

# The Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs in “Annabelle Comes Home and The Curse of La Llorona” Horror Movie Posters

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## ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis makna tanda verbal dan visual dalam poster film horor. Penelitian ini menganalisis poster film horor karena poster merupakan alat penting dalam pemasaran suatu produk dan film horor memiliki peminat yang besar diseluruh dunia. Rumusan masalah dari penelitian ini adalah tanda verbal dan visual apa saja yang terdapat pada poster film “Annabelle Comes Home and La Llorona Movie Posters”? dan apa saja makna konotatif dan denotatif dari tanda verbal dan visual pada film “Annabelle Comes Home and La Llorona” poster film? Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode observasi. Annabelle Comes Home (2019) dan The Curse of La Llorona (2019) adalah data yang digunakan pada penelitian ini. Data tersebut dikumpulkan dengan cara menonton film untuk menemukan alur cerita, mengunduh poster melalui internet, membaca dan mencatat informasi penting sesuai dengan topik, kemudian mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan data ke dalam tanda verbal dan visual untuk menemukan makna data. Penelitian ini menggunakan tiga teori. Teori pertama digunakan dari teori Saussure untuk mengidentifikasi tanda verbal dan visual, dilanjutkan dengan teori Barthes tentang makna denotatif dan konotatif, dan teori terakhir menggunakan teori dari Cerrato (2012) tentang makna warna. Hasil analisis dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan sebelas tanda verbal dan tujuh tanda visual. Enam tanda verbal dan tiga tanda visual dalam poster film Annabelle Comes Home, lima tanda verbal dan empat tanda visual dalam poster film The Curse of La Llorona. Penelitian ini juga menemukan makna denotatif dan konotatif dari tanda verbal dan visual dalam dua poster film tersebut.

## ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at analyzing the meaning of verbal and visual signs used in horror movie posters. This study analyzed horror movie posters because they are important tools in marketing of a product and horror movies have big enthusiasts all around the world. The problems of this study are what verbal and visual signs and what are the connotative and denotative meanings of verbal and visual signs in “Annabelle Comes Home and La Llorona” movie posters? The observation method was used in this study to collect data. The data came from two horror movie posters: Annabelle Comes Home (2019) and The Curse of La Llorona (2019). The study was described and interpreted using three theories. The first theory used was Saussure’s theory in Chandler’s (2007:14) to identify verbal and visual signs, second theory from Barthes (1977) about denotative and connotative meaning, and the last theory from Cerrato (2012) about colour Sverbal signs and seven visual signs. Six verbal signs and three visual signs were found in Annabelle Comes Home movie poster, five verbal signs and four visual signs in The Curse of La Llorona movie poster. This study also found denotative and connotative meanings from those horror movie posters.

## 1. Introduction

Communication is one of the activities that is always the main thing carried out by every individual and living creature in the world. Simply, language is a tool of communication. Communication is a process of exchanging information between two or more people (Rabiah, 2012). The person who receives the information is referred to as a recipient. Opinions, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and even motions can all be considered forms of information. Humans do communicate in a variety of ways every day, including use signs to convey the meaning. Because language is necessary for communication and language is made up of content signs and symbols that each have a specific meaning, language and communication are closely linked. Because of that, people can understand the language. Words, images, sounds, colors, flavors, actions, and objects can all serve as signs, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when people invest them with meaning. However, a sign's definition continues to be misunderstood by many people.

To avoid the misunderstanding of that sign, people must first learn how it works in real life and then learn about it in Semiotic. According Henny (2014) semiotics is a science or method of analysis to study signs, in the form of devices or symbols that use in human relations. The sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified (Saussure, 1974). A signifier is a form that takes a sign to be the concept. Signified is a concept about the verbal and visual. A verbal sign is a sign that is used in communication which is written or spoken language (Nelson & Shaw, 2002). This verbal sign is contained within conventionalized linguistics symbols such as words, phrases, and sentences that have purpose to tell people the idea or feeling of the writer. People always used image as a visual sign. A visual sign is something such as a picture, photograph, or piece of film used to give a particular effect or to explain something (Cambridge Dictionary). The people can also communicate the others through eye contact or body language. Visual signs could also be found in printed advertisements.

Advertisements is used for informing as well as convincing people to buy products and services sold by the advertiser (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, when the advertisers want to draw someone's attention to certain products and persuade someone to buy and use the products or services, the advertising media becomes the most appropriate media to be used. According to KBBI, there are various kinds of advertising media. One of them is a movie poster. A movie poster is used to promote and advertise a movie because it can deliver the message from the movie. Movie also needs to be promoted to reach a larger audience. Usually, a poster is created by the director or producer to attract attention. They go to all lengths to spark viewers' interest in their movie. People would be interested in the movie if the movie poster is appealing. Additionally, it serves as a means of give the information to the audience about the movie, including the title, director, producer, and the creators. Additionally, the movie poster also has to be clear and has visual art. Movie poster usually includes title, important date, illustrator/person, colors, and tagline. From those aspects, the viewer could know the meaning of the movie. For example, a viewer would know the theme of the movie if the poster depicts a ghost or use grey and black as the color background. Thus, the movie poster is interesting to discuss also the messages that the readers should know.

This study is not the first study, there are some theses about verbal and visual sign were taken to get a good understanding about this topic. The first thesis is "The Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in LA Bold Cigarette Advertisement" written by Astriyani (2018). This study focused to found the verbal and visual signs in "LA Bold Cigarette Advertisement". The result of the study was the text and image or picture found in each horror movie posters were categorized into verbal and visual signs, the characteristic of

verbal and visual sign in horror movie and the meaning that were described through the verbal and visual signs in each advertisement. The second reference was in an article written by Dhananjaya. (2019) with title "Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs of Moana Movie Poster". This study focused on the analysis of verbal and non-verbal signs of "Moana Movie Posters" and the meaning of those signs. The result of the analysis shows that "Moana Movie Posters" have verbal and non-verbal signs. The difference that was found from the first thesis with this study are about the theory of verbal and visual sign and the data source. Meanwhile, the similarity is analyzed the same topic which is about verbal and visual signs and the meaning of the signs. It also used the same theory which is about denotative and connotative meaning and about the meaning of the colors. The difference that can be made from the second study with this study is the data source and also the difference that was found is about the data collection. The similarity between the second thesis and this study is analyze the same topic which is about verbal and visual signs and the meaning of the signs. It also used the same theory which is the theory by Barthes to analyze denotative and connotative meaning.

This study analyzed horror movie poster because the horror poster is an important tool in marketing of a product and horror movie has big enthusiasts all around the world. Horror movies have their own selling point in advertising. Posters are an important tool in marketing a product, many people look at posters just to see who the actors are and when the movie will be shown, but poster also shows what will happens in the movie. The problems of the study are important to make the analysis more specific, and it is helpful to obtain a clear description for the further analysis. This study found the following problems such as; what verbal and visual signs are found in "Annabelle Comes Home and La Llorona Movie Posters" movie posters? and what are the connotative and denotative meanings of verbal and visual signs in "Annabelle Comes Home and La Llorona Movie Posters" movie posters? The aim of this analysis is to provide information to the readers that the poster has its own meaning on it, also analyzing movie posters indirectly teaches authors and readers to promote something. It is also very interesting to find verbal and visual cues for poster movies and convince people to see the movie. Posters can be important in raising public awareness and curiosity about the movie and can also provide important information about the movie. In this study, the final movie posters of "Annabelle Comes Home" and "The Curse of La Llorona" serves as the data source for analysis. In some cases, some people can understand the message well enough. However, others may not understand the message or may misunderstand the text on the movie poster. Therefore, this study is done to give a better understand about the movie posters.

## 2. Method

This study used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. According to (Lambert, 2012: 255) descriptive qualitative are the least theoretical and the goal is to obtain cases deemed rich in information for the purpose of saturating the data. This study was conducted through observation method. Horror movie posters are used as the data source. This study examined movie posters from "Annabelle Comes Home" (2019) and "The Curse of La Llorona" (2019). In collecting the data, in this study did several steps, such as watching "Annabelle Comes Home" and "The Curse of La Llorona" movie to find out the story behind the movie posters, downloading and reading movie posters for "Annabelle Comes Home" (2019) and "The Curse of La Llorona" (2019) via internet, making a note of the important information related to the topic, identifying and classifying the data into verbal and visual signs in the posters movie to determine the meaning of the data. Three theories were used to analyze the data using the descriptive qualitative method. The first theory used was Saussure's theory in Chandler (2007:14) to identify verbal and visual signs, followed by a theory from Barthes (1977) about denotative and

connotative meaning, and finally a theory from Cerrato (2012) about color meanings. Horror movie posters produce by formal and informal methods to organize the result of analysis in this study. Formal method used to present the data of visual and verbal signs also the result that found in horror movie posters, using a table to show the visual and verbal signs and the meaning found in the posters. The informal method uses to describe the finding in verbal and visual signs in horror movie movie posters.

### 3. Finding and Discussion

In order to analyze the data, this study presents the findings. In this study, was found verbal and visual signs in "Annabelle Comes Home" and "The Curse of La Llorona" movie posters. A sign can be classified into two categories according to the theory applied in this study. There are verbal and visual signs, verbal signs in these movie posters include words, phrases, or sentences. The images, expressions, body language, and colors in these movie posters serve as the visual cues. In this study also found the denotative and connotative meanings of verbal and visual signs in "Annabelle Comes Home" and "The Curse of La Llorona". The tables are used to help the reader easier to understand the data found. For the denotative meaning, verbal and visual signs have the real meaning by the dictionary or the denotative meaning is the real meaning. For instance, with the tone of a text, which is made up of numerous words. Meanwhile, those signs have connotative meaning. Connotative meaning is secondary meaning of something or the implicit meaning besides the literal meaning that they have. For instance, the expression of meaning related to the movie. The following table is based on two different selected data sources found in horror movie posters.

**Table 1. Verbal and Visual Signs in Horror Movie Posters**

No.	Horror Movie Posters	Occurrences of Verbal Signs	Occurrences of Visual Signs
1	Annabelle Comes Home	6	3
2	The Curse of La Llorona	5	4
	Total	11	7

Based on the table above, this study found 11 verbal signs and 7 visual signs in two horror movie posters. The dominant signs that appear in the horror movie posters are verbal signs but visual signs are also supported and it would help the people in understanding the message on horror movie posters that they see.

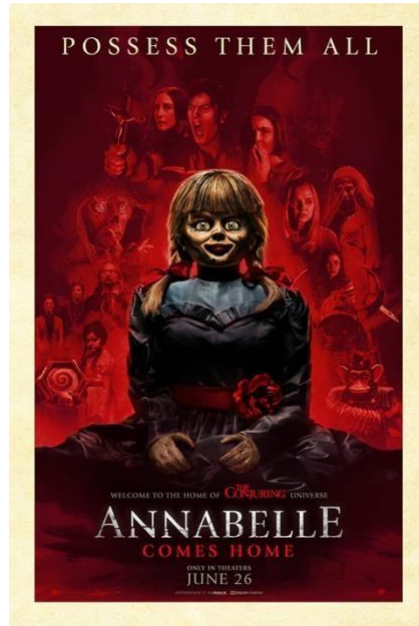
**Table 2. The Meaning of Verbal and Visual Signs in Horror Movie Posters**

No.	Horror Movie Posters	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
1	Annabelle Comes Home	10	7
2	The Curse of La Llorona	10	7
	Total	20	14

Based on the table above, this study found the meaning of verbal and visual sign. The meaning divided into two; denotative and connotative meaning. There are 16 denotative and 12 connotative meanings. The denotative meanings are more dominant than the connotative meanings because these posters do not want to reveal a lot of hidden meanings and also it can make a clue of the movie that will be shown. Therefore, it can make curiosity of the viewers and make them watching the movie. This is called movie marketing trick through of poster.

**a. Annabelle Comes Home (2019)**

On the poster "Annabelle" there are many semiotic signs can be analyzed, as can be seen from posters. Semiotic signs are used in the creation of posters, both verbal and visual, with the intention of conveying the message of the story that will be broadcast but not clearly, in order to make it appear mysterious and attract the audience's attention. In analyzing the first data, in this study found verbal and visual signs in "Annabelle Comes Home" movie poster. In this study applies Barthes' theory to focus on denotative and connotative meanings and Cerrato's theory to focus on color meanings. The poster of *Annabelle Comes Home* can be seen below:



"Annabelle Comes Home" movie tells the audience about the Annabelle doll is sealed by Ed (Patrick Wilson) and Lorraine Warren (Vera Farmiga) in the basement of their home. It is to keep the doll from causing a bigger mess and invite the evil spirits. However, when being locked in the room, Annabelle managed to roam because of human activity. In analyzing *Annabelle Comes Home* movie poster, this analyze starts with verbal signs then continued to visual signs.

**Table 3. The Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs in The Annabelle Comes Home**

NO	VERBAL SIGNS	VISUAL SIGNS
1.	Annabelle.	The figure of a little girl doll.
2.	Comes home.	Black and red background with white colour in some sentence.
3.	Welcome to the home of the conjuring universe.	People behind the Annabelle doll.

**1. The Analysis of Verbal signs**

The first verbal sign found in the Annabelle Comes Home movie poster is "Annabelle". Through that signifier, Annabelle appears and brings back the story, with a new story and some actors. This movie is a continuation of the previous story, so it can invite the viewers to watch this movie again. The word "Annabelle" has a denotative meaning; it is the title of the movie. It also has a connotative meaning, as "Annabelle" refers to the haunted doll. In this movie the doll is kept "safely" behind holy glass, it is

because this doll has a very large negative aura and can invite other evil spirits. The word “Annabelle” in the poster also uses capital letters on a dark background. Therefore, the letters are visible, with an illustrated design that gives the poster a horror feel.

The second verbal sign found in this movie poster is “Comes Home”. The signifier “Comes Home” is a major plot point in the movie, which tells the continuation of the previous Annabelle story (2014). The doll is placed “safely” behind holy glass at the Warren family's house to keep an evil spirit trapped in a doll. In this “Annabelle Comes Home” movie, when babysitting the daughter of Ed and Lorraine Warren, a teenager and her friend unknowingly awaken an evil spirit trapped in a doll. It made an evil spirit trapped in a doll come loose and hang around the Warren's house, and also invited other evil spirits to come. Therefore this 3<sup>rd</sup> Annabelle has a tagline comes home. In denotative meaning “Comes Home” is a tagline of the movie. It also has connotative meaning, which means Annabelle is coming back to terrorize people.

The third verbal sign is welcome to the home of the conjuring universe. This signifier text is found at the top of the movie title in the poster. In a denotative meaning, the movie maker or the producer of “Annabelle Comes Home” is “The Conjuring Universe”. In its connotative meaning, it shows that the conjuring producers participated in making the movie. The Conjuring is known as a good horror movie, so the phrase placed above the title is to make the audience want to watch this movie too because of The Conjuring Universe.

## 2. The Analysis of Visual signs

### Data 1



(The figure of a little girl doll)

In the “Annabelle Comes Home” movie poster there are some visual signs to make the poster more interesting to watch. First, it can be seen in the movie poster show a little girl doll wearing a dress, with braided hair in two and has a smiling face but looks quite scary or in this movie called Annabelle. It has a connotative meaning to the doll in the picture with a scary expression. The scary expression happened, because on the doll has an evil spirit who is always terrorize many people, so this doll called a cursed object. As a denotative meaning, this little girl doll or Annabelle is the main object in the movie.

### Data 2



(Black, red, and white background)

Moreover, the second signifier is a background presented with three colors such as black, red, and white. According to Cerrato's color terms there are many meanings of them. Black means evil, red means strength, and white means chastity or protection. These three visual colors indicate the strength of evil and chastity strength. Regarding the color meanings, it is because the movie tells the struggle of people who have a holy strength to protect people from evil spirits. Therefore, related with the colors there is connotative meaning. First is black color (signifier) which means evil spirits (signified). It expresses when Annabelle terrorized many people. Second is white (signifier) which means chastity (signified). It expresses when Judy can relock Annabelle on "safely" place behind holy glass with the power of prayer to the god. The last is red (signifier) which means strength (signified). It expresses when Annabelle used all her evil strength to thwart the power of Judy's prayer, and where in the end Annabelle's powers lost and she was resealed in the holy glass. The meaning of those three colors is to reflect what happened occur in the movie.

### Data 3



(People behind the Annabelle doll)

The third visual sign in this movie poster is the people behind the Annabelle doll. People behind the Annabelle doll as a background of this movie poster, it is signifier the object of the movie. In denotative meaning, it depicts the people who play the characters in the movie. This poster shows there is a man holds a cross to ward off evil spirits because the movie is associated with Christianity, as well as a stuffed monkey, a ghost, and several people with terrified expressions. These people serve as the background of the poster to pique viewers' interest about what happened and how the storyline of "Annabelle Comes Home" movie.

#### b. The Curse of La Llorona (2019)

On the poster "The Curse of La Llorona" there are many semiotic signs can be analyzed, as can be seen from posters. Semiotic signs are used in making posters both in verbal and visual forms with the intention of conveying the message of the story that will be broadcast but not clearly, because to make it look mysterious and can attract the attention of the audience. In analyzing the second data, this study found verbal and visual

signs in “The Curse of La Llorona” (2019) movie poster. This study applies Barthes' theory to focus on denotative and connotative meanings and Cerrato’s theory to focus on color meanings. The following is a poster for “The Curse of La Llorona”.



In the movie "The Curse of La Llorona" known as the legendary ghost to lure kids into a terrifying otherworldly realm at night. Their only hope to the last chance of escaping La Llorona's lethal vengeance is a disillusioned priest who practices mysticism to keep people from the evil power. In analyzing “The Curse of La Llorona” movie poster, this study begins with verbal signs then continued with visual signs.

**Table 4. The Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs in The Curse of La Llorona**

NO	VERBAL SIGNS	VISUAL SIGNS
1	She wants your children	The figure of a woman
2	The curse of La Llorona	A scary forest background
3	April 19	Puddle under La Llorona

### 1. The Analysis of Verbal Signs

In this second horror movie poster, there are some verbal signs in The Curse of La Llorona movie poster. The first verbal sign found is “The Curse of La Llorona” through that signifier which indicates that it is a scary movie which signified that there is a new horror movie being produced called “The Curse of La Llorona”. In denotative “The Curse of La Llorona” means the title of the movie. “The Curse of La Llorona” also has connotative meaning, it means a ghost who always haunted for the children to carry with her. In the movie, there was a beautiful lady who married an ordinary man and they had two sons. One day, she killed her son by drowning in the river. After that she also killed herself in the same river. Why she killed her sons and herself is because her husband is having an affair with another woman. Since then, she has haunted the children to carry with her. That is why she was called La Llorona because she wanted children.

The second signifier is “She Wants Your Children”. As denotative meanings “She Wants Your Children” is a tagline in the movie poster. It also has a connotative meaning: “She Wants Your Children” refers to La Llorona's habit of murdering children and the parents' responsibility to protect their children. Therefore, the signifier “She Wants Your Children” in the movie poster tells, there is an urban legend in Mexico, if there are

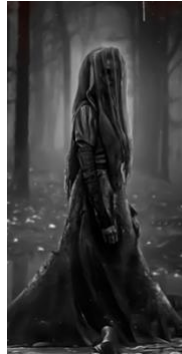


children who have misbehaved to their parents and if you saw La Llorona who wears white gown with a veil. It would bring bad luck or misfortune, so every woman in Mexico needs to look after their children. That is why this movie has a tagline “She Wants Your Children”.

The third verbal sign is “April 19”. Denotatively the movie release on April 19. Connotatively this signifier is to tell the viewers about a movie's release date and start showing in the theaters and also to invite the viewer to watch the movie because the movie will be aired soon.

## 2. The Analysis of Visual Signs

### Data 1



(The figure of a woman)

In this poster the visual signs are used to make the poster more interesting. There is a figure of a woman on it. The first visual signs in this poster signifies a woman standing in the middle of a scary forest and wearing a white dress with long black hair and a veil that covers her face because when she died, she was wearing it. It signified about the story of herself or in the movie tell about her terror to the other character. In denotative meaning, the figure of woman is a ghost character or as La Llorona in this movie. Meanwhile, the connotative meaning that visual sign depicts holds deep sadness, loneliness, anger, and regret because she has killed her sons. Therefore, La Llorona as the main characters in the movie and the story line of this movie is about the history about La Llorona and how La Llorona haunted a family and children.

### Data 2



(A scary forest background)

The second signifier is the scary forest with a red leaf as a background where La Llorona stands. Denotatively, in The Curse of La Llorona movie poster is to tell the audience about the story of La Llorona began, that place signified where La Llorona lived before. Connotatively, it is when the woman killed her sons around those trees, and in the movie her weakness is that red leaf or tree was called Fire Tree. Therefore, the

background of the movie is the scary forest with a red leaf. Also, it become a hint, why La Llorona do not come to a house that have a row of Fire Tree seeds behind the door.

### Data 3



(Puddle under La Llorona)

The third signifier is “Puddle under La Llorona”. In the movie, the puddle under La Llorona standing is the river in the midst of the forest where she had killed her children and that is where la Llorona first appeared. She killed her children in the river because her husband had an affair with her, then she was angry and thought that by eliminating her husband's valuable. She thought she could repay her annoyance, but without realizing her husband's precious treasure was her precious treasure too, so it made her turn into the ghost of La Llorona. In denotative meaning that puddle is the place where the character of La Llorona appears.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the “Annabelle Comes Home” and “The Curse of La Llorona” movie posters consist of 18 signs divided into 11 verbal signs and 7 visual signs. The verbal and visual signs in these movie posters were used to give information about the movie that would be shown and make the people interested to watch the movie. In these movie posters, there are meaning in the signs, there are 20 denotative and 14 connotative meanings. For denotative meaning, if the signs have a literal meaning, therefore this study has to find the real meaning of those signs. When those signs attempt to convey meanings other than their literal meaning, they take on a connotative meaning. Those meanings are to make the movie that will be shown looks more mysterious to be seen for the audience and make the audience curious about the story line of the movie that will be shown.

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