

SYMBOLISM IN THE MOVIE “DIVERGENT”: PEIRCE’S SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FACTION’S SYMBOLS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji simbolisme lambang-lambang faksi dalam film *Divergent* melalui perspektif semiotik Charles Sanders Peirce. Penelitian berfokus pada fungsi simbol lima faksi—Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, dan Candor—sebagai tanda visual yang menyampaikan identitas sosial dan nilai ideologis dalam masyarakat distopia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan kerangka semiotik Peirce melalui hubungan representamen, objek, dan interpretan serta klasifikasi tanda menjadi ikon, indeks, dan simbol. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa simbol Abnegation melambangkan kerendahan hati dan pengorbanan diri, Dauntless keberanian dan ketangguhan, Erudite kecerdasan dan pemikiran rasional, Amity kedamaian dan harmoni, serta Candor kejujuran dan keadilan. Simbol-simbol tersebut pada dasarnya berfungsi sebagai tanda simbolis, meskipun beberapa memiliki karakteristik ikonik dan indeksikal. Selain sebagai penanda visual, simbol faksi berperan sebagai instrumen ideologis yang memperkuat perpecahan sosial, membentuk identitas kolektif, dan mendukung mekanisme kontrol sosial dalam sistem distopia. Secara keseluruhan, simbolisme dalam *Divergent* berperan penting dalam membangun makna, identitas, dan ideologi serta menyampaikan pesan sosial dan ideologis kepada penonton.

Kata Kunci: Charles Sanders Peirce, *Divergent*, Simbol Faksi, Studi Film, Analisis Semiotik, Simbolisme.

Abstract

This study examines the symbolism of faction emblems in the film “*Divergent*” through the semiotic perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce. The study focuses on the symbolic function of the five factions—Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor—as visual signs that convey social identity and ideological values in a dystopian society. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using Peirce’s semiotic framework, which examines the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant, as well as the classification of signs into icons, indices, and symbols. The results show that the Abnegation symbol represents humility and self-sacrifice; Dauntless, courage and resilience; Erudite, intelligence and rational thought; Amity, peace and harmony; and Candor, honesty and justice. These symbols essentially function as symbolic signs, although some possess iconic and indexical characteristics. In addition to serving as visual markers, faction symbols act as ideological instruments that reinforce social divisions, shape collective identities, and support mechanisms of social control within the dystopian system. Overall, symbolism in “*Divergent*” plays a crucial role in constructing meaning, identity, and ideology, as well as conveying social and ideological messages to the audience.

Keywords: Charles Sanders Peirce, *Divergent*, Faction Symbols, Film Studies, Semiotic Analysis, Symbolism.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The development in media and communication technology have transformed the way people access and utilize mass media. Today, mass media serves not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a source of entertainment and a space for shaping social understanding (Suryani, W & Djakaria, 2025). Through the mass media, the public can gain various insights into social realities, cultural values, and diverse perspectives that indirectly influence their ways of thinking and behavior. Thus, the mass media plays a crucial role in fostering social awareness within society.

Among the various types of mass media, film is one of the most popular, especially among the younger generation, due to its ability to present stories in a visual, communicative, and easily understandable way in everyday life. Film serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium that represents social issues as well as the values and norms evolving within society (Mariza et al., 2025). As an audio-visual medium, film plays a strategic role in conveying moral, ideological, and social messages, as well as reflecting the realities of life (Kartini et al., 2022). The rapid growth of the film industry, supported by the emergence of digital platforms and streaming services, has further expanded the reach and influence of film in shaping public opinion and social identity, particularly among the younger generation.

Among the various genres that have developed, dystopian films have become quite popular among the younger generation. This genre generally depicts societies with strictly organized social systems and shows the power relations between individuals and the structures that control their lives. Through these depictions, dystopian films not only present narrative conflicts, but also represent issues of power, identity, social stratification, and the legitimacy of dominant ideologies. These representations are usually realized through the consistent use of visual symbols, which become an important part of constructing the overall meaning of the story.

In conveying these messages, films often use symbols as a form of nonverbal communication. Visual symbols in films not only serve as aesthetic elements, but also as signs that contain specific meanings (Haryani, 2023). Through symbols, values, ideologies, and social structures can be conveyed indirectly, so that the messages presented become more profound and open to interpretation by the audience. Thus, films do not merely present narratives in visual form, but are also filled with a system of signs that represent certain values and social structures. These symbols help shape the way audiences understand the messages conveyed by filmmakers, as the meanings contained within them can be interpreted in various ways

according to the experience, knowledge, and cultural context of each audience member.

From a communication studies perspective, symbols are viewed as part of a sign system that plays a role in the process of forming and reproducing meaning in social life. Symbols do not have independent meaning, but rather function within the framework of specific cultures and ideologies that underlie them (Karman & Arifianto, 2021). Therefore, the study of symbols in films is relevant to understanding how the media contributes to shaping, distributing, and legitimizing social values through visual representations presented to the audience.

One film that consistently features the use of symbols is *Divergent* (2014). Set in a dystopian world, the film depicts a society divided into five factions: Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor. Each faction has a visual symbol that reflects the core values embraced by the group, while also serving as a marker of social identity for its members. This faction system forms the basis of social grouping that regulates the roles and positions of individuals in the society depicted.

The existence of factions in the film *Divergent* not only serves to divide social groups, but also as a mechanism for controlling individual identities and roles. The repeated use of faction symbols plays a role in instilling certain values and distinguishing one group from another. Through this process, faction values are legitimized and accepted as normal in the social life of this dystopian society.

In contemporary society, the relationship between group identity, symbolic representation, and social control can also be observed in increasingly complex forms. Individuals are not only identified through personal characteristics but also through their affiliation with particular social, cultural, ideological, or digital communities. Symbols, visual markers, shared values, and patterns of communication can become means through which individuals express belonging and distinguish themselves from others. Barandiaran et al (2020) explain that contemporary collective identities are increasingly formed through digitally mediated interactions, in which communication networks contribute to the emergence of cohesive communities and shared identities. Similarly, Bliuc et al (2021) argue that social identification can contribute to the formation of polarized groups by creating collective definitions of “us” and “them,” particularly within technologically networked environments. These conditions demonstrate that although contemporary society does not operate through formal factions such as those depicted in “*Divergent*”, processes of categorization, group identification, and social boundary formation remain relevant in everyday social life.

To define individuals through collective categories and socially recognizable markers.

While group identification can provide individuals with a sense of belonging, excessive attachment to group boundaries may encourage conformity and strengthen distinctions between insiders and outsiders. In digital environments, these boundaries can become increasingly visible because social media allows individuals to continuously display, negotiate, and reinforce aspects of their identities. Other research demonstrates that social media environments can facilitate the formation of communities characterized by shared interests and selective patterns of interaction, potentially contributing to the fragmentation of public communication. Therefore, the symbolic division of society depicted in *Divergent* can be read not merely as a fictional social arrangement, but also as a critical representation of a broader social tendency in which identity categories may influence how individuals perceive themselves and others.

This condition also raises a critical issue concerning the tendency of modern society to define individuals through collective categories and socially recognizable markers. While group identification can provide individuals with a sense of belonging, excessive attachment to group boundaries may encourage conformity and strengthen distinctions between insiders and outsiders. In digital environments, these boundaries can become increasingly visible because social media allows individuals to continuously display, negotiate, and reinforce aspects of their identities. Research by Rathje & Van Bavel (2021) demonstrates that social media environments can facilitate the formation of communities characterized by shared interests and selective patterns of interaction, potentially contributing to the fragmentation of public communication. Therefore, the symbolic division of society depicted in *Divergent* can be read not merely as a fictional social arrangement, but also as a critical representation of a broader social tendency in which identity categories may influence how individuals perceive themselves and others.

In this context, the faction system in the film *Divergent* can be understood as a representation of ideology that works hegemonically. According to Storey (2018) in Gramsci's perspective of hegemony, dominant ideology is disseminated and maintained through symbols, norms, and cultural representations that encourage individuals to accept the prevailing social structure. Individuals who do not conform to the faction system are portrayed as deviants, thus demonstrating how symbols play a role in shaping social consciousness and controlling individual identity.

Although *Divergent* has been examined from various perspectives, previous studies have generally emphasized its ideological structure, social stratification, psychological dimensions, and broader narrative meanings. Wardana and Roy (2019), for example, examine the ideological and class divisions represented by the faction system, showing how the

classification of individuals according to dominant traits contributes to the organization of social roles and power relations. More recent research by Meibrianti & Iskandar (2024) identifies social stratification and discrimination as important forms of social injustice represented in the film. These studies demonstrate that *Divergent* provides a significant representation of social hierarchy, inequality, and the consequences of rigid social categorization. However, there remains a more specific research space concerning the visual faction symbols themselves as a sign system through which identity, ideology, and social control are communicated. Therefore, examining the faction symbols through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework is important because it enables the study to move beyond the general description of factional division and investigate how visual signs acquire meaning through their relationships with objects, interpretations, and the social context represented in the film.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how symbolic systems can contribute to the construction of identity and the maintenance of social boundaries within contemporary forms of communication. The relevance of this issue becomes increasingly significant in a society where digital communication enables individuals to continuously present, negotiate, and associate themselves with particular identities and communities. Huse (2020) emphasizes that social identity is closely connected to intergroup communication and social justice, indicating that the way individuals define themselves and others within groups can have broader social consequences. In addition, Bliuc et al (2021) demonstrate that digitally mediated communication can facilitate intergroup polarization by strengthening collective identities and distinctions between opposing groups. In this context, analyzing the faction symbols in *Divergent* is important because the film presents an intensified fictional model of categorization in which symbolic identities are institutionalized and connected to social roles. Studying these symbols therefore provides not only an interpretation of the film's visual language but also a critical perspective for understanding how symbolic representations may participate in the construction of identity, conformity, social boundaries, and ideological meaning in contemporary society.

To understand how faction symbols in the film *Divergent* construct meaning, identity, and social ideology, an analytical approach capable of systematically examining signs is required. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory is considered relevant because it is able to explain the relationship between representamen, objects, and interpretants, as well as classify signs into icons, indices, and symbols. This theory was chosen based on the characteristics of the research

data, considering that the meaning of faction symbols in the film *Divergent* is conveyed relatively clearly through the narrative, dialogue, and social structure of the story.

Thus, this study does not focus on deconstructing hidden meanings or myths as in Roland Barthes' approach, but rather on analyzing the function of symbols as a system of signs that shape social identity and ideology in the dystopian society depicted. Based on this description, this study is important to examine the symbolism of factions in the film *Divergent* through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of visual symbols in films as a means of forming meaning, identity, and social ideology, as well as enriching the study of film semiotics in the field of communication science.

Based on the description of the phenomenon, the problem formulations in this research are:

1. What are the meanings and functions of each faction's symbols in building the social structure in "Divergent"?

Based on the problem formulation, the research objectives aims to:

1. This study has social and cultural value because it helps reveal how the film *Divergent* reflects the social structure of modern society through the symbols of its factions. This study can show how films can be a mirror of the search for identity, equality, and individual freedom in a social system that demands conformity by understanding the meaning and function of the symbols of each faction (Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor).

1.2. Semiotic Theory (Charles Sanders Peirce)

"Semiotics" comes from the Greek word *sēmeion*, which means "sign". In general, semiotics is a field that investigate signs and the process of meaning formation. Semiotics is the study of how signs (whether in the form of images, words, colors, or gestures) are used in cultural contexts to communicate specific messages and ideas (Danesi, 2016). Semiotics has become an important approach in communication science and film studies to understand how ideologies, values, and hidden messages are created through visual and verbal sign systems. Charles Sanders Peirce defines semiotics as the study of signs and everything related to them. Peirce also viewed signs as processes that constantly change in line with individual interpretive experiences, social contexts, and cultures (Joseph, 2022). Symbols are nonverbal communication tools that are communicated through signs that have specific meanings (Aryani & Yuwita, 2023). According to Charles Sanders Peirce in a study conducted by Kurniawati et al (2022), signs is an idea that serves as the foundation for analysis, several meanings might

emerge from the process of interpreting a message. According to Kartini et al (2022), Peirce separate semiotic analysis into three primary components, including Representamen, Object, and Interpretant. In terms of Object classification, an Icon is a symbol that resembles the thing it represents in shape or appearance. Index and its object exhibit a cause and effect relationship. On the other hand, Symbols is a sign whose association with an object is established by mutual consent or convention. In this research, the main focus is on terms of objects, that are Icons, Index, and Symbols. These three types of signs provide a framework in understanding how a symbol not only represents an object, but also conveys a more complex meaning based on context and interpretation.

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory has been widely used in previous studies to analyze signs and symbols in various media objects. Aryani & Yuwita (2023) examined traffic sign symbols using Peirce's concepts of icons, indices, and symbols. They showed that the triadic relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant enables the interpretation of visual signs. Astari & Alamsyah (2024) used Peirce's semiotics to analyze symbols in the Barbie movie. They showed that visual symbols represent ideology, social values, and aesthetic elements. According to Ridho, M, R et al (2025), Peirce's semiotic approach successfully revealed the socio-cultural meanings contained in the film text. Overall, this study shows that Peirce's semiotic theory is relevant and can be used to interpret symbolic meaning in various cultural and communication contexts. Previous studies have widely used Peirce's semiotic theory. However, most of these studies are still general in nature and do not specifically apply the theory to the symbols of factions in the film Divergent. Previous studies tend to analyze symbols separately, without systematically linking them to the social structures and ideological constructions that exist within the story. As a result, this study uses Peirce's semiotic theory more specifically to analyze the symbols of factions in Divergent. In addition, it looks at how these symbols contribute to the formation of social identity and ideological meaning in the dystopian society depicted in the film.

1.3. Factions Symbols in The Movie Divergent

As an audio-visual medium, films can convey symbolic messages through visual signs such as colors, symbols, and icons. The faction system in the movie Divergent (2014) is constructed as a social structure that places each person in a group according to their dominant characteristics. Each group is given a unique symbol that visually represents the core values of the group. According to Peirce in Kartini et al (2022), signs can be interpreted through Representamen (signs), Objects (referents), and Interpretants (meaning produced). Signs

always represent something else in the eyes of a person. Recent studies show that symbols in films function as visual identities and representations of ideology (Ridho, M, R et al., 2025). This is in line with Astari & Alamsyah (2024) opinion that film semiotics aims to find meaning behind the visual signs used by filmmakers to convey certain ideas. Therefore, the faction symbols in *Divergent* are very important to study because they represent the ideology of each group and also serve as a social critique of systems that restrict individual freedom. The use of faction symbols in *Divergent* symbolizes the social, moral, and intellectual framework that rules the society in the movie rather than just a visual identification.

The social critique represented through the faction symbols in *Divergent* can also be related to contemporary society, although the forms of social categorization in modern life are generally less formal than the faction system portrayed in the film. In contemporary society, individuals frequently construct and communicate their identities through their affiliation with particular social, cultural, ideological, and digital communities. Bliuc et al. (2021) explain that social identification can contribute to the formation of intergroup divisions, particularly when individuals develop strong attachments to their respective groups and distinguish themselves from groups perceived as different. In this context, symbolic markers can become meaningful representations of group belonging and social identity. Although contemporary society does not formally divide individuals into factions as depicted in *Divergent*, similar processes of categorization, group identification, and boundary formation can emerge through social interactions and digitally mediated communities. Therefore, the faction system in *Divergent* can be understood as an exaggerated dystopian representation of a broader social issue concerning how collective identities may influence individual behavior, social relationships, and perceptions of others.

Each faction symbol is intended to indicate the member's ethical and psychological stances in addition to differentiating group membership. The faction system in *Divergent* can be viewed as a multifaceted model of personality that reflects actual human characteristics and behavioral tendencies (de Souza & Roazzi, 2017). This is consistent with the factions symbolic interpretation, in which each symbol serves as a visual representation of unique moral principles that characterize human identity within a hierarchical society.

The way these symbols are represented also reflects the ideological and educational structure of *Divergent*'s dystopian setting. According to Cuccurullo (2024), the movie offers a hermeneutic perspective on education and moral development, whereby joining a group represents the construction of identity through resistance and conformity. According to this

viewpoint, faction symbols serve as educational instruments that train the populace into particular moral categories: selflessness in Abnegation, courage in Dauntless, wisdom in Erudite, harmony in Amity, and honesty in Candor. These ideals show how social systems absorb ideology through symbolic forms, which are symbolically expressed through visual signs. According to Wardana & Roy (2019), the division of factions in *Divergent* also functions as an allegory of ideological authority and social hierarchy. The hierarchical structure and socioeconomic inequalities established in the dystopian world are reflected in each symbol, which clearly conveys represents the prevailing philosophy of its faction. From a semiotic standpoint, Arianti et al (2025) observe that the visual language of the movie functions through both denotative and connotative meanings, in which symbols are understood not only by their literal form but also by the cultural and emotional reactions they produce. Each symbol can be classified as an icon, index, or symbol based on how it relates to the represented term when examined using Peirce's triadic model. Additionally, the faction structure in *Divergent* illustrates how ideology and hegemony are upheld through symbolic control (Primananda & Hendrarti, 2016). Symbols are consistently used in rituals, architecture, and clothes to suppress individual uniqueness and strengthen group identification. According to Peirce's semiotic perspective, the faction symbols serve as ideological tools that uphold the moral order of the dystopian society depicted in the movie in addition to representing abstract values.

Previous studies on the film *Divergent* have used various theories. Arianti et al (2025) used Roland Barthes's semiotic approach to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings in *Divergent*. They found that character identities are shaped by social and cultural values represented by symbols in the film. Primananda & Hendrarti (2016) examined *Divergent* and its faction system as an example of ideological hegemony. They showed how the division of factions reflects the dominance of certain ideologies in dystopian social structures. Wardana & Roy (2019) examined the ideology of *Divergent* and class divisions, focusing on the power relations between factions. Additionally, de Souza & Roazzi (2017) examine the faction system from a psychological perspective. They show that faction division can be considered a multidimensional representation of human personality. These studies show that *Divergent* has been considered a significant representation of ideology, identity, and social structure. Although *Divergent* has been the subject of much research, most previous studies have not focused on visual faction symbols as a sign system. Previous studies have often emphasized narrative, ideological, or psychological aspects and have often used a semiotic approach. They have also often used theories other than Peirce's, such as Roland Barthes's framework. Therefore, there

is a gap in research that analyzes faction symbols as visual signs using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. This study aims to address this gap by examining how faction symbols function in the film *Divergent* as representations of visual identity as well as ideology, social structure, and values.

1.4. The Symbolic Meaning of Each Faction

In “*Divergent*”, the five-faction system consists of fundamental human values, and each faction has a unique symbol. According to Dwitasari et al (2025), each faction has a distinctive visual symbol, whether in the form of crest, color, or shape that not only serves as a visual identity or identifier, but also has a symbolic meaning that reflects the core values of each faction. These symbols have philosophical and ideological meanings: Abnegation is depicted as hands clasped together. This symbol represents humility, self-sacrifice, and putting the interests of others before one's own. Abnegation symbolizes altruistic values in society. Dauntless is symbolized by using a fire symbol. Here, fire symbolizes fighting spirit, courage, and strength in the face of fear. Because it is associated with energy, heat, and danger, fire is also an indexical symbol. According to de Souza & Roazzi (2017), Dauntless as a faction represents the spirit of struggle. Erudite is a symbol of the eye, which represents knowledge, intelligence, and awareness of the truth. Although criticized in the film for being manipulative in its pursuit of power, Erudite symbolically represents a group that emphasizes rationality and logic (Wardana & Roy, 2019). As a symbol of a tree, Amity emphasizes unity and peaceful life without conflict, so the tree symbol serves as a metaphor for social harmony (Arianti et al., 2025). And lastly Candor, Candor is a symbol of metrics. Honesty, fairness, and objectivity are symbols of scales. Because it does not resemble “honesty,” this symbol is considered a symbol of social justice. Although sometimes too rigid and inconsiderate of feelings, the Candor organization teaches complete openness (Primananda & Hendrarti, 2016). These five symbols show how certain dominant values can shape society, and how visual symbols function as tools for legitimizing social ideologies. The symbols also become a reflection of the social order that is idealized and criticized in the film's narrative. In the context of semiotic analysis, these symbols become a means to reveal how the sign system works in conveying cultural messages, ideologies, and criticism of certain social systems (Agustina & Wijaya, 2024).

These symbols therefore operate beyond the function of visual identification. They provide a symbolic framework through which members of each faction are expected to recognize, internalize, and perform particular values. In this sense, the faction symbols become part of a broader system of social classification in which belonging is visually communicated and

socially reinforced. Such a mechanism is relevant to the study of contemporary identity formation because individuals increasingly communicate aspects of their identities and affiliations through social and digitally mediated interactions (Bluc et al, 2021). Although these contemporary forms are generally less institutionalized than the faction system represented in *Divergent*, they demonstrate that group identification and symbolic boundaries remain relevant to understanding how individuals position themselves in relation to others. In *Divergent*, the faction symbol system forms an integrated semiotic system when viewed as a whole. Each sign (Representamen), refers relatively directly to a specific value (Object) and produces an interpretation (Interpretator), which can support or oppose the social structure in the story. Empirical studies of factions show that faction construction has a real psychological correlation (de Souza & Roazzi, 2017). Therefore, the selection of visual symbols in the film is not merely an aesthetic issue, but also helps to read the social and psychological functions of the characters. Meanwhile, studies on dystopian styles for teenagers help to place these visual choices within a film tradition that transforms dystopian tropes for issue of adolescence, identity, and subject formation (Seppänen, 2017).

According to previous research on symbolic meaning in films, symbols serve to shape ideology and identity. Cuccurullo (2024) states that symbols in dystopian films function as tools for shaping ideological and moral identities. Wardana & Roy (2019) emphasize that symbols in *Divergent* reveal a hierarchical social structure and class inequality created by factional ideology. According to Arianti et al. (2025), symbols in *Divergent* have denotative and connotative meanings that reflect moral and cultural values. Primananda & Hendrarti (2016) argue that the symbols of the *Divergent* factions serve as ideological tools to maintain power dominance. Overall, this study states that symbols in films have social, moral, and ideological meanings in addition to aesthetic meanings. Previous studies have provided information, but most research has not systematically explained the process of meaning formation based on the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant in Peirce's theory. Previous studies have also not comprehensively classified faction symbols into symbols, indices, or icons to explain how meaning is created during the interpretation process. Therefore, using Peirce's triadic model, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the symbolic meaning of each faction in the film *Divergent*. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how symbols construct identity and social ideology in film narratives.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis as its main analytical framework. A qualitative approach is chosen because this research emphasizes the interpretation of meanings rather than the calculation of numerical data. Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena through meaning, context, and cultural representation (Creswell, 2014).

The focus of this study is to examine how faction symbols in the film *Divergent* operate as visual signs that represent social identity and ideological values within a dystopian society. By employing Peirce's semiotic theory, this research seeks to explain how these symbols communicate concepts related to identity formation, social hierarchy, moral principles, and ideological control. The descriptive nature of the research allows the findings to be presented systematically based on the meanings embedded in the film's visual elements.

This study employs a critical paradigm because it views social reality as being shaped by social structures, power relations, and historically constructed meanings rather than as a completely neutral and objective reality. The critical paradigm is concerned with examining how knowledge and social phenomena are influenced by particular theoretical and social positions. Erciyes (2020) explains that research paradigms differ in their ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, with critical theory emphasizing interpretive perspectives for examining social phenomena. Therefore, the critical paradigm is appropriate for this study because the faction system in *Divergent* is not interpreted merely as a fictional classification system, but as a representation of social structures that organize individuals according to particular values and identities (Erciyes, 2020).

The use of a critical paradigm also enables this study to examine the power relations and ideological meanings embedded within the faction symbols. Rather than limiting the analysis to identifying what each symbol represents, the study seeks to understand how these symbols participate in constructing social identity, establishing boundaries between groups, and legitimizing particular values within the dystopian society depicted in *Divergent*. Critical inquiry is particularly relevant when research aims to reveal unequal or hidden power relations within social structures and to critically examine how such structures influence individuals and groups. Thus, the critical paradigm supports the combination of Peircean semiotics and Foucauldian social theory in this research: Peirce is used to interpret the meaning of faction symbols, while Foucault provides a critical perspective for examining their relationship to

power, knowledge, ideology, and social control (Lourie & McPhail, 2024).

2.2 Data Source

This research utilizes two categories of data sources: primary data and secondary data.

1. Primary Data

The primary data source is the film *Divergent* (2014). The data consist of selected scenes that prominently display symbols of the five factions: Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor. These scenes include various visual elements such as faction logos, dominant colors, costumes, settings, gestures, and relevant dialogues that emphasize each faction's symbolic identity.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data are obtained from books, academic journals, scientific articles, previous studies, and credible online sources related to semiotics, symbolism, ideology, and film studies, particularly those discussing Peirce's semiotic theory and the film *Divergent*. These sources are used to strengthen the theoretical foundation and support the interpretation of the research findings.

2.3 Social Theory: Ideology, Power, and Knowledge

1. Power

Michel Foucault views power not simply as something possessed by a particular individual or institution, but as a relational process that operates through social practices, institutions, and discourse. Power functions productively by shaping behavior, establishing norms, and influencing how individuals understand themselves and others. In *Divergent*, this perspective can be applied to the faction system, in which social order is maintained through the classification of individuals into specific factions and the expectation that they conform to the values associated with their respective groups. Thus, power operates not only through direct coercion but also through the normalization of particular behaviors and identities (Aswar et al., 2026).

2. Knowledge

Foucault's concept of knowledge is closely connected to power through the notion of power or knowledge, which emphasizes that knowledge is not entirely neutral or independent from social relations. Systems of knowledge help establish what is considered true, normal, acceptable, or deviant within a particular society. Knowledge therefore becomes a means through which individuals and groups can be classified, regulated, and understood. In

Divergent, the categorization of individuals according to their dominant characteristics can be examined as a system of knowledge that defines the appropriate identity and social role of each faction. The faction system consequently demonstrates how classification and knowledge can contribute to the organization and regulation of social life.

3. Ideology

Although Foucault does not treat ideology in exactly the same manner as classical Marxist theory, his concepts of discourse, power/knowledge, normalization, and subject formation can be used to examine how particular values become accepted as legitimate within social system. Ideological meanings can therefore be understood through the discourses and practices that make certain values appear natural and unquestionable. In *Divergent*, the values attached to Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor can be interpreted as ideological frameworks because they define how members are expected to behave and understand their social identities. The faction symbols consequently do more than represent group membership, they can function as visible markers through which dominant values are communicated and reproduced. Recent scholarship combining Foucault with ideology and discourse studies likewise emphasizes the relationship between ideological practices, knowledge regimes, power, and subject formation (Maesse, J., & Nicoletta, 2021).

4. Relevance to the Present Study

Based on these concepts, Foucault's social theory provides a supporting framework for interpreting the social implications of faction symbols in *Divergent*. Peirce's semiotic theory is used to identify and interpret the meaning of the symbols through the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant, while Foucault's perspective is used to examine how the meanings represented by those symbols relate to power, knowledge, ideology, normalization, and social control. Therefore, the combination of Peircean semiotics and Foucauldian social theory enables the study to move beyond identifying the meaning of faction symbols toward explaining how those meanings contribute to the construction of identity and the maintenance of social order in the dystopian society depicted in *Divergent*.

2.4. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is conducted through documentation and observation of the film text. The procedures include the following steps:

1. Watching the film *Divergent* repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline and visual structure.
2. Identifying scenes that contain visual representations of faction symbols.

3. Capturing screenshots of selected scenes and transcribing dialogues relevant to the symbols.
4. Describing and recording each symbol in detail, including its form, color, object, costume, gesture, and setting.
5. Organizing the collected data based on faction categories to facilitate systematic analysis.
6. Collecting relevant references from theoretical studies and previous research to support the analysis.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process in this study applies Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic model, which consists of Representamen, Object, and Interpretant. The analysis is carried out through several stages:

1. Identification of Representamen

Describing the physical appearance of the symbols found in the film, such as images, colors, logos, objects, costumes, and gestures.

2. Identification of Object

Explaining what each representamen refers to, including the ideas, values, or concepts represented by the symbol within the film's context.

3. Interpretation of Interpretant

Interpreting the meaning that emerges from the relationship between the representamen and the object by considering the narrative context, cultural background, and ideological elements presented in the film.

4. Classification of Signs

Categorizing each symbol as an icon, index, or symbol according to Peirce's semiotic classification to explain how meaning is constructed.

5. Contextual Meaning Analysis

Analyzing how the symbols contribute to the formation of social identity and ideology within the dystopian society portrayed in the film.

2.6. Validity of Data

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings, this study applies source and theoretical triangulation. The interpretations derived from the film are compared with relevant theories, previous research, and scholarly literature in the field of semiotics and film studies. In addition, consultations with academic advisors and peer discussions are conducted

to verify the accuracy of the semiotic classifications and interpretations, thereby minimizing researcher bias and strengthening the validity of the study.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Overview of The Movie Divergent

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research on symbolism in the film “Divergent”. The analysis concentrates on the faction symbols that reflect identity and ideological values within the dystopian society portrayed in the film. By applying Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic framework, which includes Representamen, Object, and Interpretant, this study explores how meanings are constructed through visual symbols and how these symbols operate within the broader social structure of the narrative.

The dystopian society depicted in Divergent is organized through a strict faction-based system consisting of five groups: Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Amity, and Candor. Each individual is required to choose one faction, which ultimately shapes their social role, personal identity, and way of life. Although this system is intended to preserve social order and prevent conflict, it also restricts individual freedom and creates clear social hierarchies, especially for those who fail the initiation process and become factionless. The enforcement of social order is further strengthened through the continuous use of faction symbols, regulations, clothing, and environmental settings that reinforce the core values of each group.

In this context, symbols function not only as markers of visual identity but also as instruments that influence behavior, establish boundaries between groups, and sustain ideological control. Individuals identified as Divergent are viewed as threats because they challenge the system’s emphasis on conformity and obedience. Therefore, this chapter examines the symbols of each faction to understand how they construct social meaning, shape collective identity, and serve as ideological tools that maintain division and control within the dystopian society represented in the film.

3.2 Analysis of The Abnegation Faction’s Symbols

The Abnegation faction symbol is depicted as two hands clasped together. This visual design is presented simply, without excessive ornamentation, in keeping with the Abnegation faction’s emphasis on self-sacrifice and humility. The symbol reflects an attitude that prioritizes the interests of others over personal interests, which is the guiding principle in the lives of this faction’s members.

In the film, the Abnegation symbol is further reinforced by the dominant use of gray in

their clothing and living environments. These simple, unobtrusive colors underscore the symbol's meaning as a representation of a humble life—one that does not seek the spotlight and distances itself from selfishness. Additionally, the gesture of interlocking hands symbolizes solidarity, social compassion, and dedication to others.



Picture 1&2. Abnegation faction symbol, their costume, and their role in society

Representamen

The symbol of the Abnegation faction is represented by an image of two hands clasped together. This symbol is depicted in a simple form without any striking ornamentation. Additionally, the symbolism is reinforced by the predominance of gray in the costumes, surroundings, and accessories worn by Abnegation members. Visually, these elements convey a sense of simplicity and unobtrusiveness, reflecting the humility that is the defining characteristic of the Abnegation faction in the film.

Object

The values represented by this symbol are self-sacrifice, humility, and a commitment to putting others first. The two hands clasped together symbolize service and care for others. Meanwhile, the use of simple, understated colors reflects the lifestyle of Abnegation members, who shun personal ambition and avoid self-promotion. Thus, this symbol points to the concept of altruism, which emphasizes self-control and dedication to the common good within society.

Interpretant

The interpretant formed by the relationship between the representamen and the object indicates that the Abnegation symbol is interpreted as a group identity that emphasizes the values of simplicity and self-sacrifice. This symbol fosters the understanding that Abnegation members are expected to live without prioritizing personal interests and to be more oriented toward serving the community. Furthermore, this symbol also serves to reinforce the faction's

ideology, which emphasizes conformity to altruistic values. Through the symbol's repeated appearance in the film, the meaning emerges that Abnegation is a group that acts as the guardian of morality and social stability within the depicted dystopian society.

Classification of Signs

In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the symbol of the Abnegation faction can be understood as a sign that is predominantly symbolic in nature, although it also contains iconic elements in its visual representation. As a symbolic sign, the meaning of the Abnegation symbol is formed through social convention within the factional system in the film "Divergent". The image of two hands clasped together is indirectly interpreted as self-sacrifice or altruism, but this understanding arises due to conventions prevailing in that dystopian society. This symbol is consistently used to represent the values of simplicity, humility, and devotion to others, so the relationship between the sign and its meaning is arbitrary in accordance with the characteristics of symbolic signs according to Peirce. On the other hand, the Abnegation symbol also has an iconic element because the shape of two clasped hands resembles a gesture of prayer or humility, indicating a direct resemblance between the sign and the object it represents. Visually, this gesture is associated with acts of service, respect, and self-effacement, thereby reinforcing the intended meaning. Thus, the Abnegation faction symbol in the film *Divergent* can be classified as a dominant symbolic sign because its meaning is shaped by social conventions, yet it retains iconic elements through its resemblance to a gesture representing humility and self-sacrifice, serving not only as a visual identity but also as a means of shaping values and character within the dystopian social structure of the film.

Contextual Meaning Analysis

The contextual meaning of the Abnegation faction symbol in the film "Divergent" can be understood through its connection to the social system in a dystopian society that emphasizes the values of self-sacrifice and the collective good. The symbol of two hands clasped together represents the core values of Abnegation: humility, simplicity, and concern for others. In the film, this symbol does not stand alone but is reinforced by other visual elements such as the predominance of gray in clothing, simple living environments, and the behavior of faction members who do not seek to draw attention to themselves. The presence of this symbol within this social context indicates that Abnegation is portrayed as a group that prioritizes service to the community and suppresses personal interests to maintain social stability. Furthermore, this symbol also functions as a shaper of social identity that distinguishes Abnegation from other factions, while simultaneously shaping the behavior of its members to align with the values

they represent (Huse, 2020).

Furthermore, the symbol of Abnegation also holds ideological significance within the power structure (Primananda & Hendrarti, 2016). This faction is depicted as playing a role in government because it is perceived as having no personal ambitions, and is thus considered more objective and trustworthy. This symbol of self-sacrifice reinforces the legitimacy of their position, establishing Abnegation as the moral guardian of the dystopian society. Thus, this symbol not only represents the value of simplicity but also functions as a means of social legitimization that places them in a position of moral authority (Storey, 2018). Additionally, the symbol reflects a mechanism of social control, where its consistent use in clothing, surroundings, and daily activities encourages faction members to align their behavior with the values they uphold, while constantly reminding them to prioritize the common good over personal interests (Aswar et al., 2026).

3.3 Analysis of The Dauntless Faction's Symbols

The symbol of the Dauntless faction in the film “Divergent” is depicted as a blazing flame. The visual representation of the flame is bold and dynamic, reflecting the character of the Dauntless faction, which is synonymous with courage, strength, and a spirit of taking risks. Visually, the flame symbolizes energy, courage, and resilience core values embraced by Dauntless faction members. This symbol reinforces the expectation that Dauntless members must overcome fear and bravely face various challenges.

In the film, the flame symbol is further emphasized through the use of dark colors, such as black in their attire, and the harsh, challenging environment of the Dauntless faction. Furthermore, the activities undertaken by Dauntless members, such as jumping off a moving train, further underscore the meaning of the fire symbol as a representation of courage and resilience. This risk-filled environment demonstrates that the value of courage is not merely displayed through symbols but is also applied in the daily lives of the faction's members.



Picture 3&4. Dauntless faction symbol, their costume, and their role in society

Representamen

The symbolism of the Dauntless faction is represented by an image of a blazing fire with bold and dynamic lines. This symbol appears in various faction attributes, such as tattoos, logos, and visual elements found within the Dauntless faction's environment. Additionally, the symbolism is reinforced by the dominance of dark colors, such as black, in Dauntless members' costumes, as well as the harsh and challenging settings. Visually, these elements convey a strong, bold, and energetic impression, which are the primary characteristics of the Dauntless faction in the film.

Object

The symbol of fire in the Dauntless faction represents the values of courage, strength, and determination in the face of risk. Contextually, fire symbolizes energy, courage, and resilience in the face of fear. These values are also reflected in the activities of Dauntless members, who often engage in extreme actions, such as jumping off a moving train, participating in rigorous physical training, and facing fear simulations. Thus, the fire symbol refers to the character of Dauntless members, who are required to be brave, resilient, and ready to face danger.

Interpretant

The interpretant formed from the relationship between the representamen and the object indicates that the Dauntless symbol is interpreted as a group identity that upholds courage and resilience. The symbol of fire reinforces the understanding that Dauntless members are expected to overcome fear, take risks, and demonstrate strength in the face of challenges (de Souza & Roazzi, 2017). Furthermore, the repeated appearance of the symbol in the film reinforces the meaning that Dauntless is a faction that acts as a protector of society within the dystopian social structure. Thus, the symbol functions not only as a visual identity but also as a means of shaping the character and behavior of faction members in accordance with the values of courage they embrace.

Classification of Signs

In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the symbol of the Dauntless faction can be understood as a sign that is predominantly symbolic in nature, although it also possesses indexical and iconic elements in its visual representation. The flame symbol of the Dauntless faction represents the values of courage, strength, and resilience, which are established through a shared understanding of meaning within the faction system in the film "Divergent". Essentially, fire is not always synonymous with courage, however, within the context of the

dystopian society in this film, the symbol is consistently used to depict Dauntless characters as brave and willing to take risks (Chandler, 2017). Consequently, the relationship between the sign and its meaning is conventional and falls under the category of symbolic signs according to Peirce. In addition, the flame symbol carries connotative meaning because fire is naturally associated with heat, energy, and potential danger, which underscores its powerful, risky, and uncontrollable nature, thereby reinforcing Dauntless's image as a faction synonymous with courage in the face of dangerous situations. On the other hand, this symbol is also iconic because its visual form resembles a real flame that is easily recognizable and conveys a sense of energy, strength, and dynamism that aligns with the faction's character. Thus, the Dauntless symbol is not only shaped by social conventions but also possesses an indexical element through its association with energy and danger, as well as an iconic element through its visual resemblance, thereby functioning not only as a group identity but also as a medium for affirming values and shaping the character of its members within the dystopian social structure of the film.

Contextual Meaning Analysis

The contextual meaning of the Dauntless faction's symbol in the film "Divergent" can be seen in its relationship to the faction's position within the social structure of the dystopian society. The Dauntless's flame symbol serves not only as a visual marker of identity but also reflects the values of courage, strength, and a willingness to take risks. These values are evident in various activities of Dauntless members that demand great courage, such as jumping from a moving train, undergoing extreme physical training, and participating in fear simulations. The use of the fire symbol in various visual elements further reinforces the expectation that Dauntless members must overcome fear and remain resilient in dangerous situations. Additionally, this symbol plays a role in shaping the social identity that distinguishes Dauntless from other factions, while portraying them as a group that is brave, aggressive, and ready to face conflict in a harsh environment (Barandiaran et al., 2020).

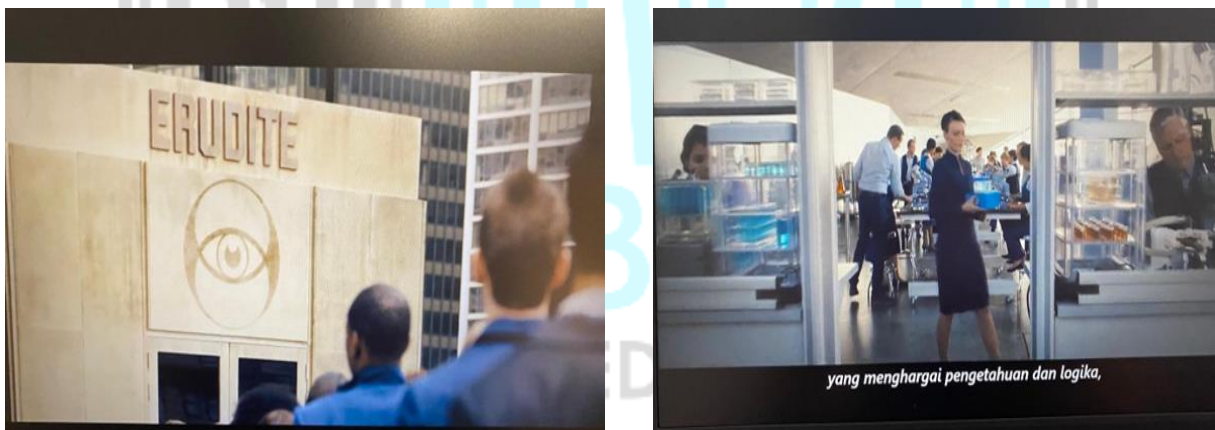
Furthermore, in the context of social structure, the Dauntless symbol is also linked to their role as protectors of society within that dystopian system. This faction is depicted as responsible for maintaining security and confronting various threats, so the flame symbol represents strength and readiness to face danger. This indicates that the symbol not only reflects individual character but also the faction's social function within an organized societal system. Additionally, the Dauntless symbol serves as a means of social control, where its constant use in tattoos, logos, and clothing encourages members to align their behavior with the embraced

values of courage. Thus, the flame symbol is not merely a group identity but also a tool that shapes behavior and upholds the ideology of courage within the dystopian society depicted in the film.

3.4 Analysis of The Erudite Faction's Symbols

The symbol of the Erudite faction in the film “Divergent” is depicted as an open eye. This symbol represents observation, knowledge, and intellectual awareness the core values of the Erudite faction. Visually, the eye symbolizes the ability to see, understand, and analyze information rationally. This aligns with the Erudite faction's character, which values intelligence, logic, and the pursuit of knowledge as the foundation for decision-making.

In the film, the eye symbol is further emphasized by the dominance of the color blue in the Erudite faction's clothing and environment. The color blue is often associated with rational thinking, calmness, and intellectuality. Additionally, Erudite members are depicted wearing neat attire, working in technology filled environments, and prioritizing logic based discussions. These elements further emphasize that the eye symbol serves not only as a visual identity but also reflects the intellectual character of the Erudite faction.



Picture 5&6. Erudite faction symbol, their costume, and their role in society

Representamen

The symbol of the Erudite faction is represented by an open eye. This symbol appears in various visual elements associated with the Erudite faction, such as its logo, accessories, and the environments used by its members. Additionally, this symbolism is reinforced by the predominance of the color blue in the Erudite faction's uniforms and settings. Visually, the open eye depicts the act of observing and understanding, while the color blue conveys a sense of rationality, calmness, and intellect. These elements form a visual representation that reflects the Erudite faction's emphasis on intelligence and knowledge.

Object

The symbol of the eye in the Erudite faction represents the values of intelligence, knowledge, and rational thinking. Contextually, the eye symbolizes the process of observing, understanding, and analyzing information. These values are also evident in the Erudite members, who are portrayed as prioritizing logic, research, and the use of technology in their daily lives. Furthermore, the faction's modern, science-based environment reinforces that the eye symbol refers to intellectualism as a core value. Thus, the symbol reflects the Erudite members' character, who base their decision-making on knowledge.

Interpretant

The interpretant arising from the relationship between the representamen and the object indicates that the Erudite symbol is interpreted as a group identity that values intelligence and rationality. The eye symbol conveys the understanding that members of the Erudite faction are expected to think logically and analytically, and to prioritize knowledge. Furthermore, the repeated appearance of the symbol in the film reinforces the ideological meaning that the Erudite faction serves as the intellectual center of the dystopian society. Thus, the symbol functions not only as a visual identity but also as a means of shaping the mindset and behavior of faction members in accordance with the intellectual values they embrace.

Classification of Signs

In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the symbol of the Erudite faction in the film "Divergent" can be understood as a sign that is predominantly symbolic in nature, although it also possesses iconic elements in its visual form. The eye symbol used by the Erudite is interpreted as a symbol of intelligence, knowledge, and rationality, formed through a social convention within the faction system. Essentially, the eye does not always symbolize intellect, but within the context of the dystopian society in this film, the symbol is consistently used to depict Erudite characters who emphasize logic and science (Chandler, 2017). Therefore, the relationship between the sign and its meaning is conventional, thus falling under the category of symbolic signs according to Peirce. In addition, this symbol also has an iconic quality because its shape resembles a real human eye, indicating a direct connection to the activity it represents: seeing, observing, and understanding. The depiction of an open eye conveys a sense of awareness, vigilance, and the ability to acquire knowledge through observation, thereby helping the audience grasp its meaning while reinforcing the intellectual values held by the Erudite faction. Thus, the Erudite symbol serves not only as a visual identity but also as a representation of intellectual values within the dystopian social structure, possessing a dominant

symbolic character while still retaining iconic elements.

Contextual Meaning Analysis

The contextual meaning of the Erudite faction's symbol in the film "Divergent" can be understood from its role as a group that prioritizes knowledge and intelligence within the structure of a dystopian society. The Erudite's eye symbol not only serves as a marker of identity but also symbolizes the ability to observe, understand, and analyze information logically and rationally. In the film, Erudite members are depicted as placing great emphasis on the use of logic, research activities, and the application of technology in daily life. The modern setting, the dominance of the color blue, and activities centered on the intellectual world further reinforce that the eye symbol is closely tied to the values of knowledge and rationality that define this faction. Furthermore, this symbol also shapes the social identity that distinguishes Erudite from other factions, such as Abnegation, which focuses on self-sacrifice, and Dauntless, which emphasizes courage, making Erudite known as a group that is analytical, rational, and science-oriented (Barandiaran et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in the context of power, the Erudite symbol also carries ideological significance (Maesse & Nicoletta, 2021). This faction is depicted as having the ambition to lead society through mastery of knowledge and technology, where the eye symbol represents the ability to "see" and understand the broader picture as a foundation for gaining influence within the social system. This indicates that the Erudite symbol is not only related to intelligence but also serves as a means to attain power through intellectual dominance. Additionally, the symbol also functions as a tool for social control rooted in rationality, as its consistent use in attributes, logos, and the environment encourages members to always act in accordance with the intellectual values they uphold. Thus, the eye symbol is not merely a group identity but also shapes ways of thinking and upholds the ideology of rationality within the dystopian society depicted in the film (Maesse & Nicoletta, 2021).

3.5. Analysis of The Amity Faction's Symbols

The symbol of the Amity faction in the film "Divergent" is depicted as a tree with lush branches and leaves. This symbol represents the values of peace, harmony, and togetherness, which are the core principles of the Amity faction. Visually, the tree symbolizes life, growth, and balance with nature. This aligns with the Amity faction's character, which prioritizes harmonious social relationships, avoids conflict, and maintains a peaceful atmosphere in community life.

In the film, the tree symbol is further emphasized through the use of warm colors like red

and yellow in Amity members' clothing, as well as an environment dominated by farmlands and a rural atmosphere. Amity members are depicted working together in the fields, sharing food, and forming close social bonds. These elements further emphasize that the tree symbol serves not only as a visual identity but also reflects a lifestyle that emphasizes togetherness, simplicity, and peace.



Picture 7&8. Amity faction symbol, their costume, and their role in society

Representamen

The symbolism of the Amity faction is represented by an image of a tree with lush branches and leaves. This symbol appears in various visual elements associated with the Amity faction, such as its logo, insignia, and the living environments of its members. Additionally, this symbolism is reinforced by the use of warm colors like red and yellow in Amity members' costumes, as well as the backdrop of vast farmlands. Visually, the lush tree conveys a sense of life, togetherness, and harmony that reflects the Amity faction's core characteristics.

Object

The values represented by the tree symbol in the Amity faction are peace, harmony, and togetherness in social life. Contextually, the tree symbolizes growth, balance, and interconnected relationships. These values are evident in the lives of Amity members, who are depicted working together on farmland, sharing the harvest, and maintaining close social ties. Additionally, the environment's closeness to nature reinforces that the tree symbol refers to a peaceful and balanced life. Thus, the symbol reflects the character of Amity members who prioritize harmony and avoid conflict.

Interpretant

The interpretant emerging from the relationship between the representamen and the object indicates that the Amity symbol is interpreted as a group identity that upholds peace and unity. The tree symbol fosters the understanding that members of the Amity faction are expected to

maintain harmonious social relationships, avoid conflict, and coexist peacefully (Cuccurullo, 2024). Furthermore, the repeated appearance of the symbol in the film reinforces the meaning that Amity is a faction that plays a role in maintaining social stability through harmony. Thus, the symbol functions not only as a visual identity but also as a means of shaping the behavior of faction members in accordance with the values of peace they embrace.

Classification of Signs

In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the symbol of the Amity faction in the film "Divergent" can be understood as a sign that is predominantly symbolic in nature, although its visual form also contains iconic elements. The tree symbol used by Amity is interpreted as a symbol of peace, harmony, and unity formed through social consensus within the faction system. Essentially, a tree does not always carry these meanings, however, within the context of the dystopian society depicted in this film, the symbol consistently represents a peaceful life and harmonious social relationships core characteristics of Amity (Chandler, 2017). Consequently, the relationship between the sign and its meaning is conventional, thereby classifying it as a symbolic sign according to Peirce. In addition, this symbol also has an iconic quality because its shape resembles a real tree, indicating a direct connection to the concepts it represents: life, growth, and harmony with nature. The image of a lush tree evokes a sense of tranquility, togetherness, and harmony that aligns with the character of the Amity faction, while also making it easier for the audience to understand its meaning and reinforcing the value of peace inherent in that faction. Thus, the Amity symbol functions not only as a visual identity but also as a representation of the value of peace within the dystopian social structure, dominated by symbolic qualities yet still containing iconic elements.

Contextual Meaning Analysis

The contextual meaning of the Amity faction's symbol in the film "Divergent" can be understood through its role as a group that prioritizes peace and harmony within a dystopian society. The tree symbol used by Amity serves not only as a visual identity but also symbolizes a peaceful life, growth, and social balance. In the film, Amity members are depicted living in harmony, cooperating with one another in agricultural areas, and avoiding conflict with other factions. The open environment, rural atmosphere, and activities that emphasize togetherness further reinforce that the tree symbol is closely linked to the values of peace and harmony that define this faction. Furthermore, this symbol also shapes a social identity that distinguishes Amity from other factions, such as Dauntless, which emphasizes courage, and Erudite, which emphasizes intelligence, so that Amity is understood as a group that is friendly, cooperative,

and avoids conflict.

Furthermore, in the context of social structure, the Amity symbol also reflects stability within society. This faction is depicted as playing a role in maintaining social balance through a conflict-avoidant approach, in which the tree symbol represents growth and the sustainability of life that supports the creation of social harmony. This indicates that the Amity symbol not only depicts individual character but also the faction's social function within an organized social system (Aswar et al., 2026). In addition, the symbol also functions as a means of social control based on the value of harmony, as its consistent use in clothing, the environment, and daily activities encourages members to align their behavior with the embraced values of peace (Maesse & Nicoletta, 2021). Thus, the tree symbol is not only a group identity but also a tool that shapes behavior and upholds the ideology of peace within the dystopian society depicted in the film.

3.6. Analysis of The Candor Faction's Symbols

The symbol of the Candor faction in the film "Divergent" is depicted as a set of scales in a state of balance. This symbol represents the values of honesty, justice, and openness, which are the core principles of the Candor faction. Visually, the scales symbolize balance, objectivity, and fair judgment without bias. This aligns with the Candor faction's character, which upholds truth and transparency in social life.

In the film, the scales symbol is further reinforced through the use of black and white in the Candor members' attire, symbolizing the clarity between right and wrong. Candor members are depicted as speaking directly, openly, and without hiding the truth, even though this sometimes leads to conflict. Additionally, the Candor faction is associated with the role of law enforcers or those tasked with determining the truth, further emphasizing the meaning of justice and objectivity they uphold.



Gambar 9&10. Candor faction symbol, their costume, and their role in society

Representamen

The symbolism of the Candor faction is represented by an image of a balanced set of scales. This symbol appears in various visual elements associated with the Candor faction, such as its logo, insignia, and the environments used by faction members. Additionally, this symbolism is reinforced by the use of black and white in the Candor members' uniforms, which reflects the clear distinction between right and wrong. Visually, the balanced scales convey a sense of objectivity, justice, and impartial judgment, which are the defining characteristics of the Candor faction.

Object

The values represented by the scales symbol in the Candor faction are honesty, justice, and openness. Contextually, the scales symbolize an objective evaluation process and the fair determination of truth. These values are reflected in the characters of Candor members, who are depicted as speaking directly, openly, and without concealing facts. Additionally, the Candor faction is often associated with the role of law enforcers or truth-determiners, so the scales symbol refers to the function of justice in society. Thus, the symbol refers to the character of Candor members who uphold truth and transparency.

Interpretant

The interpretant that emerges from the relationship between the representamen and the object indicates that the Candor symbol is interpreted as the identity of a group that upholds honesty and justice. The symbol of the scales reinforces the understanding that members of the Candor faction are expected to be objective, truthful, and open in conveying the truth. Furthermore, the repeated appearance of the symbol in the film reinforces the ideological meaning that Candor is the faction responsible for upholding justice in the dystopian society. Thus, the symbol serves not only as a visual identity but also as a means of shaping the behavior of faction members in accordance with the values of honesty they embrace.

Classification of Signs

In Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the symbol of the Candor faction in the film "Divergent" can be categorized as a symbolic dominant sign, although it also contains iconic elements in its visual form. The scales symbol used by Candor is interpreted as a representation of honesty, justice, and objectivity within the faction's social system. Although scales do not generally always symbolize honesty, in the context of the dystopian society in this film, the symbol is consistently associated with Candor's commitment to truth and openness (Chandler, 2017). Therefore, the relationship between the sign and its meaning is conventional,

thus falling under the category of symbolic signs according to Peirce (Chandler, 2017). On the other hand, this symbol also has an iconic quality because its visual form resembles an actual set of scales, indicating a direct resemblance to the object it represents: the process of fair and balanced judgment. This resemblance helps clarify the symbol's meaning for the audience while reinforcing the value of honesty inherent in that faction. Thus, the Candor symbol functions not only as a visual identity but also as a representation of the values of honesty and justice within the dystopian social structure, possessing a dominant symbolic character while still retaining iconic elements.

Contextual Meaning Analysis

The contextual meaning of the Candor faction symbol in the film "Divergent" can be understood through its role as a group that places honesty and justice as core values within the structure of a dystopian society. The scales symbol used by Candor not only serves as a visual identity but also symbolizes balance, objectivity, and fair judgment. In the film, Candor members are depicted as speaking frankly, openly, and without concealing the truth, even though this often leads to debate or conflict. The use of the scales symbol reinforces the idea that Candor makes truth the primary principle in social life. Furthermore, this symbol also shapes a social identity that distinguishes Candor from other factions, such as Erudite, which focuses on intelligence, and Amity, which emphasizes harmony, so that Candor is understood as a group that is honest, firm, and objective.

Furthermore, in the context of social structure, the symbol of Candor is also linked to its role in the legal system and the pursuit of truth. This faction is depicted as engaged in the process of testing honesty through interrogation or fact-based assessment, where the symbol of the scales represents a fair and impartial judgment process, thereby reinforcing Candor's position as the guardian of justice in society. This indicates that the symbol not only reflects individual character but also the faction's social function in maintaining order within the dystopian societal system. Furthermore, the Candor symbol also serves as a means of social control grounded in the value of truth, as its consistent use in attributes, environments, and visual identity encourages members to always remain objective and prioritize honesty (Aswar et al., 2026). Thus, the scales symbol not only serves as a group identity but also shapes behavior and upholds the ideology of honesty within the dystopian society depicted in the film.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Meaning and Function of Faction Symbols

The results of this study show that the five faction symbols in the film “Divergent” represent different moral and social values. Abnegation represents humility and self-sacrifice, Dauntless represents courage and resilience, Erudite represents intelligence and rationality, Amity represents peace and harmony, and Candor represents honesty and justice. These findings indicate that the faction symbols serve not only as visual markers but also convey the values and characteristics inherent to each social group.

From the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics, the meaning of each faction symbol is formed through the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant (Chandler, 2017). The visual form of the symbol acts as the representamen, while the values and concepts represented by the symbol constitute the object. Meanwhile, the meaning derived by the audience through the social and narrative context of the film serves as the interpretant. Thus, faction symbols function as a system of signs used to convey the social identities and ideological values present in the society depicted in the film (Storey, 2018).

The research findings also show that faction symbols generally fall into the category of symbolic signs, although some of them possess both iconic and indexical characteristics. This indicates that the meaning of a symbol is not determined solely by its physical form but is also shaped by social conventions and the context of the factional system within the film. For example, an image of an eye does not inherently signify intelligence (Chandler, 2017). However, within the social system depicted in “Divergent”, the eye symbol is associated with knowledge, rationality, and intellectual identity, characteristics of the Erudite faction.

4.2 Faction Symbols as Social and Ideological Instruments

Further research findings indicate that faction symbols serve as tools for shaping collective identity while maintaining social boundaries between groups (Huse, 2020). The repeated use of symbols through clothing, logos, the environment, and daily activities reinforces the values associated with each faction (Storey, 2018). Thus, individuals are constantly reminded of the characteristics and behaviors expected of members of their group (Huse, 2020).

This function can be observed in the Abnegation faction. The symbol of two hands clasped together is reinforced through the use of simple clothing, a predominance of gray, and members’ behavior that prioritizes the interests of others. Consequently, this symbol plays a role in shaping Abnegation’s collective identity while encouraging its members to align themselves

with the values of humility and self-sacrifice. Furthermore, this symbol helps reinforce Abnegation's legitimacy as a group possessing moral authority within the social structure depicted in the film.

A similar mechanism is also evident in the Erudite faction, where the eye symbol is repeatedly associated with knowledge, rationality, research, and technology. Thus, the symbol not only serves as a marker of Erudite members' identity but also reinforces a certain mindset and establishes intellectual values as part of the faction's ideology.

Overall, these findings indicate that faction symbols play a role in maintaining the social order depicted in the film. Symbols serve to distinguish one faction from another, reinforce group identity, and encourage individuals to behave in accordance with the values embraced by their group. Thus, the system of symbols present in the film can be understood as a form of ideological control within the dystopian society depicted in "Divergent".

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion regarding symbolism in the film "Divergent" using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, it can be concluded that the faction symbols in the film serve as representations of identity as well as shapers of ideological values within the depicted dystopian society. Each faction has a visual symbol that is consistently used to depict the characteristics, moral values, and social roles of each group. Through the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant, symbols are not only interpreted as visual identities but also as a means of constructing social and ideological meaning.

The analysis reveals that the Abnegation faction's symbol, two hands clasped together, represents the values of self-sacrifice, humility, and care for others. The Dauntless faction's symbol, shaped like a flame, embodies courage, strength, and the spirit of facing risks. The Erudite faction's symbol, an open eye, symbolizes intelligence, knowledge, and rationality. The Amity faction's symbol, shaped like a tree, represents peace, harmony, and social unity. Meanwhile, the Candor faction's symbol, a balanced scale, signifies the values of honesty, justice, and objectivity. These five symbols affirm that each faction is built upon specific moral values that subsequently shape the social identity of its members.

Based on the classification of signs in Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, the faction symbols in the film "Divergent" predominantly fall into the category of symbolic signs, as their meanings are formed through social conventions within the faction system presented.

Nevertheless, several symbols also contain elements of icons and indexes. The iconic element is visible in the visual similarity between the symbols and the objects they represent, such as fire, eyes, trees, and scales. Meanwhile, the indexical element appears in certain symbols, such as the fire in the Dauntless faction, which has a relationship with energy, danger, and courage. This indicates that symbols in the film do not only possess a single type of sign, but can also contain a combination of several classifications simultaneously.

In addition to functioning as visual identities, the faction symbols also act as tools for shaping ideology and mechanisms of social control within the dystopian society. The repeated use of symbols through costumes, environments, and daily activities encourages individuals to adjust their behavior to the values upheld by each faction. These symbols reinforce group identity boundaries, form social stratification, and maintain the existing power structure within the society of "Divergent". Thus, symbols function not only as visual elements, but also as ideological media that construct social identity and regulate individual behavior within a structured societal system.

Overall, this study shows that symbolism in the film *Divergent* plays an important role in constructing meaning, identity, and social ideology. Through the semiotic approach of Charles Sanders Peirce, faction symbols can be understood as a system of signs that shapes group character, reinforces certain moral values, and supports mechanisms of social control within the dystopian society portrayed in the film. Thus, symbols do not only function as visual elements in the narrative, but also as a means of communication that conveys ideological messages to the audience. This indicates that the use of symbols in the film also helps shape viewers' understanding of the social structure and the values presented in the story.

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