Emotions and Social Identity: A Semiotic Analysis of the Website series A.G.NE.S. on the YouTube Channel Toyota Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to analyze how emotions and social identity are represented through signs in the A.G.N.E.S. web series aired on Toyota Indonesia's YouTube channel, using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, specifically the theory of denotation and connotation. The research method used is qualitative analysis, where visual and verbal signs in the series are examined in depth. Denotation refers to the literal meaning that can be directly identified from visual elements, such as images and text, while connotation highlights the more complex and hidden emotional and social meanings behind them. The results show that the A.G.N.E.S. series goes beyond creating a strong social identity through the representation of emotions designed to connect with viewers' social identities, such as modernity, innovation, and togetherness. In conclusion, this semiotic analysis shows that emotions and social identity play a key role in the strategic approach to communication, which is reinforced through the use of signs that have rich and multi-layered connotative meanings.

1. Introduction

The film industry is experiencing a significant wave of digitization. Online platforms and streaming services are replacing conventional media such as movie theaters and television as the main channels for watching movies and series. Some studies, such as those by Lobato (2019) and Cunningham & Silver (2012), show that this digitization not only affects film production and distribution but also creates new spaces for content creators to create. However, specific attention to web series as a fast-growing format has only started to come into focus in recent years, along with the popularity of digital platforms and changing viewing habits. The global movie industry has undergone a major transformation in the past few decades, especially with the advancement of digital technology and shifting media consumption preferences. Where once feature films dominated the entertainment industry, we are now seeing the emergence of new formats such as web series that are rapidly gaining popularity. Web series are series that are produced and distributed through online platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, or other websites. This phenomenon not only changes the way entertainment content is consumed but also opens up opportunities for independent content creators to present their work to a wider audience.

Indonesians' interest in digital video content has grown significantly, with a 2023 survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) showing that approximately 55.06% of the population now actively accesses online video content. This surge in video consumption is driven by improved internet accessibility, the increasing use of smartphones, and the rise of diverse streaming platforms that offer personalized, high-quality content. As internet penetration in Indonesia reaches 79.5%, with over 221 million users, the digital video industry holds bright prospects for future growth. However, challenges such as heightened competition, copyright issues, and the proliferation of negative content must be addressed through collaboration among the government, industry, and society to create a sustainable ecosystem (APJII, 2023).

The message conveyed in a movie includes themes, emotions, and sources of inspiration. The message conveyed has a significant impact on fostering the emotional sense of the audience, especially in creating the emotional feelings it conveys. Emotional itself is a complex psychological reaction. Emotions can be divided into various categories, such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and surprise.

Emotionality in art, especially in movies and web series, plays an important role in attracting attention and conveying a deep message. Emotions such as happiness, sadness, and hope are often expressed through characters and storylines that can be connected to the audience's real-life experiences. For example, emotionally evocative moments, such as a touching goodbye or a small celebration that brings happiness, can build a strong emotional bond between the audience and the characters. By inviting the audience to feel the emotions faced by the characters, the work not only becomes entertainment but also serves as a tool for personal reflection. Research shows that emotionally evocative artworks can deepen our understanding of ourselves and social relationships with others, reinforcing the collective experience underlying human interaction (Holt, 2016; Bruner, 2018).

Web series have the unique ability to convey emotions through narratives and characters that connect with the audience. In the context of a web series such as A.G.N.E.S., the emotions displayed can evoke feelings in the audience, creating a visceral and reflective experience. Elements such as family relationships, friendships, and personal struggles in the face of life's challenges become a means to express various emotional nuances. For example, a character facing the grief of loss or a moment of happiness in achieving a dream can evoke a sense of empathy and connectedness among viewers. Research shows that emotions in media, including web series, can enhance the audience's understanding of the situation faced by the characters, while also inspiring reflection on their own experiences (Holt, 2016; Bruner, 2018). This allows the audience to experience these moments more deeply, making web series not only entertainment but also a tool for emotional exploration and social understanding.

The web series 'A.G.N.E.S.', which airs on Toyota Indonesia, tells the story of Eros, a successful man who feels alienated from society, finding escape in the digital world. A.G.N.E.S., the artificial intelligence he created, becomes a reflection of everything he wants. However, over time, Eros begins to realize that his dependence on A.G.N.E.S. threatens his identity as a human being. This inner conflict becomes more complex when Eros has to choose between selfish gratification and an authentic relationship with his fellow human beings. A.G.N.E.S. serves as a reminder to us about the importance of maintaining a balance between technological advancement and human values, as well as the importance of finding our identity amidst the hustle and bustle of modern life.

Based on the description above, the researcher decided to conduct a study entitled Emotional and Social Identity: A Semiotic of the website series A.G.N.E.S. on the YouTube channel Toyota Indonesia. This research is expected to be a foundation and means in the development of language in particular and can be useful and a reference for further researchers. This research is also expected to be useful for students in analyzing emotional and social identity in films. It can be accepted as a contribution to increasing the use of emotional feelings in films.

2. Method

In this study, Roland Barthes' semiotic method is applied to understand emotional delivery and social identity through web series. This approach uses two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, such as facial expressions or dialog,

while connotation involves deeper meanings and cultural associations. For example, a character's crying could be interpreted denotatively as an expression of sadness, but on a connotative level, it could reflect cultural values about expressing emotions in a particular society. The method used is qualitative analysis with the following steps: (1) Data Collection: The analyzed data consists of visual and verbal snippets from each episode of the A.G.N.E.S. series. Each visual element such as color, movement, facial expression, and text will be identified as a sign. Denotative Analysis: The first stage in the analysis is to determine the denotative meaning of each sign found, i.e. the literal meaning displayed by the visual and verbal elements. Connotative Analysis: Once the denotative meaning is identified, the research moves on to the connotative analysis stage, where hidden meanings relating to emotions and social identity are uncovered. At this stage, signs are understood within a specific cultural and social context, especially in relation to how modern, innovative, and togetherness identities are.

Recent research has shown that semiotic approaches are effective in uncovering layers of meaning in visual media. According to Jones (2018), semiotic analysis can help reveal how symbols in media create diverse meanings based on the social and cultural background of the audience. Similarly, research by Smith (2020) highlights that the connotative approach in semiotic analysis enables a deeper understanding of how social identities are represented through digital media. Web series often combine visual and narrative signs that evoke emotions and tell stories of social identity. In this context, semiotic analysis not only reveals the literal meaning of visuals or dialog but also provides insight into how emotional and social messages are conveyed to the audience through specific cultural codes (Brown & Lee, 2017). This research aims to outline how these connotations contribute to forming complex emotional narratives, as well as how media such as web series play a role in shaping audience perceptions of identity and social relations.

3. Result and Discussion

In this research, the researcher explains the results and discussion of the Emotion and Social Identity web series A.G.N.E.S on the YouTube Channel Toyota Indonesia. The Following are the analysis results from Barthes's semiotic stages, including understanding denotation, and Connotation.

Table 1. The denotation and connotation meaning emotion

DENOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Eros is looking comfortable and happy while interacting with A.G.N.E.S.

Table 2. Denotation and connotation of emotions

CONNOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Eros talks to A.G.N.E.S. That is AI technology, eros is like having a new friend to talk to.

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The denotation marker is the visual taken from the series at 00:14:07. In the scene, eros is talking to A.G.N.E.S. an AI technology that can speak and listen like a human. The denotation meaning gives the meaning that Eros is telling his life experience who feeling lonely because there is no one to accompany him during his life. Eros should not talk to the technology because it will cause him not to interact with other people. The connotation that can be seen in the situation has a negative impact because the absence of interaction with others can cause a high sense of selfishness and cannot trust yourself to rise to build your future. These actions cause emotional growth.

Table 3. Denotation and connotation of emotions
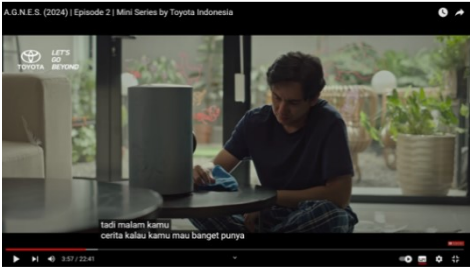
DENOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Eros is seen sitting pensively and talking to A.G.N.E.S. as if regretting his words.

Table 4. Denotation and connotation of emotions

CONNOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Eros revealed that the arrival of his family from the future was a burden because he was not ready to start a family.

The denotation marker is a visual taken from the series episode 2 at the minute 00:03:57. In the scene, eros talks to A.G.N.E.S. AI technology that can speak, and regrets the request made last night. The denotation meaning gives the meaning that Eros is regretting the regret he made last night by saying "I want a family". With the ability of advanced technology, A.G.N.E.S. Realizes the dream of Eros last night but is different from his own decision. Eros should not have requested because Eros himself is not ready to start a family. After all, he still has a selfish nature. The connotation that can be seen in the situation has a negative impact because there is no justice at all if there is an advanced technology that can realize it is impossible. The incident can change the timeline and cause regret.

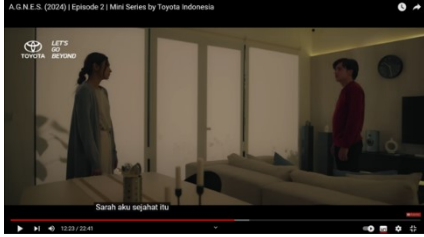**Table 5.** The denotation and connotation meaning of Social Identity

DENOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Sarah, eros's future wife, stood staring at Eros as if she was upset.

Table 6. The denotation and connotation meaning of Social Identity

CONNOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Sarah, eros' future wife, is expressing her frustration with Eros in managing the household and Eros's selfishness.

The denotation marker is a visual taken from the series episode 2 at minute 00:12:23. In the scene, Sarah, the wife of the future Eros, Sarah stands up and is angry at Eros' behavior. The denotation means that Sarah, Eros' future wife, is angry at Eros for being selfish and unable to solve problems in their household. The connotation that can be seen in the situation has a negative impact because Sarah is angry at Eros who in the past has not finished with his selfishness and cannot understand the feelings of others. This action causes social identity problems because she cannot understand other people around her.

Table 7. The denotation and connotation meaning of Social Identity
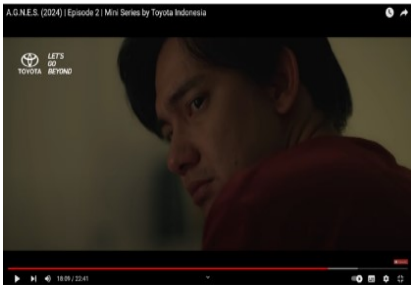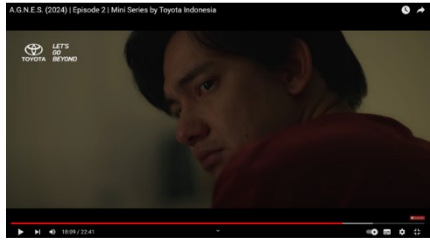
DENOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Looking from Her facial expression of eros expresses sadness.

Table 8. The denotation and connotation meaning of Social Identity

CONNOTATIVE	
SIGNIFIER	**SIGNIFIED**
	Eros seems to feel guilty about his family for being too selfish and not thinking of his family.

The denotation marker is a visual taken from the series episode 2 at the minute 00:18:09. In the scene, Eros is looking sadly at his future family. The denotation meaning gives the meaning that Eros regrets what he did to his future family because he is still selfish and does not understand the feelings of the people around him. The connotation that can be seen in the situation has a negative impact because Eros brings his future family into the present. Eros still cannot respect the people around him and his selfishness is still high. These actions cause social and emotional problems that lead to an identity crisis for Eros.

4. Conclusion

This conclusion, reveals that the emotional expressions and social identity issues portrayed throughout the series emphasize the conflicts surrounding selfishness and identity crises. The analysis indicates that these themes are intricately tied to broader societal stereotypes, which suggest that selfishness and social identity struggles are prevalent in today's social landscape. This study highlights how media, such as in the A.G.N.E.S. series, reflect and reinforce existing social tensions regarding personal and collective identities, providing insight into the ongoing challenges individuals face in reconciling their emotions with their social roles and expectations.

5. Acknowledgement

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