li> </ol>
Social/Psychological Bullying	<ol> <li>Isolating the victim</li> <li>Spreading shame</li> <li>Spreading rumors</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Sarah whispers and laughs with her new friends in front of isolated Charlie.</li> <li>Sarah spreads Charlie's shame to her new friends.</li> </ol>

3. Rumors are spread to the entire school that Charlie is a
'slut'.

Source: Researcher Analysis Results

Based on the results of the data analysis findings of "*Respire*" film bullying, it shows that there are acts of verbal, non-verbal bullying. physical bullying, cyber bullying, and social/psychological bullying. The existence of bullying in the Respire film occurs in the school environment, to overcome bullying in educational institutions can be done by implementing character education at school. The correlation of character education as the main foundation for fostering behavior and forming good character in every student in school is a countermeasure that will help students to understand how dangerous bullying is and how to avoid it.

The role of teachers is very important to help implement character education at school. Teachers serve as role models for every student in the school. For this reason, as a good example, teachers can apply the character values of religious nature in religion, tolerance in every difference, discipline in the learning / teaching process and obeying school rules, being honest and transparent, caring about the surrounding environment not to litter, and being able to communicate well with their students so that students do not hesitate to ask about what they do not know and can appreciate their students to foster enthusiasm in the learning process (Hendriana & Jacobus, 2017).

Through character education, socialization of bullying prevention and the adverse effects of bullying can be implemented at school to all students to minimize bullying at school, so that students have the knowledge and skills on how to interact well with others. Activities that can be carried out include through school orientation activities, class socialization about bullying, and holding parent meetings with the teachers to provide psychological studies of child development, considering that parents are the role models who play the biggest role in implementing character education in their environment (Anugrah & Sinaga, 2023).

# CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that the movie Respire has several scenes that represent bullying. The movie is adapted from a novel by Anne-Sophie Brasme published in 2014, which tells the emotional journey of two teenage girls, Charlie and Sarah, who build a complex but ultimately toxic friendship. The results of the movie representation using Roland Barthles Semiotic Analysis found that there are denotation, connotation, and mythical meanings in the five movie scenes that researchers took.

As for some bullying behaviors that are classified according to their types, the first verbal bullying that occurs in the film is insulting, threatening, and comparing. Second, non-verbal bullying that occurs in the film is intimidating with

condescending looks and smug smiles, damaging the bully's belongings, scribbling on tables and blackboards with pornographic writings. Third, physical bullying that occurs in the movie is pushing shoulders, pushing the body, and pressing pillows to the bully's face. The fourth type of cyber bullying that occurred in the movie was spreading the victim's phone number and terrorizing unknown callers continuously to the victim. Finally, the types of social/psychological bullying that occurred in the movie were ostracizing, spreading disgrace, and slandering the victim.

The background of bullying that occurs in this movie is school, to avoid bullying in educational institutions can be overcome by implementing character education at school. The correlation of character education as one of the countermeasures to avoid bullying behavior is the important role of teachers as role models at school and parents as role models in their environment. Through character education, activities that can be carried out to prevent bullying include school orientation activities, class socialization about bullying, and parent meetings with homeroom teachers to provide psychological studies of child development.

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