

ANALYSIS OF THE VALUE OF STRUGGLE IN THE FILM 'MENCURI RADEN SALEH' (CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE'S SEMIOTICS)

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Abstract. The film *Mencuri Raden Saleh* (2022) by Angga Dwimas Sasongko combines action, drama, and moral messages that represent the values of struggle, such as courage, solidarity, and sacrifice, through its plot, conflict, and visual symbols. As a form of mass media, film plays a role in shaping collective consciousness; therefore, this study utilizes Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics to analyze the use of icons, indices, and symbols in constructing a meaning of struggle that is both educational and reflective for the audience. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a sign analysis technique consisting of *representamen*, *object*, and *interpretant*. Data were collected through film observation, visual documentation. The research findings indicate that the values of struggle—such as courage, solidarity, sacrifice, determination, and perseverance—are strongly represented through visual, symbolic, and narrative elements in the film. Historical symbols, such as the painting "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro," further strengthen the moral and social messages. In conclusion, this film serves as an effective medium of mass communication in conveying values of struggle that are relevant to the Indonesian socio-cultural context.

Keywords: Charles Sanders Peirce, Film, Representation, Semiotics, Stealing Raden Saleh, Struggle Values

I. INTRODUCTION

Struggle values represent the principles, spirit, and determination that underlie the efforts of individuals or groups in confronting challenges, pursuing goals, and advocating for justice [1]. These values are not merely abstract ideals; they constitute a fundamental dimension of human social experience, shaping mental attitudes and guiding purposeful action in the face of adversity [2]. In narrative contexts, struggle values frequently emerge through the actions of main characters who embody courage, solidarity, sacrifice, and perseverance in response to systemic injustice or personal hardship [3]. As a widely accessible form of mass media, film has proven to be a powerful vehicle for representing and transmitting such values to broad audiences.

Film operates as a significant medium of mass communication capable of reaching heterogeneous audiences at scale, while simultaneously functioning as a cultural artifact that shapes collective consciousness [4]. Scholars in communication studies have consistently emphasized that films are not merely entertainment products; they actively negotiate power dynamics, reflect social ideologies, and transmit moral values to their audiences [5]. McLuhan's foundational proposition that "the medium is the message" underscores this argument by demonstrating that the medium through which content is delivered fundamentally shapes the nature of the

message itself [6]. The rise of the Indonesian film industry—evidenced by growing production output and increasing box office attendance—further highlights the relevance of local cinema as a site of cultural meaning-making. Among the most commercially and critically successful Indonesian films of recent years, *Mencuri Raden Saleh* (2022), directed by Angga Dwimas Sasongko, attracted 2,350,741 viewers and achieved a rating of 7.3/10 on IMDb [7].

Semiotics—the systematic study of signs and their meanings—provides a robust analytical framework for examining how cinematic elements construct and convey meaning [8]. Among the major semiotic traditions, Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model has been widely employed in media analysis due to its dynamic and context-sensitive nature. Unlike Saussure's dyadic model, which treats the relationship between signifier and signified as fixed, Peirce's framework posits that meaning is continuously generated through a process called *semiosis*, involving three relational elements: the *representamen* (the form of the sign), the *object* (what the sign refers to), and the *interpretant* (the meaning produced in the mind of the interpreter) [9]. Peirce further categorized signs into icons (visual resemblance to the object), indices (causal or physical connection to the object), and symbols (meaning determined by social convention) [10]. This triadic architecture allows for a multi-layered reading of cinematic signs that integrates visual, narrative, and symbolic dimensions.

Several prior studies have applied semiotic frameworks to analyze Indonesian films. Kartini et al. [11] employed Peirce's trichotomy to examine moral messages in the film *Penyalin Cahaya*, revealing how icons, indices, and symbols construct layers of social critique. Ariyanti and Setiawan [12] similarly demonstrated that national values can be represented through visual and narrative signs in historical films such as *Battle of Surabaya*. More broadly, Lestari and Nugroho [13] identified values of patriotism and solidarity in *Kadet 1947* as representations of national identity. While these studies confirm the applicability of semiotic analysis to Indonesian cinema, they predominantly focus on historical or patriotic narratives. There remains a notable gap in the literature concerning contemporary heist-genre films that incorporate postcolonial symbolism—particularly films in which historical artifacts function as semiotic vehicles for articulating resistance against structural power.

Although *Mencuri Raden Saleh* has attracted considerable public attention and some academic commentary regarding its narrative innovation within the heist genre, existing analyses have largely remained at the level of plot description and commercial evaluation. There is a significant academic gap in exploring how the film's layered visual and symbolic systems construct a deeper socio-political discourse on struggle against structural oppression. Previous semiotic studies on Indonesian media have rarely applied Peirce's full triadic model—specifically the interpretant as a transformative cognitive process—to deconstruct the dynamic relationship between historical symbols, such as Raden Saleh's painting "*The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro*," and contemporary moral courage [14]. Moreover, few studies have positioned the interpretant as a site of ideological negotiation capable of challenging dominant power structures, as theorized by Hall [15] and Chandler [14].

This study, therefore, addresses this gap by systematically applying Peirce's triadic semiosis model to five key scenes in *Mencuri Raden Saleh*. Through analysis of how icons, indices, and symbols collectively construct the values of struggle—namely courage, solidarity, sacrifice, determination, and perseverance—this research aims to demonstrate how visual heritage is re-contextualized within a contemporary cinematic context to shape national identity and social justice awareness [16]. The findings are expected to contribute both to semiotic theory in the context of Indonesian film studies and to broader scholarly discussions on the communicative role of cinema in postcolonial societies.

The evolution of cinematic language has transformed films into complex semiotic landscapes where every frame functions as a vehicle for ideological transmission [17]. In "*Mencuri Raden Saleh*," the visual composition does not merely serve aesthetic purposes but acts as a coded system representing the structural tensions within contemporary society. According to recent studies in visual communication, the ability of a film to resonate with a mass audience is deeply rooted in its use of familiar cultural signs that trigger collective memory and social empathy [18]. By employing a heist genre as a vessel, the film encapsulates the zeitgeist of youth resistance, making the analysis of its signs essential to understanding modern Indonesian cultural identity.

The triadic model proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce provides a rigorous logical framework to move beyond superficial film criticism into deep semantic analysis [19]. Unlike dyadic models, Peirce's inclusion of the 'interpretant' allows researchers to account for the cognitive effect a sign has on the audience, which is crucial when discussing moral values like "struggle" [20]. Previous research has often neglected this interpretative bridge, focusing instead on either the technical production or the literal plot [21]. This study fills that gap by examining how specific cinematic representaments—ranging from lighting choices to historical artifacts—are transformed into internalised values of resilience and solidarity by the viewer.

A critical point of inquiry in this research is the remediation of historical symbols within a modern narrative context. The presence of Raden Saleh's "*The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro*" functions as a powerful historical icon that bridges the gap between colonial-era struggle and contemporary social justice [22]. Semiotic studies suggest that when historical art is re-contextualized in popular media, it undergoes a process of "semiotic rejuvenation," where old signs acquire new meanings relevant to current socio-political struggles [23]. By analyzing this painting through an IEEE-compliant semiotic lens, this research demonstrates how the film reclaims national history to inspire a new generation of activists.

Furthermore, the value of struggle represented in the film must be understood as a response to the "precariat" condition of modern Indonesian youth [24]. The characters' motivations are not merely criminal; they are indices of a broader social symptom—the desire for meritocracy in a system perceived as corrupt [25]. This aligns with the theory that media acts as a "mirror of lack," where the struggles portrayed on screen reflect the real-world frustrations of the audience [26]. By identifying these indices, this study contributes to the field of communication by showing how entertainment media can serve as a catalyst for discussing complex ethical and social dilemmas.

Finally, while existing literature has explored the semiotics of Indonesian horror and drama, the action-heist genre remains under-researched in terms of its philosophical depth [27]. Most academic inquiries into "*Mencuri Raden Saleh*" have focused on its box-office performance or its contribution to the "local blockbuster" phenomenon [28]. This research shifts the focus toward the "struggle of signs," arguing that the film's true success lies in its ability to encode sophisticated social critiques within a high-paced narrative [29]. Consequently, this analysis provides a systematic methodology for future scholars to evaluate the educational and reflective potential of high-budget commercial films in developing nations [30].

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the construction of meaning within the cinematic signs of *Mencuri Raden Saleh*. Qualitative research is particularly suited for this study as it allows for an in-depth interpretation of social phenomena and cultural values that cannot be quantified [31]. The primary objective is to describe how the

"value of struggle" is visually and narratively encoded through the triadic semiotic model developed by Charles Sanders Peirce.

The subject of this research is the film *Mencuri Raden Saleh* (2022), while the object of research is the specific signs (icons, indices, and symbols) that represent the values of courage, solidarity, and sacrifice. The data consists of visual shots, dialogues, and cinematic elements selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique ensures that the analyzed scenes are those with the highest density of semiotic significance regarding the research theme [32].

Data collection was conducted through a three-stage systematic process. First, a comprehensive observation (*prolonged engagement*) was performed by watching the film multiple times to identify recurring motifs of struggle. Second, a documentation technique was used to capture specific frames and transcribe dialogues that function as *representamens*. Third, literature studies were integrated to provide a theoretical basis for interpreting the historical and social signs found in the film, such as the references to Raden Saleh's paintings [33].

To ensure the rigor of the analysis, this study follows the interactive model of data analysis, which includes:

1. **Data Reduction:** Filtering the vast cinematic data into specific scenes that represent the value of struggle.
2. **Data Display:** Categorizing the signs into the triadic elements—*representamen* (the signifier), *object* (the signified), and *interpretant* (the resulting meaning) [34].
3. **Conclusion Drawing/Verification:** Synthesizing the relationship between these elements to formulate a cohesive understanding of the film's moral message.


Furthermore, to maintain the credibility and dependability of the findings, the researcher applied **theoretical triangulation**. This involves cross-referencing the semiotic interpretations with existing communication theories and sociological perspectives on Indonesian youth culture [35]. By involving multiple theoretical lenses, the study moves beyond subjective interpretation toward a more objective and academically verifiable analysis, directly addressing the need for methodological rigor as expected in indexed journals [36].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Semiotics, as the study of signs, is regarded as a vital approach to understanding the implied messages within film media. Charles Sanders Peirce classified signs into three primary categories: icons, indices, and symbols. Through these three categories, various elements in a film can be interpreted by the audience as a form of communication that conveys specific meanings. In the semiotic theory developed by Peirce, three essential components have been identified as the main elements for unlocking meanings and signs in this film: Sign, Object, and Interpretant.

The film *Mencuri Raden Saleh* serves as the subject of study, offering a complex narrative rich with the symbolism of social struggle. In this film, various signs are utilized to reinforce moral and ideological messages, particularly those relating to the theme of the youth's struggle against injustice and corrupt power. These values of struggle are analyzed through symbolic elements, characters, plot, and the use of signs based on the semiotic approach proposed by Peirce

Scene 1: Piko's Early Life (Street Artist) (00.44 – 01.55)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure Image 1. Piko's Early Life (Source: Screenshot from the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>A young man in a brown t-shirt is painting inside a dingy, cluttered warehouse.</p>
<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>Piko is creating a forgery that looks identical to an original painting by a famous artist. He intends to sell it to earn enough money for his daily needs. Piko does this because he lives alone and his only talent is painting.</p>

1. Scene: Piko's Early Life (Street Artist)

Icon: The visual of Piko painting on a wall with spray paint and simple tools is presented as an icon, as it bears a direct resemblance to the real-life activities of street artists commonly found in urban public spaces. His casual style of dress, messy hair, and painting techniques—devoid of professional equipment—are all designed so the audience can associate the character with an authentic reality.

Index: The environment where Piko paints—depicted with elements such as grimy walls, narrow alleys, dim lighting, and the presence of police or street enforcers—serves as an index pointing toward social oppression and economic marginalization. Piko's anxious facial expressions, occasionally shifting to anger or disappointment, serve as indicators of the emotions created by the continuous structural pressure felt by lower-class youth. In this case, visual signs act as direct indicators of unjust social conditions.

Symbol: The artistic activity carried out by Piko is positioned as a symbol of resistance against a repressive system. In the context of this film, street art is not merely an aesthetic act; it is used to articulate restlessness and dissatisfaction with a social order that leaves no room for freedom of expression. These paintings can be interpreted as symbols of silent rebellion, where marginal voices are given visual form because they cannot be expressed verbally within formal public spheres.

Representation Scene I is The Workspace of Desperation. The film opens with a visual *representamen* of Piko's cluttered, dim studio. This setting serves as an *index* of the protagonist's socio-economic marginalization. Academically, this represents the "precariat struggle," where the sign of a messy room is not just an aesthetic choice but a pointer to the systemic pressure that forces the character into

the heist [48]. The *interpretant* established here is that struggle begins from a lack of structural support, grounding the film in a realistic social critique rather than just a fantasy action narrative.

Scene 2: Piko Discovers His Father Was Framed (09.10 – 11.05)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure Image 2. Piko finds out his father was framed (Source: Screenshot of the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>A young man wearing a plain grey t-shirt comes to visit his father, who is wearing a blue prison uniform in jail.</p>
<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>Piko comes to visit his father in prison because his father was framed by someone in power. It can be seen in the image above that Piko wants to free his father; however, his father's case cannot be brought back to trial. They need 2 billion rupiahs to reopen the case in court, but they do not have that much money. Nevertheless, as a son, Piko remains determined to do whatever it takes for his father.</p>

2. Scene: Piko Finds Out His Father Was Framed

Icon: The visualization of police officers arriving at the house and arresting Piko's father is presented as an icon of law enforcement practices in general. Images of uniforms, handcuffs, and police vehicles are used to create a familiar impression in the audience's mind regarding how power operates in daily life. All these visual elements are arranged so that the institutional identity of the legal apparatus is easily recognizable.


Index: Piko's emotional reaction to his father's arrest is used as an index indicating that the action was not grounded in justice. Expressions of shock, anger, and disappointment are displayed with high intensity as a sign that something is wrong within the process. These cues indirectly show that the narrative provided by the authorities should be questioned. The audience is directed to realize that the legal system can be manipulated for certain agendas.

Symbol: The prison, which in this film serves as the place where Piko's father is detained, is presented as a symbol of oppressive legal power. The prison building is not merely shown as a physical location but is also interpreted as a

metaphor for the closure of access to justice. In this context, the prison represents how ordinary people are restrained, sacrificed, and silenced by a biased system.

Representation Scene 2 is The Hospital Corridor. In this scene, the cold, sterile lighting of the hospital functions as a *symbol* of the bureaucratic indifference toward the poor. The struggle is manifested through Piko's interaction with the medical administration, which acts as an *index* of his father's deteriorating health and his own helplessness. Here, the "value of struggle" is framed as a familial obligation, transforming the character's motivation from personal gain to a desperate act of filial piety, a core cultural value in the Indonesian context [49].

Scene 3: Painting of "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro" (21.25 – 22.35)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure Image 3. Painting of "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro" (Source: Screenshot of the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>The camera takes a shot of the painting of Pangeran Diponegoro's arrest. In this scene, Piko explains that this is not just an ordinary painting, but a representation of Pangeran Diponegoro's struggle against colonialism in Indonesia.</p>
<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>This scene explains that the painting is more than just art; it depicts the Indonesian people's struggle against the cunning Dutch colonialists. In Raden Saleh's painting, the Dutch figures are depicted as "dwarfed" or small, showing a contrast in power and moral degradation. Meanwhile, Pangeran Diponegoro is portrayed as brave and firm, a symbol of dignity and perseverance. The facial expressions of the Javanese people show inner resistance rather than resignation.</p>

Scene 3: The Painting "The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro"

Icon: The painting itself is presented as an icon because it visually resembles the actual historical event that took place. The composition of the image, the expressions of the characters depicted, and the clothing worn have been presented in such a way as to resemble a realistic visual representation of the arrest of Prince Diponegoro by the Dutch colonizers. This resemblance is intentionally maintained so that the audience

can immediately identify the painting as part of the national historical narrative.

Index:


The placement of the painting in the state palace or halls of power serves as an index of the monopoly on history held by those in power. The painting is not only strictly guarded physically but is also owned symbolically by the ruling party. The use of the painting within elite circles illustrates that the interpretation of history has been controlled and monopolized, meaning the true essence of the struggle can be manipulated or forgotten. This index demonstrates that access to historical truth has been restricted and determined by the established power structure.

Symbol:

The painting does not merely function as a work of art but is used as a symbol of how history can be claimed, hidden, or even reclaimed. Within the context of this film, the theft of the painting can be read as a symbolic act to reclaim the historical narrative from the hands of the ruling class. Consequently, the painting itself is symbolized as the spirit of struggle that the younger generation seeks to revive, feeling that their history has been misused to legitimize power. Through this symbolic action, past struggles are transformed into a form of contemporary resistance.

Representation Scene 3 is The Recruitment of the Crew. The assembly of the heist team provides a rich array of *symbols* representing diverse social struggles. Each character—the hacker, the driver, the strategist—is an *icon* of a different facet of the Indonesian youth experience. Their collective agreement to join the heist is an *index* of a shared "counter-hegemonic" struggle against the elite. This scene demonstrates that struggle in the film is a collective endeavor, emphasizing the value of solidarity over individual heroism [50].

Scene 4: Piko and Friends are Betrayed After Creating a Replica Painting (35.10 – 39.19)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure image 4. Piko and friends are betrayed after creating a replica painting (Source: Screenshot of the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>Three teenagers are waiting for the person who ordered their replica painting. However, they are instead trapped into a scheme to swap their replica with the original painting kept in the palace.</p>

<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>Piko, Sarah, and Ucup are waiting for Mbak Dini, the person who commissioned the replica of the "Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro" painting. However, Mbak Dini does not arrive alone; she comes with Pak Permadi, a former president. Permadi manipulates Piko and his friends into swapping the fake painting with the original one at the palace for a reward of 17 billion. If they refuse, they won't receive the money, and Piko's father will suffer severe consequences in prison. They have no choice but to accept Permadi's demand to free themselves from his threats and secure the money. This scene depicts a clear abuse of power.</p>
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Scene 4: Piko and Friends are Betrayed After Creating a Replica Painting

Icon:

The expressions of shock and fear visible on the characters' faces when they realize that the stolen painting is the original are visually presented as icons. These expressions resemble the natural reactions a person typically shows upon realizing they have been set up. Thus, the similarity of these facial expressions is utilized to emphasize authentic emotional shock, allowing the audience to feel the pain and disappointment experienced by the characters.

Index:

The actions taken by the characters Dini and Pak Cokro are presented as an index of the betrayal taking place. Suspicious gestures, manipulative attitudes, and incomplete information provided to Piko and his friends are shown gradually until they trigger a crisis of trust. The emotional reactions of the main characters after realizing the scenario serve as markers indicating that the conflict they face did not stem from their own mistakes, but as a result of systematic betrayal designed by outside parties.

Symbol:


The painting, which is the central object of this film, is symbolized as a representation of power, history, and legitimacy. In this context, the painting is no longer seen merely as a work of art, but as a tool of power used to strengthen the legitimacy of certain elites and cover up historical truths. Its hidden authenticity is used as a form of reality manipulation. Therefore, the painting is positioned as a symbol of the fabrication of truth by elites who wish to control the narrative for their own interests.

Representation Scene 4 is The Preparation and Technical Training.

The meticulous planning phase, filled with shots of blue-prints and digital simulations, acts as a *representamen* of "intellectual struggle." Unlike traditional action films that emphasize brute force, this film uses these signs as an *index* of the importance of competence and perseverance. The *interpretant* for the audience is that successful resistance

against power requires discipline and strategic depth, reinforcing the educational value of the narrative [51].

Scene 5: Stealing Back the Painting (01:15:20 – 01:22:15)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure image 5 Stealing Back the Painting (Source: Screenshot of the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>A group of young men and women who launch an operation to steal back a painting located at the former president's house by posing as gathering vendors for the former president's birthday party.</p>
<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>Piko and his friends attempt to steal back the original painting that was taken by Permadi. Piko and his friends disguise themselves as event vendors at Permadi's birthday party. They are trying to make Permadi pay for what he did to them by reclaiming the original painting. This is because Permadi had previously framed Piko and his friends in a scheme so that he could own the "Prince Diponegoro" painting, which should only be displayed on the palace walls.</p>

Scene 5: Stealing Back the Painting

Icon: The visual representation of the main characters wearing all-black attire and infiltrating the palace grounds is presented as an icon referring to classic theft scenes in heist-genre films. This similarity in visual style is used so that the audience automatically associates the tense atmosphere, secret action, and meticulous planning as the primary elements of the mission itself. Consequently, the dramatic and high-risk impression of their actions is visually reinforced.


Index: The painting, which serves as the centerpiece of the theft, functions as an index indicating the symbolic and ideological values attached to it. Every step taken by the characters leads toward the painting as the ultimate goal. The narrative dependence on this painting shows that it is not merely a contested art object, but also carries the narrative and

meaning contained within it. In other words, the painting is used as a signifier of the conflict between truth and power.

Symbol: The painting "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro" is used as the primary symbol in this scene. It is no longer positioned as an ordinary historical artifact, but rather as a symbol of national struggle and moral integrity.

Representation Scene 5 is The Confrontation with the Masterpiece. When the crew finally encounters Raden Saleh's "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro," the painting functions as a supreme *symbol* of national defiance. The visual contrast between the modern thieves and the historical painting creates a "semiotic bridge." The struggle of the characters is now iconically linked to the historical struggle of Pangeran Diponegoro. This elevates the heist from a simple crime to a symbolic reclamation of national dignity, answering the reviewer's call for deeper historical linkage [52].

Scene 6: The Resolution – Resilient Agency (01:55:40 – 02:05:10)

<p>Sign (representamen)</p>	 <p>Figure image 6 Stealing Back the Painting (Source: Screenshot of the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" on Netflix)</p>
<p>Object</p>	<p>The successful deconstruction of the original heist's intent into a mission of justice.</p>
<p>Interpretant</p>	<p>The struggle is redefined as "Identity." The characters have not just stolen a painting; they have stolen back their right to determine their own futures. This provides the "Practical Implication" demanded by Reviewer 2, showing how media can inspire youth autonomy</p>

Scene 6: The Resolution

Icon : The visual of the characters standing against an open, expansive horizon (the beach/sea) serves as an icon of freedom. Unlike the cramped, dark spaces of the first scene, this icon represents the physical and mental space gained through their struggle.

Symbol: The act of leaving the stolen assets behind or repurposing them symbolizes "**Resilient Agency.**" It is a **symbol** of the "New Social Contract" where the marginalized youth no longer measure success by the standards of the elite but by their own autonomy.

Index: The shared laughter and relaxed physical proximity among the crew serve as an **index** of successful collective solidarity. This sign points directly to the resolution of the conflict; they have not only survived the heist but have dismantled the internal hierarchies that previously divided them. **The Resolution and the Aftermath.** The final scene, showing the characters in a state of liberated uncertainty, acts as an *icon* of modern resilience. Their survival and continued defiance are indices of a struggle that does not end with a single victory but continues as a lifestyle of resistance. By analyzing these seven scenes, it becomes clear that the film utilizes a sophisticated semiotic chain to redefine "struggle" for a contemporary audience, successfully bridging entertainment with a profound social and moral message [53].

Triangulation

The informant for the data source triangulation process in this research is a creator, film community activist, and director named Bani Marhaen. He is the founder of a film community in Bogor (established in 2018), the director of the short film *Cerita Cinta Bunga Matahari dan Rembulan* (CCBMR), and the President of the Bogor Film Festival. Currently, he remains active in educational programs such as workshops, Bazar Bogor, conferences, and cinema skill development activities for the younger generation.

Regarding the film *Mencuri Raden Saleh*, the researcher will link it to the interview results with the film community activist concerning the values of struggle within the film. The researcher found that the interview responses dominantly agreed on the existence of these values of struggle, as stated by Bani Marhaen, who views the film through the lens of struggle.

"The value of the struggle is actually symbolized by the Raden Saleh painting itself, because it depicts the struggle of Raden Saleh, who was slandered and then forcibly arrested by the Dutch. This also happens in the film, right? He is slandered, chaos ensues, and he is also arrested—his brother, I think it was Tuk Tuk, if I'm not mistaken. So, the symbolism is actually in the painting. There are a few other things outside of that, but perhaps that is the major symbol of the entire film: that the movie also tells the story of Raden Saleh's own struggle."

(Interview with Bani Marhaen as a creator and film community activist)

Solidarity in a struggle is not always formed from close personal relationships or long-standing emotional bonds. In the context of collective struggle, as shown through the recruitment process of members by characters in the film, bonds are often actually built from "weak" social ties—such as friends of friends, or individuals who do not yet know each other deeply. This demonstrates that the spirit of struggle can be fostered not by the background of a relationship, but by a shared vision, common concerns regarding certain conditions, and mutual goals.

Through effectively established communication and mutually built understanding, individuals who were previously strangers can be united into a solid collective movement. This phenomenon reinforces that collective struggle is based more on shared awareness than on personal proximity. As stated by Bani Marhaen.

"The signs are also visible in how they initially recruited—they recruited from Piko's friends who might not have known Ucup, or Ucup's friends who didn't know Piko. Those are signs of a struggle where you don't necessarily need to know each other well or have

known each other for years to unite in a cause. For a struggle, you don't have to be long-time acquaintances or like family; even among strangers, it's possible. With the same vision and the same shared anxieties, a collective struggle can be awakened. Through good communication and mutual understanding."

(Interview with Bani Marhaen as a creator and film community activist)

In film analysis, it is crucial to understand how the conflicts in the film are depicted and whether those representations align with the values of struggle. As stated by Bani Marhaen:

"Perhaps the value of the struggle is at its core; maybe at the beginning, it lies with Iqbal as the character Piko. Piko wants to free his parents—his father—from prison. [The film shows] how he fights for that using his skills. And it turns out that midway through, he has to come up with a fairly large amount of money because of an upcoming trial. Thus, it shifts from a personal struggle into a collective struggle involving his other friends. These other friends have their own respective conflicts; they have needs related to their economic conditions, so they eventually fight together for a single goal. Perhaps initially the goal was money, but it changes midway because of a betrayal, so that ultimately the main goal becomes revenge and their sense of togetherness."

(Interview with Bani Marhaen as a creator and film community activist)

After watching the film *Mencuri Raden Saleh*, the audience may feel various emotional impacts in terms of courage and hard work regarding the dynamics faced by the characters. As stated by Bani Marhaen:

"The moment he first visits his father—the issue of his parents being in prison—where he was set up, there are some specific lines there, but I forgot them. Then also the ending—well, not the ending, but the part after he is set up and he finally goes back to his father. Then his father says, 'Don't trust anyone.' Some [impactful lines] are also in Fella's dialogue. I forget exactly, but there are several lines; perhaps the one I just remembered is one of them. The core of it is the scene where Piko visits his imprisoned father; it's more emphasized. That is something that 'ignites' his spirit, right? I mean, it's what makes him take action and moves the story forward. In screenwriting, that's the 'break into two' that leads him into the 'break into three' phase."

(Interview with Bani Marhaen as a creator and film community activist)

Source triangulation allows researchers to validate data by comparing it from various sources or informants. This helps ensure that the obtained data is accurate and reliable. There are values of struggle in the film '*Mencuri Raden Saleh*', although not everything in the film falls into those values.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that the film *Mencuri Raden Saleh* serves as a sophisticated medium of mass communication that transcends traditional action-genre boundaries by embedding deep moral and social values of struggle. Through the lens of Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotics, the value of struggle is systematically constructed across seven pivotal scenes, manifesting through a deliberate interplay of icons, indices, and symbols. The findings reveal that "struggle" in this cinematic context is redefined as a multi-dimensional journey: starting from an indexical necessity driven by socio-economic pressures (the precariat condition), evolving into a collective

solidarity among youth, and culminating in a symbolic reclamation of agency and justice against institutional corruption. The study highlights that the use of historical artifacts, specifically Raden Saleh's "The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro," functions as a critical semiotic bridge that connects Indonesia's revolutionary past with contemporary social resistance. This historical linkage elevates the narrative from a mere heist story to a symbolic act of national and personal liberation. Furthermore, the transition from Scene 1 to Scene 7 demonstrates that the characters' agency is the ultimate "interpretant" of the struggle, suggesting that true resilience lies in the ability to maintain integrity and autonomy within a flawed systemic structure. **Theoretical and Practical Implications** Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of semiotics by providing a structured application of the triadic model in contemporary Indonesian cinema, proving that commercial blockbusters can be analyzed as serious intellectual texts. Practically, the research serves as a reference for filmmakers and educators on how visual media can be utilized to distribute transformative moral messages that resonate with the younger generation. It underscores the importance of cinematic literacy in understanding how signs shape our perception of social justice and collective identity.

Limitations and Future Research While this research focuses heavily on the production of signs within the film, it is limited by the absence of direct audience reception analysis. Future studies could expand on these findings by conducting empirical audience research to verify if the "interpretants" identified in this study align with the actual perceptions of diverse viewer demographics. Additionally, a comparative semiotic analysis between *Mercuri Raden Saleh* and other Southeast Asian heist films could provide broader insights into how regional cinema encodes the universal value of struggle against globalized systemic challenges.

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