

**NATIONALISM IN WAR MOVIES: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FILM
“ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT”**

By

Samuel Abraham Mangitung
11910003

BACHELOR'S DEGREE
in

GLOBAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
BUSINESS & COMMUNICATION



SWISS GERMAN UNIVERSITY
The Prominence Tower
Jalan Jalur Sutera Barat No. 15, Alam Sutera
Tangerang, Banten 15143 - Indonesia

Revision after the Thesis Defense on
12 July 2023

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.



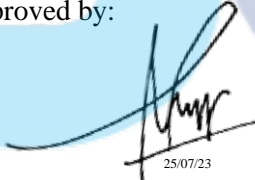
Samuel Abraham Mangitung

Student

25 July 2023

Date

Approved by:



Muninggar Sri Saraswati, Ph.D

Thesis Advisor

25 July 2023

Date

Dr. Ir. Yosman Bustaman, M.Buss.

Dean

Date

Samuel Abraham Mangitung

ABSTRACT

NATIONALISM IN WAR MOVIES: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FILM "ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT"

By

Samuel Abraham Mangitung
Muninggar Sri Saraswati, Ph.D, Advisor

SWISS GERMAN UNIVERSITY

War movies often either promote or criticise nationalist ideologies. Depending on the movie, war can be seen as glorious and noble, or brutal and futile. This thesis conducted a semiotic analysis of the movie "All Quiet on the Western Front" that was directed by Edward Berger and released in 2022, focusing on the portrayal of nationalism within the film. Drawing upon Christian Metz's Film Semiotic Theory, the study aimed to unravel how the movie constructs, reinforces, or challenges nationalistic ideologies. Through the film semiotic, this study explored the scenes and sequences of the film, dissecting how nationalism was narrated and depicted. The findings suggested that the film carried an anti-war message as it questions the nationalistic ideologies used to justify the war and showed how the youth were manipulated to fight in the war only to find themselves being exposed to the traumatising brutality of war. The findings contribute to the understanding of how nationalism is constructed and communicated through the language of film, offering a perspective on the complex relationship between cinema and ideology.

Keywords: Semiotic Analysis, All Quiet On The Western Front, Film, Christian Metz, War Film, Edward Berger



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the preservation of world peace



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for always protecting me and keeping me healthy to be here to write this Thesis. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my friends and family, especially my parents for their continued support and love. I would also like to thank all the authors on the reference page for their deep knowledge and understanding which has made for excellent reference material.

I would like to also express my gratitude to my thesis advisor, Muninggar Sri Saraswati, Ph.D, for her deep extensive knowledge and insight as well as her patience in handling and advising the creation of my thesis throughout these long months. It is through her advice that I was able to shape this paper into an actual thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank rice bowls, potato chips, and soft drinks for providing me with emotional support as great comfort food. My mental stability would not have been able to survive throughout this thesis creation process if it were not for these foods.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR	2
ABSTRACT	3
DEDICATION	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
LIST OF FIGURES	9
LIST OF TABLES	10
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 Background	11
1.2 Problems	14
1.3 Objectives	14
1.4 Significance	15
1.5 Questions	15
1.6 Scope & Limitation	15
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Nationalism	16
2.2 War	19
2.3 Film	20
2.4 Film Semiotics	22
2.5 Previous Studies	26
CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODS	29
3.1 Type of Study	29
3.2 Unit of Analysis	30
3.3 Data Collection Technique	30
3.4 Data Analysis Technique	30
3.5 Research Framework	31
3.6 Trustworthiness	32
CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	34
4.1 Findings	34
4.2 Discussion	53

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	66
5.1 Conclusion	66
5.2 Recommendations	67
GLOSSARY	68
REFERENCES	70
CURRICULUM VITAE	77



LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Metz's "Grande Syntagmatique" of the image track of narrative film	23
2. "All Quiet On The Western Front" Title Card	34
3. Forged Signature, time mark 08:29 – 11:50, The Scene	41
4. The army truck next to the school unloading uniforms for students	42
5. Departure, time mark 11:50 - 14:11, Ordinary Sequence	43
6. Graduation, time mark 09:46 - 11:50, The Scene	44
7. Going Back, time mark 2:03:45 – 2:08:30, Ordinary Sequence	45
8. A Soldier Without War, time mark 1:29:42 – 1:32:29, The Scene	46
9. The Train to Compiegne, time mark 57:02 – 1:00:57, Parallel Syntagm	48
10. 72 Hours, time mark 1:19:43 – 1:21:28, The Scene	50
11. Signing the Armistice, time mark 1:44:15 – 1:47:30, The Scene	51
12. Assembling The Recruits, time mark 1:47:30 – 1:48:20, The Scene	52
13. The Rector's Speech from Paul's Perspective	54
14. General Frierichs' speech from Paul's Perspective	55
15. General Friedrichs and Major Brixdorf eating together	56
16. General Friedrichs standing behind his desk	57
17. Bunker interior under barrage	58
18. Ludwig tells Paul he needs to go home, clearly terrified	59
19. Paul grieves the death of Ludwig	60
20. The room filled with the dead rotting corpses of the missing recruits	61
21. Saint-Chamond tanks emerge from the smoke and gas	62
22. Saint-Chamond Tank driving over a trench	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1. Previous Studies	26
4.1. Christian Metz's Grand Syntagmatic	36
4.2. All Quiet On the Western Front Scenes categorised by traits of nationalism.	39

