

Representation of Terrorism in 22 July Movie (John Fiske Semiotic Analysis)

Luthfi Fathullah^{1*}, Indah Wenerda²

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Email: luthfifathullah3@gmail.com

*Correspondence

ABSTRACT

| | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Keywords: Representation; Analysis | Terrorism; Semiotic | Paul Greengrass' 22 July depicts the tragic events of the July 22, 2011 terrorist attack in Norway. This research aims to describe the representation of terrorism in the movie "July 22". The qualitative method is used in this research. The data contained in this research are in the form of scenes that indicate acts of terrorism in the movie "22 July". The data were analysed using John Fiske's semiotic analysis technique, which consists of three levels: level of reality, level of representation, and level of ideology. The result of the research shows that the movie "22 July" contains elements of terrorism committed by Anders Behring Breivik. At the level of reality, the elements of terrorism are represented through aspects of costume, behaviour, expression, and conversation. At the level of representation, there are aspects of camera, lighting, and sound. At the ideological level, this movie represents the ideology of terrorism. |
|---|------------------------|---|



Introduction

The development of mass media has greatly influenced every aspect of modern society. Mass media has developed into a medium that helps humans spread messages (Haquq et al., 2019). One form of media used to spread messages is film. Film is an effective mass communication tool to show the reality of society and display social phenomena. In addition, filmmakers can convey their messages to the audience (Haquq & Pramonojati, 2022). Movies depart through social phenomena which in this July 22 movie has a social phenomenon about terrorism.

Terrorism is a political or religious group movement used to gain support through overt acts of violence. The purpose of these acts is to attack, intimidate, and frighten certain targeted parties. This is usually done by groups that are hostile to the target political party (Schmid, 2011).

According to the book *Terrorism, Definition, Action, and Regulation*, a person is labelled as a terrorist if they meet the following requirements: (1) deliberate use of violence and threats; (2) organised; (3) the target is the civilian population; (4) creates fear and has a specific reason; (5) damages important facilities, both national and international; and (6) results in casualties (Hardiman et al., 2005).

The beginning of the global emergence of terrorism was the collapse of the Twin Towers in the United States the World Trade Center (WTC) on September 11, 2001, and

there were also train bombings in Madrid, Spain and London, England in 2004 and 2005 (Prayoga et al., 2024)

Terrorists are more likely to be perceived as a group or organisation because a single individual cannot carry out attacks and achieve their political demands. (Lutz & Lutz, 2011). However, there is one case of individual terrorism that occurred in Norway. This act is referred to as lone-wolf terrorism, committed by Anders Behring Breivik in 2011.

Anders Behring Breivik is a Norwegian national who carried out a terror attack on July 22, 2011, in Norway. He claimed to be the leader of the Knights Templar Europe network. However, police have found no evidence that such a network exists. The book 2083-A European Declaration of Independence is a book in which Anders Behring Breivik spread a manifesto for his actions. The book describes his operations and asserts that concrete action is needed and deemed necessary to eliminate Muslim immigrants from Norway and Europe and criticises Norwegian politics in favour of multiculturalism. (Spaaij, 2011).

Norway used to be viewed as a homogeneous society, essentially formed by ethnic Norwegians themselves. Later, the Sami people and the Finnish minority known as "Kven" joined in. Since the 1960s, various new ethnic groups have come to Norway as immigrants when labour was needed. Others came as political refugees or simply individuals seeking a better life. Until then, Norwegian society has been multicultural, and in some parts of Oslo there is a majority of non-ethnic Norwegians.

Oil resources were discovered in the Norwegian North Sea in 1967. This led to the arrival of Islamic immigrants such as Moroccans, Turks, and Pakistanis. By 1997, the number of Pakistani residents in Norway increased from 110 to 990, making Pakistan the largest non-Western immigrant country (Bangstad, 2014).

During the 1970s and 1980s, immigrants from Muslim countries who came to Norway were referred to by their nationality. However, in the 1990s, this term began to change. In Norway, the terms "Pakistani," "Moroccan," and "Turks" had changed to "Muslim" and thus began to refer to "religious centrism" rather than ethnonationalism (Bangstad, 2014).

Therefore, Anders Breivik saw Muslims as a group that could threaten European culture, especially Norway. In a political party forum, his final message was that there would be a civil war when Muslims took over Norway and that Islamization in the West would be very scary (Nugroho, 2022).

Based on Asne Seierstad's book *One of Us: The Story of a Massacre in Norway and Its Aftermath*, the crime drama film "July 22" tells the story of the 2011 attack in Norway and its aftermath. Paul Greengrass directed and produced the film, which features a Norwegian cast and crew. On September 5, 2018, the film premiered at the 75th Venice International Film Festival. The film debuted on Netflix and in select theatres on October 10, 2018. The 2018 Freedom Of Expression Award was given to the film.

In the story of this movie, Anders Behring Breivik, a right-wing politician, carried out terrorist attacks in Oslo and Utoya Island on July 22, 2011, which killed 77 people. At 14:09, he sent a manifesto to more than 1,000 email addresses, and at 15:25, he

detonated a 950-kilogram bomb in the Norwegian government compound, killing eight people and injuring many others.

At 17:17, Anders Behring Breivik arrived on Utoya Island by ferry, wearing a police uniform and carrying a gun in a suitcase. He claimed to be a police officer conducting a post-bombing security check in Oslo to gain access to the Workers' Youth League summer camp. Afterwards, he killed 69 people, including guards and camp organisers. At 18:00, the police arrived to arrest him.

Terrorist groups rely heavily on creating panic and fear in the target audience to seek publicity. The goal would not have been achieved if no one knew about the terrorist act. Therefore, Anders Behring Breivik carried out an attack aimed at the centre-left Labor Party because it was the political party that had the power. The purpose of Anders Behring Breivik's act of terrorism was to combat multiculturalism in Norway and prevent Islamization under the ruling political party.

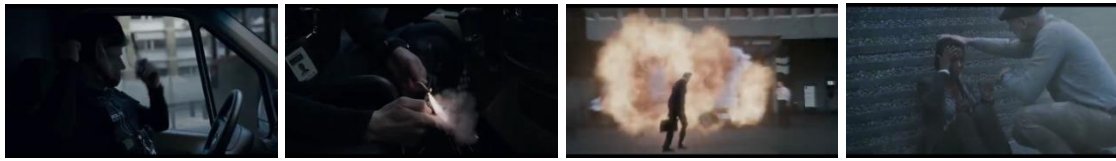
However, while much attention has been given to the broader implications of media representations, there has been limited focus on the semiotic analysis of specific films that depict real-life terrorist events. The 22 July movie, with its unique approach to storytelling and its focus on both the victims and the perpetrator, presents an opportunity to explore the construction of meaning around terrorism in contemporary cinema. This research aims to analyse how 22 July represents terrorism through a semiotic lens, specifically utilising John Fiske's semiotic analysis framework to understand the symbols, signs, and narratives embedded within the film. By doing so, this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of media in shaping public perceptions of terrorism, trauma, and social solidarity.

Methods

This research uses qualitative methods to dissect the phenomenon of terrorist acts, including motivation, behaviour, and other actions, as a whole in the form of language, as well as words that have special meaning, through various scientific approaches (Moleong, 2011).

As explained in The Codes of Television theory, John Fiske mentions three levels of coding, namely reality, representation, and ideology. (Fiske, 2012). At the level of reality, the codes included are appearance, make-up, costume, behaviour, conversation, action, expression, and environment. At the level of representation, the codes included are camera, lighting, music, and sound. At the level of ideology, the code includes ideological levels that include topics such as capitalism, communism, terrorism, individualism, democracy, materialism, feminism, and race. These three levels become the reference to dissect the meaning of each terrorism scene in the movie July 22.

Results and Discussion



Scene Description 1:

Breivik detonated a white van filled with bombs at the Norwegian government's main office complex in Oslo, resulting in many casualties.



Scene 2 Description:

Breivik was dressed like a policeman with weapons in his suitcase. He claimed to be a police officer assigned to guard and check security after the Oslo bombings. In this way, he gained access to the Workers' Youth League summer camp. After having a conversation with the camp organisers, Breivik was asked to show his police identity card. Breivik immediately killed the guards and camp organisers and killed teenagers on the island.



Scene Description 3:

Breivik met Geir Lippestad, a lawyer who Breivik wanted because 9 years ago, he became Benjamin Hermansen's lawyer with a neo-Nazi case. Breivik wanted Geir Lippestad to protect him from imprisonment for his acts of terrorism. Then, Breivik and Geir Lippestad were brought into the interrogation room to explain the purpose of his actions.

Reality Level

Custom

A costume is anything that a player wears, along with all the accessories. Accessories include hats, jewellery, watches, glasses, shoes, canes, and so on. Fashion in movies does not only function as a body cover, but also has a role that suits the story. (Farhana RM & Aflahah, 2019).

Scene 1 shows Breivik wearing a police costume. It can be seen from the clothes worn, starting from Norwegian police clothes and equipped with accessories such as helmets, vests, and identity cards that are hung. The costume used is intended as a disguise for Breivik in carrying out his mission to blow up the Oslo government office.

Scene 2 Breivik is still wearing a police costume, seen from the clothes worn, namely Norwegian police clothes. Equipped with accessories such as vests and firearms. This costume aims to be a disguise for Breivik to enter the island of Utoya.

Scene 3 shows Breivik in the Norwegian police interrogation room wearing a prisoner costume. This costume aims to show prisoners who are still being examined by the police.

Behaviour

According to the Purwadarminta Dictionary of Indonesian Language, terrorism is the practice of acts of terror, the use of violence to cause fear in achieving goals (especially political goals) (Sulaiman, 2007). According to the book *Terrorism, Definition, Action, and Regulation*, a person is labelled as a terrorist if they fulfil the following conditions: (1) deliberate use of violence and threats; (2) organised; (3) the target is the civilian population; (4) creates fear and has a specific reason; (5) damages important facilities, both national and international; and (6) results in casualties. (Hardiman et al., 2005). Where it is used to intimidate the public and government by involving firearms and explosives (Jahroni, 2016).

Scene 1 shows the explosion of the bomb, causing damage to buildings and targeting civilians as victims. This is part of the terrorist behaviour of causing damage to public facilities and targeting civilians. The action was carried out to gain public attention and to threaten the leadership of the Norwegian government.

Scene 2 shows Breivik killing guards, event organisers and several teenagers who were conducting a summer camp with firearms. Breivik created fear for the teenagers on the island, so they ran and hid. This is part of the behaviour of terrorism, which is causing fear and loss of life.

Scene 3 shows Breivik stating the terrorist mission he wants to accomplish. In the statement, Breivik threatened that he had just started a war and an attack could happen at any time. This is part of the behaviour of terrorism, which is deliberately making threats.

Expression

One of the most frequently used gestures in the communication process is facial expressions. These natural responses reflect an individual's feelings or emotions when interacting in certain situations. Facial expressions consist of a variety of different cues, and each cue has a meaning and can affect the message to be conveyed (Adiatma et al., 2021).

Scene 1 shows Breivik setting off the bomb and walking away from the van with a neutral expression. A neutral expression can be recognised as a state without emotion by not showing negative or positive feelings.

Scene 2 shows Breivik looking for teenagers who are hiding behind the rock. He expresses anger and fear at the teenagers. The anger can be seen from the tip of his eyebrows down, slightly narrowed eyes, and a high tone of voice. (Abubakar & Lasut, 2021). Expressions of fear can be known from both eyebrows rising simultaneously and raised upper eyelids (Adiatma et al., 2021).

Scene 3 shows Breivik being interrogated with a relaxed expression. This expression shows calmness and contrasts with the tense expressions of the other characters.

Dialogue (Conversation)

Dialogue is a conversation that takes place between two or more people. It must represent the character's role, character, and feelings (Tsabitha, 2023). Dialogue serves to convey information, build character, develop a plot, and express emotions. With dialogue, the audience will understand the motivations and conflicts that occur in the story.

Scene 2 features the dialogue, "You will all die today, Marxists, liberals, children of the elite", said Breivik when he found teenagers hiding in the house. And the dialogue "Where are you? Get out, you Marxists!!!" said Breivik, who was looking for other teenagers.

Scene 3 features the dialogue "I just started a war to take over Norway, from the west", said Breivik when asked, "What are you doing today?" by Geir Lippestad as Breivik's lawyer. And also features the dialogue, "I'm just one of the movers in a network called the Knights Templar, we want Islam to disappear from Europe", said Breivik when asked, "Did anyone help you do this?" by a detective in a police interrogation room.

Level of Representation

Camera

Camera movement is one of the image elements that actually leads to changes in size (Type shot), composition, and the angle of the object against the camera screen frame (Angle shot/Camera angle) (Morissan, 2010).

The scenes in the movie 22 July have several shooting angles that are used to display acts of terrorism and the main characters in this film.

Scene 1 uses camera angles that strengthen the atmosphere of the scene, namely medium close-up (Narrow-angle), long shot (Wide angle), and medium shot (Eye level angle). Taking the medium close-up technique with a Narrow-angle aims to focus on detail when Breivik burns the bomb fuse. This is because the narrow-angle is the best angle used as a detail shot, and the medium close-up is a combination of a medium shot and a close-up shot so that the scene of burning the bomb fuse can be captured clearly.

Taking the long shot technique with a wide angle aims to give the feeling of being around the environment when the white van exploded. This is because a long shot is a visual that captures the entire area of the scene, and a wide angle is a wide angle that is recorded to be in focus.

Using a medium shot technique with an eye-level angle aims to give the audience a view parallel to the details of the body parts and facial expressions of the bomb blast victims. This is because the medium shot is a shooting technique that shows details of the body parts and the surrounding environment, and the eye-level angle is a shooting angle parallel to the subject's point of view.

Scene 2 uses camera angles that strengthen the atmosphere of the scene, namely the Long shot (Wide angle), the Over-shoulder shot (High angle), the Medium shot (Low angle), and the Medium close-up (High angle). Taking the Full shot technique with a Wide angle aims to bring the audience into a tense atmosphere when Breivik shoots the guards, event organisers and teenagers running on the island of Utoya. This is because the Long shot is a visual that captures the entire area of the scene, and a wide angle is a wide angle that is recorded to be in focus.

Taking the over-shoulder shot technique with a High angle aims to give the audience a view from behind the object, watching the terrified expressions of the teenagers hiding in the house. This is because an over-shoulder shot is a technique of taking pictures from behind the shoulder of the object used to show that the object is looking at something, and a High angle is a shooting angle used to show a lack of superiority and a weakened position.

Using the Medium shot technique with a Low angle aims to give the audience the impression that Breivik looks like he has prominent strength. This is because Medium shots are used to show gestures and body language, and low angles make the subject appear to have power.

Using the Medium close-up technique with a High angle aims to show the details of the frightened teenagers' expressions while hiding behind the cliff. This is because the Medium close-up is used to show the subject's face and expression clearly, and the High angle is a shooting angle to show the subject as a weak figure.

Scene 3 uses camera angles that strengthen the atmosphere of the scene, namely, Over shoulder shot (Eye level angle) and, Medium long shot (Straight angle). Taking the shoulder shot technique with A level angle aims to provide focus on the dialogue scene between Breivik and his lawyer. This is because Over shoulder shot is a technique used when in a conversation between two people facing each other, and Eye level angle is used to be parallel to the subject's point of view.

Using the Medium long shot technique with a Straight angle aims to bring the audience into the interrogation atmosphere. This is because the Medium long shot shows the character's movements, the environment, and the way the character interacts with other characters. A straight angle is a shooting angle whose position is at chest level and is often used in scenes where the image is fixed.

Lighting

A book titled "Introduction to Camera Management" by Vani Dias Adiprabowo explains that light is the most important element in designing television/film images. Apart from its fundamental role in illuminating the subject, light also determines tonal

differences, outlines, shapes, colours, textures, and depth. Light can also shape the performer's mood, atmosphere, and visual continuity.

Scene 1 uses the Low-key lighting technique, using little light to produce a serious and dramatic scene.

Scene 2 uses minimal lighting to create a tense and gripping atmosphere. This technique is used to influence the audience's emotions.

Scene 3 uses lighting with a blue colour temperature to create a colder atmosphere, which can add psychological tension. The blue colour temperature will give an impression that can affect the mood and feelings of the subject more intensely.

Sound

Sound is an audio element used to support the story, atmosphere, and audience experience. Sound in the film does not only consist of dialogue; other components complement each other to create a strong and deep atmosphere.

Scene 1 shows the sound of a bomb exploding from a white van. The sound of explosions used in the context of terrorism is to create fear in the general public and create anxiety that will affect their attitude or behaviour.

Scene 2 features gunshots and screams of scared teenagers. The gunshots and screams of the teenagers are useful to be able to trigger emotional responses from the audience, such as anxiety, fear, and surprise. It also makes the audience feel more involved in the world of the movie and reinforces the impression that what they are seeing is part of the real world.

Scene 3 features a calm voice in the interrogation room. This calm voice aims to reduce the tension in the conversation and allow the subject to speak more freely. The calm tone of voice gives the impression that the subject is not being cornered but is trying to gather information more naturally.

Ideology Level

Overall, the scenes chosen by the author indicate the elements of terrorism committed by Anders Behring. In the theory of terrorism, the elements that fulfil the act of terrorism are deliberate actions to create fear and threat; the target is the civilian population, damage to public facilities, and violence that causes casualties (Hardiman et al., 2005). (Hardiman et al., 2005). All the elements mentioned above fulfil the form of terrorism in the three scenes of the movie "22 July" chosen by the author.

Conclusion

The result of the data analysis shows that the movie "22 July" depicts terrorist events. The codes that support terrorism in the visualisation of the film are displayed at the level of reality in the form of costumes used, actions shown by the actors in terror scenes, and dialogues that support the elements of terrorism. At the level of representation, the codes used, including camera, lighting, and sound, to give the impression of a tense and gripping atmosphere strengthen the meaning of terrorism in

film visualisation. At the level of ideology, every scene chosen by the author shows that there are elements of the act of terrorism committed by Anders Behring Breivik. In the theory of terrorism, an act of terror is a deliberate act using violence and threats, targeting civilians, causing fear, having a specific motive, and causing damage to important facilities both nationally and internationally, resulting in casualties.

Bibliography

- Abubakar, & Lasut. (2021). Ekspresi Verbal Dan Non-Verbal Dalam Mengungkapkan Ketakutan Dan Kemarahan Dalam Film Ready or Not Oleh Bettinelli–Olpin. *Jurnal Elektronik*, 1–16.
- Adiatma, B. C. L., Utami, E., & Hartanto, A. D. (2021). Pengenalan Ekspresi Wajah Menggunakan Deep Convolutional Neural Network. *Explore*, 11(2), 75. <https://doi.org/10.35200/explore.v11i2.478>
- Bangstad, S. (2014). *Anders Breivik and the rise of Islamophobia*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Farhana RM, F., & Aflahah, A. (2019). Kolonialisme dan Nasionalisme dalam Novel Bumi Manusia Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer. *Gh Ncaran: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 1(1), 10–25.
- Fiske, J. (2012). *Pengantar ilmu komunikasi*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Haqu, R., Hastjarjo, S., & Slamet, Y. (2019). Teenagers' Entertainment Satisfaction in Watching Talk Show Programs through Youtube. *Jurnal The Messenger*, 11(1), 38–45.
- Haqu, R., & Pramonojati, T. A. (2022). Representasi Terorisme Dalam Dua Adegan Film Dilan 1990 Dengan Analisis Semiotika John Fiske. *Rekam: Jurnal Fotografi, Televisi, Animasi*, 18(1), 67–80.
- Hardiman, F. B., Marpaung, R., & Araf, A. (2005). Terorisme: definisi, aksi, dan regulasi. In *Imparsial : Koalisi Untuk Keselamatan Masyarakat Sipil*.
- Jahroni, J. (2016). *Memahami Terorisme: sejarah, konsep dan model*. Prenada Media.
- Lutz, J., & Lutz, B. (2011). *Terrorism: the basics*. Routledge.
- Moleong, L. J. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, cetakan XXIX. Bandung: PT. Remaja, Rosdakarya.
- Morissan, M. A. (2010). *Jurnalistik televisi mutakhir*. Kencana.
- Nugroho, P. A. (2022). Analisis Penargetan Serangan Anders Breivik di Norwegia pada Tahun 2011.

- Prayoga, A. B., Suratnoaji, C., Komunikasi, J. I., & Timur, J. (2024). Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal Penggambaran Terorisme Dalam Film "Sayap-sayap Patah." Jawa Timur; Jl. Rungkut Madya, 6(1), 18706369. <https://doi.org/10.47476/reslaj.v6i3.4427>
- Schmid, A. (2011). The Routledge handbook of terrorism research. Taylor & Francis.
- Spaaij, R. (2011). Understanding lone wolf terrorism: Global patterns, motivations and prevention. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Sulaiman, K. F. (2007). Who is the real terrorist? Menguak Mitos Kejahatan Terorisme. Yogyakarta: Elementera Publishing.
- Tsabitha, M. K. (2023). Representasi Keberanian Perempuan dalam Film "Penyalin Cahaya" (Analisis Semiotika John Fiske).