

INTRODUCTION

Survival, defined as the state of continuing to live or exist despite difficulty or danger (Hornby, 1995), often conjures images of overcoming physical threats in extreme circumstances like natural disasters or wilderness expeditions. However, the concept extends far beyond wilderness scenarios. In everyday life, survival encompasses navigating socioeconomic obstacles, securing basic needs like housing and healthcare, and building meaningful relationships. Surviving social life also involves strategic decision-making, remaining strong in the face of difficulty, and adapting to constantly changing circumstances. Therefore, understanding survival in its various contexts' sheds light on the diverse strategies individuals and communities employ to endure and thrive in the face of difficulty.

The concept of survival is a recurring theme often used in various media, particularly films, to engage and resonate with audiences with the tensions created by conflicts involved in survival narratives, which is a central element in storytelling (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). A film is known as a story that is recorded as a set of moving pictures to be shown on television or in cinemas (Hornby, 1995). In a broader sense, film serves as a medium of visual storytelling through motion pictures, and is used to convey narratives, emotions, ideas, and messages to audiences. Films have become an art form that most people seek for recreation, inspiration and insight and can be interpreted as something that "represents" real-life activities or reality (Danesi, 2004). It acts as a means of communication to present stories, events, music, drama or any other things that contain messages to be conveyed to the public. In this case, film acts as a medium that is used to convey a story that portrays the concept of survival employed by the characters.

One notable example of this is the portrayal of survival in the characters and stories of films, especially within the context of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu* in Korean). The Korean Wave is a collective term used to refer to the global spread of South Korean culture, starting from their popular music (K-Pop), movies, dramas, to online games and their cuisines (Jin & Yoon, 2017). Since the late 1990s, South Korea has solidified its position in the entertainment industry, with its cultural

products gaining international acclaim (Pramadya & Oktaviani, 2016). The success of South Korean films and TV dramas, such as "Swiri," "Autumn in My Heart," "My Sassy Girl," and "Winter Sonata," during the late 1990s to early 2000s, played a crucial role in introducing Korean culture to the world (Shim, 2008). The international success of Korean films has not only popularized Korean culture but also set new standards in filmmaking, blending genres and pushing boundaries of conventional narratives. Moreover, Korean films often explore themes that resonates universally, such as social inequality, class struggles, and survival, reflecting the complex reality of South Korean society.

Numerous researchers have used semiotics to uncover the meaning of certain signs. Dianiya (2020) conducted a study titled "Representation of Social Class in Film," where the author chose to analyze the film "Parasite" using a semiotic approach, specifically Roland Barthes's theory. The results of this study revealed that social class can be observed through signs that are socially interpreted by audiences, such as differences in the fashion and clothing of people in each class and even their body odor. Another researcher, Sarah (2021), explored the representation of feminism in the film "Jane Eyre" in a study titled "Representation of Feminism in the Film 'Jane Eyre.'" In this research, the author employed Peirce's theory of triadic models of signs. The study found that the representation of feminism could be interpreted through the characters, scenes, and properties used in the film, particularly through the main character, Jane Eyre. In a related theme of survival, the researcher found that there is little to almost no research about the concept of survival that uses a semiotics approach. However, the researcher found that Anugerah (2019) has conducted a research titled "Representasi Survival dalam Film (The 33) Analisis Semiotika Charles Sander Pierce." This study also used Peirce's semiotic theory in order to find out the survival signs or symbols shown in the film. The result of this study is that the protagonists' effort for survival in this film are represented through how they worked together and tried to encourage each other to survive so that they could go back to their beloved family.

There has been a significant amount of research conducted on topics concerning the representation of various themes depicted in films, such as social class and feminism, using a semiotic approach. However, as mentioned earlier,

there is still a notable absence of studies that focus specifically on the concept of survival. Therefore, this research aims to address this gap by exploring the theme of survival in film, specifically in the Korean film "A Taxi Driver," and providing valuable insights and contributions to the applied semiotics field. The objective of this research is to analyze the film with a semiotic approach and identify the semiotics signs used to represent the concept of the survival in the film, using Roland Barthes' theory on semiotics, namely denotative, connotative, and myth. More specifically, this study is guided by the following question:

- 1) How is the concept of survival represented in the Korean film A Taxi Driver?

By incorporating the theory on connotative and denotative meaning of signs by Roland Barthes (1967), this study focuses on analyzing the verbal and nonverbal signs shown in the film and pivoting only on finding the semiotics signs that represent the concept of survival based on their connotative and denotative meaning.