

REPRESENTATION OF ANARCHISM IN THE GAME TROUBLEMAKER

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ABSTRACT

Games are a medium often used by creators to convey messages to the public. Along with the development of technology, the number of games in Indonesia has increased. Games can contain positive sides, such as education and excitement, but that doesn't mean they don't have negative effects, such as violence. This research examines the representation of anarchism in the game Troublemaker, an action-adventure-beat-'em-up game that depicts the dynamics of teenage life in a school environment. The study focuses on identifying and analyzing the elements of anarchism expressed through the narrative, visuals, and character interactions. Using a qualitative approach and Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic method, this study employs the triadic model (Representamen/sign, Object, and Interpretant) to uncover the meanings and ideologies behind the anarchistic elements in the game. This Research indicates that the game represents anarchism through various actions such as verbal and physical violence, violations of norms, and resistance against formal authority within the school context. Visual elements such as character design, dialogue, and the chaotic school setting reinforce the image of rebellion within high school students. The study concludes that Troublemaker serves not only as entertainment but also as a reflection of social criticism toward authority structures in educational environments, which may influence players' perceptions of social rules.

Keywords: *anarchism, school, charles sanders peirce semiotic, game, troublemaker*

1. PREFACE

In the digital era, the world of digital-based games continues to grow with technological advancements. According to Arif Wibisono (2017, as cited in Rangan et al., 2024), games are a medium used to convey messages to the general public through entertaining gameplay. Over the past decade, the gaming industry in Indonesia has proliferated due to increasingly advanced technology, leading the Indonesian public to pay more attention to this industry. Behind the success of any game, there are always people who play a significant role in its creation. Games are generally played for entertainment, but many games, including Troublemaker, have educational and informative qualities in today's gaming industry. According to Wahono in Lutfiyatun (2015, as cited in Koriaty & Agustani, 2016), games are structured activities or structured art forms that usually aim to entertain and can sometimes serve as educational tools. Games are popular due to their enjoyable, motivating, addictive, and collaborative characteristics. While modern video games can positively impact society, they can also have adverse effects, depending on the genre or type of game.

The game Troublemaker falls within the action-adventure-beat-'em-up genre. This genre includes verbal and non-verbal violence among characters and is inspired by the Yakuza game series. Upon its release, Troublemaker received considerable attention from players, garnering positive reviews with a 9/10 rating on Steam. This game depicts the situation of school teenagers who tend to engage in anarchistic actions, often leading to acts of violence against one another. This is also closely related to the reality within the school environment, the education system, or other settings. Anarchism remains quite prevalent and can often be observed in the surrounding environment. According to Ainiyah (2018, as cited in Lohy & Pribadi, 2021), adolescents are in a developmental phase and, combined with external information and technology, can quickly adapt and absorb new knowledge due to their high curiosity.

Representing anarchism in video games involves visualization, narrative, game mechanics, and player interaction. In games, elements of violence are defined as images or actions that contain scenes or acts of anarchism. Examples include refusing to follow school rules, engaging in intimidation or bullying, and violating existing rules or norms. This study aims to explore the representation of anarchism in *Troublemaker* using semiotic analysis. The focus is to understand how anarchism among teenagers is depicted within the game. Unlike previous studies that primarily addressed the impact on players, This Research examines elements of anarchism in *Troublemaker* using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model. From an etymological perspective, the Greek word "semeion" forms the root of "semiotics," meaning "sign." Semiotics is the discipline that studies signs. According to Sobur (2017, as cited in Kevinia et al., 2022), a sign is a tool to navigate the world and interact with others. In semiotic theory, a sign is an essential element conveying meaning. It can be a word, image, sound, or Object representing something. Studying signs provides a new approach to communication and influences many aspects of communication theory. Generally, a sign has meaning; it cannot be a communicative object if it lacks meaning.

Semiotics provides a broad framework to analyze how various signs create and convey meaning. It investigates all possible signs and rejects "absolute" signs. The meaning of a sign is not fixed but can change depending on context, culture, and interpretation. When we observe a sign, we interpret it based on prior knowledge and experience. Semiotics also emphasizes the concept of representation, exploring how signs are used to depict or represent reality. Social, cultural, and ideological contexts often shape representation. In media, for instance, representation can convey social values or particular ideologies through images, words, and symbols. In communication, representation allows us to understand and give meaning to the world through media—such as films, television, advertisements, literature, and video games. According to Hall (2005, as cited in Santoso & Winingsih, 2022), representation is the ability to describe or imagine something. Representation involves mental ideas using language, enabling us to describe natural objects, people, and events, as well as imaginary objects, people, and events. One way of producing meaning is through representation, which works via a system comprising two essential elements: concepts in the mind and words in language. Concepts help individuals understand the meaning of something. According to Wibowo (2013, as cited in Novitasari & Nur, 2022), representation is the process of physically recording messages, concepts, or knowledge as a sign intended to explain something that is physically understood, felt, or imagined.

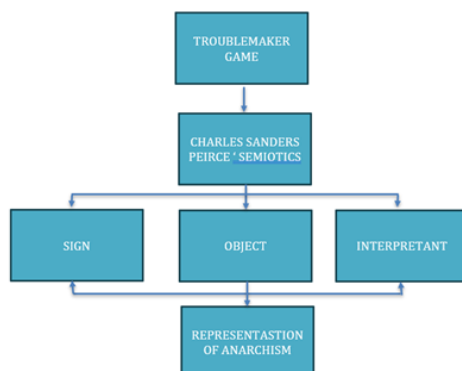
Other Related Research Representation of Marginalized Culture in Games. This Research indicates that online games can perpetuate negative consequences for intercultural society, as described by Roland Barthes, who suggests that bad habits can become normalized behaviors (Yonathan & Paramita, 2021). *Communication Patterns of Female Gamers: A Case Study on Mobile Legends Squad Resis.* This study is divided into four parts: communication among female group members while playing *Mobile Legends*, differences in communication patterns between female-only groups and mixed groups, the role of friendship in female communication dynamics during gameplay, and the communication strategies employed by female groups to achieve victory. The study thoroughly explains group communication patterns among women (Chen & Paramita, 2024). *Virtual Communication in Online Games: A Case Study on Mobile Legends.* This study reveals that virtual communication is prevalent in the *Mobile Legends* game. It explores the virtual world, virtual communities, chat rooms, MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons), bots, interactivity, and multimedia, all of which stem from the interactions and communications in the *Mobile Legends* online game. The findings show that virtual

communication significantly enhances effectiveness, allowing players to interact without face-to-face meetings (Wijaya & Paramita, 2019)—previous Research Related to This Theme. Research has previously focused on topics such as the semiotic analysis of the game Troublemaker, which represented violent behavior among adolescents. This study employed Roland Barthes' semiotic method to demonstrate how video games can shape cultural values and perceptions (Putra & Rinaldi, 2024).

In contrast, no research has examined the concept of anarchism within the Troublemaker game using Charles Sanders Peirce's methodology. This focus represents the novelty of the current Research. Charles Sanders Peirce developed a semiotic theory to understand signs and meanings. He explained that semiotics is the study of signs and how those signs represent meaning in various contexts. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, a sign is used for analysis and has various meanings due to the interpretation of the message conveyed by the sign. Peirce designed this theory to understand the relationship between a sign, the Object it represents, and the meaning the sign's receiver interprets. Charles Sanders Peirce referred to a sign called semiosis, which means that everything in the world represents a sign that is part of a process of meaning creation. This process explains how meaning is produced through the interaction of three elements: the Representamen, which evokes an object; the Object, which influences the formation of the Interpretant; and the Interpretant, which is the result of interpretation and may become a new Representamen in the following semiosis process (this process is iterative).

Peirce divided the three previous categories (Sign, Object, and Interpretant) into three additional categories. Accordingly, Peirce classified signs into Qualisign, Sinsign, and Legisign. Peirce also divided signs based on their objects into Icon, Index, and Symbol categories. After that, Peirce divided signs into three final categories based on the Interpretant: Rheme, Dicent Sign, and Argument. From all the categories above, this study chooses to focus on analyzing the representation of anarchism as a whole in this context using the triadic model, without specifically separating the types of signs. This is because the Research aims to understand the overall meaning produced by the signs in the game Troublemaker, which contains elements of anarchism.

Figure 1
Framework



Representamen or Sign is something the senses perceive or function as a sign, while Object means something that the sign refers to. The Representamen represents it and can be a mental representation (existing in the mind) or something tangible outside the sign, and the Interpretant

is the understanding produced in someone's mind after perceiving the sign, involving the relationship between the Representamen and the Object.

Games are a form of interactive media that play an essential role in shaping, reflecting, and defining social, cultural, and psychological realities. Games often represent social, political, or cultural realities in a particular environment. Anarchism is a philosophy that believes all forms of the state, government, and power structures are institutions that create oppression in society. An anarchist, therefore, believes in and adheres to anarchism. In other terms, an anarchist is associated with activities that involve violence and refusal to yield or comply with authority (Sagala, 2022). This study began by looking for games that have recently attracted the attention of gamers. After that, the researcher found an Indonesian-made game, "Troublemaker," with anarchist elements representing Indonesian culture's reality. Then, these elements were analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, applying the triadic meaning triangle, which includes Representamen (Sign), Object, and Interpretant.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, which Creswell (as cited in Murdiyanto, 2020) defines as an investigation into social phenomena and human issues. Qualitative Research requires meticulous data analysis to ensure it is well-accepted (Yuliani, 2018). The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis theory. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory is used here because it employs signs and symbols as meaningful elements within the communication process. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics approach allows a deeper exploration of meaning through the relationship between signs, objects, and interpretation within a broader context. This semiotic theory examines how a sign represents a situation, condition, or feeling within a particular context.

According to Sugiyono (2013, as cited in Tanujaya, 2017), the subject of Research is an attribute, characteristic, or value of a person, Object, or activity that possesses certain credibility, which is determined to be studied and concluded. In this Research, the researcher designates the game Troublemaker as the subject of the study. According to Supriati (2012, as cited in Hamidah & Hakim, 2023), the Object of Research is the variable studied by the researcher at the location of the Research. Therefore, the Object of this Research, serving as material to support the study, consists of clips or scenes from the game Troublemaker in the form of images that depict representations of anarchism within the game.

According to Sugiyono (2018, as cited in Suryani et al., 2020), "Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research, as the main objective is to obtain accurate data; without knowledge of data collection techniques, researchers cannot obtain data that meets the established standards". The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, documentation, and interviews. Morissan (2017, as cited in Suryani et al., 2020) states: "Observation is a human daily activity using the senses as the main tool". In this Research, the researcher observed the *Troublemaker* game directly to examine visual signs as references for analyzing teenage violence within the game. The researcher also utilized game media as a documentation method by downloading the game from an online platform.

Once data collection is complete, the next stage is data analysis. According to Sugiyono (2018, as cited in Salim et al., 2022), data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation by categorizing data, breaking it into units, synthesizing it, forming patterns, selecting critical data, and making





conclusions to be easily understood by the researcher and others. The data analysis technique employed in this study is a semiotic analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's perspective. The data analysis technique used in this research is semiotic analysis with the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce, which employs the triadic or meaning triangle concept. This meaning triangle consists of Representamen/Sign, Object, and Interpretant.

The stages undertaken by researchers in conducting data analysis based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics are as follows: (a) The researcher played and observed the game, focusing on scenes of anarchism in Troublemaker; (b) The researcher identified elements of anarchism violence within the game; (c) The researcher captured images from each anarchist scene within Troublemaker related to the study's theme; and (d) The researcher analyzed the elements of anarchism within Troublemaker using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The game Troublemaker tells the story of a high school student named Budi, who is highly skilled in fighting. Budi frequently gets into trouble, leading to him being summoned by the police. However, Budi's mother, who is raising him alone after the death of his father, steps in to defend him and prevent him from being arrested. To help Budi turn his life around, his mother transfers him to a new high school. After moving, Budi is determined to leave behind his troubled past and start fresh. However, due to the new school's alums needing help to secure jobs, the school organizes a fundraiser in a tournament where students fight one another for a cash prize. This tournament is called "Raise Your Gang!". The analysis used by the author is the semiotic analysis model of Charles Sanders Peirce. Charles Sanders Peirce's theory emphasizes a framework categorized as triadic or the "triangle of meaning" (Representamen/Sign, Object, and Interpretant). This theory enables researchers to analyze the game Troublemaker in greater depth, focusing on various elements, such as visuals, dialogue, sound/music, and gameplay. Peirce's theory allows for analysis at a deeper level of meaning, including the representation of ideologies such as anarchism. Through the signs in Troublemaker, such as character interactions or social chaos in the school environment, the study can explore how anarchism is represented as a social and cultural phenomenon or a critique of the system. Using Peirce's Theory, researchers have greater flexibility in analyzing various types of signs that appear in "Troublemaker", including visual signs (such as animations, school facility damage, etc.).

Table 1*Sign, Object, Interpretant*

<i>Picture</i>	<i>Sign</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Interpretant</i>
	Depictions of students sleeping on desks, with desks covered in scribbles and accompanied by dialogues like "Ohm."	The depiction symbolizes a lack of enthusiasm or apathy toward academic activities within the school environment.	Represents social anarchism in the youth environment, where violence is used to show strength
	It shows the interaction between two groups, with characters who express whole emotion on one side and look calmer on the other.	Emotional facial expressions indicate tension or protest against specific policies or actions.	This image represents anarchism because there is a formal policy that some parties do not accept.
	The lighting setup depicts the atmosphere of a nightclub with colorful lights, yet it takes place indoors in what appears to be a classroom.	Using a classroom as a location with party lighting depicts transforming a formal space into an informal one.	This setup could represent "anarchism" as a symbolic narrative about students creating their own rules.
	Four characters are sitting in a relaxed position in a room. They are wearing school uniforms but have different expressions and attributes.	The relaxed sitting position and the use of the classroom as an informal space indicate a change in the room's function from a place of learning to a place for relaxing or hanging out.	The relaxed behavior, use of the classroom for informal activities, and presence of alcohol in this image reflect a rebellion against the norms prevailing in the school environment.

The researcher applies Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis in each analysis using the triangle of meaning or triadic model. The researcher conducts a comprehensive analysis and provides interpretative results for each image. From these images, it can be observed how the scenes in the game Troublemaker contain elements of anarchism. The anarchism depicted in this game refers to rebellion, resistance, violations, and rejection of school authority rules. The form of authority in this game includes the formal authority of the principal and the informal authority of school organizations or groups.

After conducting research, I found that this game demonstrates the dynamics of social conflict among teenagers, which can be interpreted as a reflection of reality or the fantasy of its players. The game also depicts settings, costumes, and characters with a distinctive Indonesian cultural nuance often seen daily. Thus, players perceive the game as quite relevant to local realities. Based on this, the researcher also concludes that, apart from entertainment, this game can serve as a medium to critique lenient norms among teenagers and the educational system. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, this game can influence players' perceptions as part of entertainment culture or as a reflection of teenage life realities. As illustrated in the analyzed images, such as teenagers rebelling, fights among peers, normalization of actions that deviate from norms, bullying, and other anarchistic behaviors, these elements align with the dynamics of teenage interactions and the educational system in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This Research reveals that the game *Troublemaker* represents anarchism through symbols that depict resistance against social norms, authority structures, and the educational system. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis, the researcher found the following: (a) The student characters are depicted with modified uniforms, informal clothing styles, and additional attributes (such as bandages, glasses, etc.), which serve as symbols of rebellion against the formal institutional rules of the school; and (b) The characters' interactions show solidarity and a sense of unity within the rebellious group. This highlights the presence of community in anarchism, where the group supports each other in resisting the pressures of a more extensive system.

Using the triangle of meaning (triadic) concept, this study concludes that *Troublemaker* symbolically represents anarchism through visual modifications and character interactions that challenge formal authority. Through visual and narrative signs, this game becomes a reflection of the youth culture's resistance against authority structures that are seen as limiting their treatment and freedom.

Recommendations

For the gaming industry, games like *Troublemaker* can serve as an inspiration to create other games that deeply represent social or cultural issues. By utilizing strong visual and narrative elements, games can become a medium to critique or reflect social realities. For future researchers, future research can involve players' perspectives through interviews or surveys to understand how they interpret the representation of anarchism in the game *Troublemaker*. For Society and Education, society and schools need to provide better education to teenagers. Games that explore social themes, such as *Troublemaker*, can be used as educational tools to understand the realities of teenagers and the challenges they face, particularly in the context of critiquing the education system.

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