

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Semiotics is a discipline of linguistics. Semiotics studies the interpretation, creation, and communication of meaning. Semiotics, as a branch of communication, is the most comprehensive analytical tool for deconstructing signs and symbols, whether textual or non-textual (Olurotimi, 2022). Semiotics is a branch of linguistics that studies the interpretation, creation, and can communicate the meaning of a sign or symbol. Semiotics has a range of not only examining linguistic signs, but also non-linguistics signs such as messages from signs contained in stories in books, movies, and advertisements. One of the experts in the field of semiotics is Charles Sanders Peirce who has a theory about his tri-dimensional model with the representamen (R), object (O), and interpretant (I). The researcher is motivated to delve deeper into the theory of Semiotics, particularly the work of Peirce.

Peirce's theory examines a three-dimensional or triadic system consisting of Representamen (R) or the form of signs, Object (O), and Interpretant (I) or the meaning of signs in the interpretation of researchers (Firmansyah, 2022) Peirce has also added a classification for the relationship between the sign or Representamen and Object into three points, namely Icon, Index, and Symbol. This theory can not only be used to interpret signs in culture, but can also be a tool to analyse signs that exist in the universe or

towards a broader scope of analysis. The researcher is interested in use of Peirce's semiotic theory because of its long-standing viability as a research tool. Additionally, numerous studies have successfully employed this theory to analyze the icons, indices, and symbols. It will be a tool to uncover Nordic culture portrayed in movie as well.

Culture is a structured system of symbols used by humans to interpret and organize the world around them. According to a study by Pilgreen (2024) cultures are not merely fictional stories, but rather an important element of society that serves to give meaning to history and places through extraordinary narratives from the past. By using these stories, societies can turn complex, abstract ideas into understandable symbols. These cultures then act as a "superstructure" for belief systems, helping communities explain their origins and core values through a shared narrative language. Through this process, culture help humans cope with the uncertainties of life by providing explanations that feel logical and structured, even though these explanations are not always based on facts. The complex and fascinating concept of culture inspires researchers to study cultures of the world. In line with this, the researcher is interested in studying culture because it is a powerful system that helps humans understand life and create meaningful stories.

There are many interesting characteristics of culture in the world, including Nordic culture. One example of Nordic's God is Odin, the "Allfather", which was immortalized in a statue by Freud in 1828, with a throne comparable to those of Zeus and Jupiter (Halink et al., 2019) Nordic culture

originated in North Germanic societies and continued to develop deeper and deeper with a combination of universal themes such as heroism, creation, destruction, etc. Interest in Nordic culture dates back to the 17th century. What was once merely a part of human imagination and belief has evolved into a topic of discussion in academic and literary circles, and has now developed into a global cultural phenomenon. Nordic culture can continue to permeate modern culture in the form of literature, art, and other popular media. One example is a study by Taubert (2025) on how the “Elves versus Dwarves” narrative, which draws on Nordic culture, illustrates the portrayal of elves and dwarves in fantasy media that reflect modern imaginings of medieval Europe. The timeless nature of Nordic culture reflects a deep-rooted cultural foundation that transcends the boundaries of time. This culture integrates naturally into modern art, particularly movie, which serves as a bridge to introduce classic folklore to a global audience through a more accessible and cinematic medium.

Movie become one of the most widely used media for adapting Nordic cultural stories that can be enjoyed by many people from all over the world. Audiences are drawn to the characters and storylines that are complex and exciting to follow and this not only attracts fans, but also increases people's understanding of world Culture in this modern era. The transition from old writings to modern adaptations highlights the relationship between these cultures and the current landscape or modern context (Šil, 2025; Syam et al., 2022). This reason also encourages researcher to examine how Nordic culture is culturally exposed and popularised in the medium of movie (Saribaş, 2025).

The use of costumes, settings, storylines, scene design, and movie props that are displayed help the audience to enter the story with the screen as they see it. All of these things are the reasons why the researcher chose the latest Thor movie, “Thor: Love and Thunder”, as a research object in this paper.

Movie “Thor: Love and Thunder” is one of the movies produced by Marvel Studio which is included in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) story series and is included in the spin-off of the Marvel movie series about Thor, the Son of God Odin. This movie premieres on July 8, 2022, the story is written by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson and Taiki Waititi who also doubles as director. This movie certainly tells about the journey of Thor, the God of Thunder, who is looking for his true identity along with his friends Valkyrie, Korg, and Jane Foster who became Might Thor and can use Thor's hammer, Mjolnir. Some elements of Culture that are still depicted are the reason the researcher compiled this research paper, namely to find out how the representation of Nordic culture elements in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder” with the science of Semiotics based on Peircean theory.

There are many previous studies have used Peirce's theory in analysing signs from various themes or fields contained in different objects. There are many previous studies that have used Peirce's theory in analysing signs from various themes or fields contained in different objects. This statement is supported by numerous research results on sign representation in various modern media such as movies, series, and other works of art. For example, research by Septiana (2023) on the representation of oligarchic power

in the Korean Drama series “Healer” using Peirce theory, for the analysis of Representation, Object, and Interpretant, with results the existence of oligarchic elements. Research from Suryavanshi (2018) and Kamboj & Mor (2025) shows that the introduction of cultural stories in modern literary works still shows signs and symbols and important points from the original story, with the addition of modern elements. The three studies above show that Peirce’s theory can be used and developed today by analysing interesting media. This is the reason why researcher use Peirce’s theory in this research for analysing the representation of Nordic culture in the movie.

In addition to the various results of analysis using Peirce’s theory. For example, the study by Abdullah & Sonni (2026) uses Peirce’s semiotic theory to show the local wisdom & traditional maritime system of Hawaii in the movie “Moana”. There is a gap in the scientific literature, namely semiotic analysis that specifically uses Peirce’s triadic model to find out the representation in Thor’s movie, especially the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder”. The triadic model in Peirce’s theory that analyse the representation of objects through icons, indexes, and symbols becomes the basic framework for examining the meaning of signs. Although the cultural elements in this movie already critically discuss, it does not use the right semiotic mechanism through the adaptation of the original cultural story into a modern work through the analysis of icon, index, and symbol. Most of the analysis results are still not explore in depth with semiotics. This thesis is written with the aim of bridging the specific gaps mention above by providing a more detail understanding of

the depiction of the meaning of Nordic culture elements in movies studies semiotically.

Based on the gaps, the main objective of this research is to analyse in depth the representation of Nordic culture elements in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder” through the application of Peirce's Semiotics Theory. This research tries to explain how old cultural stories are adapted into modern works by analyse the data representing icons (resemblance), indexes (causal relationships), and symbols (social conventions) to show how Nordic culture is reconstructed in modern movies. These objectives involve the researcher's in-depth analysis in detail of visuals, character portrayals, and dialog that aligns with Peirce’s framework of Representamen, Object, and Interpretant and can contribute to the field of semiotics.

Based on the explanation above, this study focuses on analysing the representation of Nordic culture in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder” using Peirce’s semiotic theory. The analysis will specifically examine the icons, indexes, and symbols that bridge ancient culture with modern cinematography.

B. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. How is Nordic culture represented in iconic signs in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder”?
2. How is Nordic culture represented in indexical signs in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder”?

3. How is Nordic culture represented in symbolic signs in “Thor: Love and Thunder”?

C. Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To analyse the representation of Nordic culture in iconic sign in the movie “Thor: Love and Thunder”.
2. To analyse the representation of Nordic culture in indexical sign in the movie ““Thor: Love and Thunder””.
3. To analyse how the representation of Nordic culture in symbolic sign in the movie ““Thor: Love and Thunder””.

D. Delimitation of the Study

This research is focused on analysing the Nordic culture represented in the Marvel’s movie ““Thor: Love and Thunder”” using Peirce’s Semiotics Theory approach.

E. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing knowledge in the field of semiotics by applying Peirce’s triadic concept to the context of Nordic culture in the movie Thor: Love and Thunder. This study offers a new theoretical application of the theory, thereby enriching the results of semiotic analysis. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the utility and explanatory power of Peirce’s theoretical framework in analysing the complex meanings contained in contemporary visual media.

F. Definition of Keyterms

1. Semiotics

Semiotics is one of the disciplines of linguistics in the study of language which studies symbols about images, objects, and sounds, as well as other elements of language or communication and analyses how meaning is created through signs.

2. Icon

Icon is a type of sign classification in Peirce's semiotic theory that relies on human interpretation of direct visual similarity or look-like features between the physical sign and the object being researched.

3. Index

Index is a type of sign classification in Peirce's semiotic theory that relies on human interpretation of a direct cause & effect or logical links where the sign acts as physical or existential evidence of its object within a medium.

4. Symbol

Symbol is a type of sign classification whose relationship in Peirce's semiotic theory with its referent is entirely determined by human interpretation of learned agreements, social conventions, or narrative rules established within a cultural context.

5. Nordic culture

Nordic culture is a culture from European lands that contains gods and goddesses who have characteristics according to their respective duties

which tells about the lives of gods and goddesses that describe heroism, wisdom, creation, division, destruction, and much more.