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**CINEMA AND ADVERTISEMENT: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE TRAILER OF THE FILM: "BAY E"**

**ABSTRACT**

Cinema, as an art form that aims to convey complex messages within a limited timeframe, utilizes multilayered codes to establish emotional connections, foster identification, or create alienation. This study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic model to analyze a specific visual segment from the trailer of Sinan Çetin's 1995 film, Bay E (Mr. E). Situated at the intersection of cinema and advertising, the research explores the historical evolution of communication—from oral to visual—and examines the trailer's strategic function in film marketing. Through a detailed analysis of color, lighting, costume, and character representations (including references to Freud, Chaplin, and Yeşilçam stereotypes), the study demonstrates how these elements reinforce the film's ironic and tragicomic themes. The findings indicate that the trailer employs a context-concealing strategy to arouse audience curiosity, reflecting the experimental and modernist tendencies of 1990s Turkish cinema. By bridging local cultural elements with global contexts, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the semiotic power of film trailers.

**Keywords:** Movie Marketing, Trailer, Modernist Cinema, Roland Barthes, Bay. E, Sinan Çetin

**1. INTRODUCTION**

One of the most fundamental activities in human history, storytelling has evolved in parallel with social and cultural transformations, acquiring new forms with the development of communication technologies [44]. In the historical process, this evolution from oral narratives to written texts and then to audiovisual media has profoundly changed individuals' practices of sharing experiences and producing meaning [47]. The communication journey of humanity began with visualization before writing and speech. At the beginning of human history, approximately 200.000 years ago, it is known that tools appealing to the visual sense—such as signs, symbols, and shapes—were used in communication. Humanity, which began storytelling by drawing various lines and shapes depicting events, objects, and figures from daily life onto surfaces such as cave walls, rocks, or felt, waited 12,000 years before using the first alphabet [16]. Indeed, visual communication tools have acquired new meanings not only in prehistory but also throughout history, constantly evolving alongside social changes [2].

Linguistic studies suggest that humans engaged in their first oral communication by imitating the sounds of animals and nature around them [22]. Sound lies at the core of oral culture. "You can immerse yourself into 'hearing', in sound; it is impossible to immerse yourself into an image" [11]. In oral culture, experience strengthens memory. To remember something in oral culture, formulaic thought patterns that aid memory,

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along with sayings containing rhythm, tongue twisters, and hand-arm movements, are used [62]. Over time, with the spread of speaking and listening activities, communication extended to a broader field, and under the dominance of oral communication, a collective culture prevailed [28]. With the invention of the Gutenberg printing press, humanity became acquainted with the recordability and disseminability of information, and for a long period, the printing press dominated information technologies. At this point, people gained the ability to access works from the other side of the world, translate books into their own languages, and preserve and transmit knowledge over long periods [55]. While the printing press increased individuality in the personal sphere, it also pioneered the opening of a new era in the social sphere by contributing to the spread of the Enlightenment movement [19]. Accelerated access to information under the leadership of the printing press expanded the influence of the Renaissance, and the fields of science, art, and culture—once monopolized by a certain class—began to be accessible to all segments of society. The parties holding economic and political power, on the other hand, sometimes spent their resources for artistic and cultural activities with an elitist class-based purpose. For example, wealthy Italian merchants during this period had their artists paint everything beautiful and desirable and recreate it in the most realistic way possible [12]. The development of printing techniques enabled the written press, namely newspapers, to gain global importance. In the subsequent process, the invention of the telegraph and Morse code expanded the possibilities of long-distance communication [27].

From the Industrial Revolution to the present day, rapid developments in communication technologies have created a radical change, shifting from the dominance of writing to the rise of visual and auditory media, thereby reshaping social and cultural life. Particularly in the 20th century, rapidly advancing communication tools, as McLuhan [25] emphasized, have functioned as extensions of human senses and restructured cultural frameworks. Since then, rapidly advancing technological developments have transformed humanity's life and communication practices "anew" and "fundamentally." The development of communication technologies and the internet has strengthened people's diverse skills. In this context, technology, which has become a powerful force affecting social life, has also brought cultural transformation [29]. The discovery of the telephone by Graham Bell in 1876 and the first radio broadcast in the United States in 1920, for example, caused oral communication and oral culture to regain importance and become widespread, as in the pre-print oral tradition. Indeed, the 20th century was generally a rapid period in which new mass communication and media tools emerged, developed, became widespread, and were later replaced by "newer version" media tools. The main reason for this can be attributed to the opportunities and convenience provided to people by electronic communication networks [23]. Historically, each newly emerging medium threatened the existence of its predecessor and diminished its significance [37].

Digital technologies have evolved into today's most widespread communication medium due to their speed, cost-efficiency, and interactivity [34]; specifically, Mialkovska et al. [39] note that tools offering personalization hold the greatest potential. This transformation has cultivated a unique digital culture, moving daily necessities online and positioning social media as a visual archive for image-based storytelling [5]. Such intensive exposure to visual digital environments has inhibited the traditional predominance of text-based communication [39]. In this context devices like smartphones and television have effectively reintroduced visuality into the dominance of the written age. In earlier years, cameras and photographic devices

required specific expertise and education, and the photos and videos produced could be shared with only a limited audience. However, today, visual content, which can be easily created by anyone, can also be widely disseminated to the masses. In this regard, in the information age, visual culture spreads from the bottom up [63]. Indeed, due to humanity's tendency to be captivated by every new device encountered as a tool, social, cultural, and artistic practices have also transformed in response to this new digital visuality [35].

One of the tools that has played an undeniable role in the return from the dominance of speech and writing to the visual world is undoubtedly cinema. "Cinema, as an art, is time engraved and sealed in the mind in all its factual forms and manifestations" [59]. Beyond its technical definition as the transformation of three-dimensional reality into two-dimensional narratives, cinema is conceptualized as a dynamic phenomenon and a distinct visual language offering superior realism [37]. Throughout its journey to the present day, cinema has not remained merely a function of recording reality. Drawing from diverse disciplines to reconstruct reality, cinema exists in a reciprocal relationship with its socio-political context, transcending the mere combination of verbal and visual elements [44]. In this context, cinema, which over time has acquired a dramatic narrative structure, can be said to be built upon a multilayered narrative structure frequently featuring cultural and specific codes. Visual codes and symbols in films are placed within the composition, arranged, and used to convey a meaningful message [58]. The communication expected to occur between a film and its audience depends on the formation of this meaning [64]. With a narrative structure that centers on humans and all human activities, cinema offers a very broad field of study and is therefore highly suitable for semiotic analysis. According to Metz [37], the autonomy of cinema lies in the presence of a linguistic competence within an art that aspires to be a language, and vice versa. However, cinema is unquestionably a complex carrier that is not easily codifiable due to reasons such as its narrative structure and the minimal distance between the signifier and the signified. Unlike a writer, a filmmaker doesn't have a dictionary, he draws his signs not from a drawer, but from the chaos itself [51]. Distinct from this artistic complexity, advertising functions as a strategic communication tool designed to reach specific audiences and influence behavior [33]. Rather than direct imposition, it utilizes persuasive linguistic methods to build subtle connections and strengthen brand identity [52].

Advertising accelerates market activity by streamlining product discovery and sales, while simultaneously building emotional connections and brand loyalty [7]. Advertisements vary according to the media (e.g., television, newspapers) and devices (e.g., smartphones, e-readers, laptops) through which they are presented [50]. In this context, advertising has a broad scope of influence, ranging from supporting marketing functions to stimulating demand, introducing new trends, and reinforcing customer loyalty. Serving this specific promotional function within the film industry, a trailer is defined as a short film emerging in the mid-1910s to capture viewers' attention and promote cinematic works [57]. In film marketing, audience awareness is crucial for reaching the target audience. Increasing competition and the abundance of film options have led producers and marketers to focus on public relations and promotional activities [8]. Functioning as a unique form of advertising that presents a 'free sample' of the product, trailers are pivotal for commercial success. Through the strategic use of visual and auditory codes, they effectively reach target audiences by stimulating curiosity and encouraging narrative interpretation [55]. Each film is viewed as a new product with a short and fragile shelf life; therefore, promotion, positioning, and marketing are of great importance. Major

production companies begin marketing campaigns before filming starts and continuously update their strategies [3].

## 2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Film trailers, situated at the intersection of cinema and advertising, serve the functions of persuading the audience and arousing curiosity [57]. Trailers are marketing tools that directly affect commercial success by presenting the essence of the film through short excerpts [8]. This study aims to examine the relationship between cinema and advertising by analyzing, within the framework of Roland Barthes' semiotic model, a visual excerpt selected from the trailer of *Mr. E*, a 1995 film by Sinan Çetin. Semiotics reveals how cultural codes create layers of meaning by analyzing the denotative and connotative meanings of visual elements [10]. This study investigates the role of trailers and meaning-making processes at the intersection of cinema and advertising by examining a selected visual excerpt from the trailer of Sinan Çetin's 1995 film *Bay E*. The visual is analyzed through elements reflecting the film's ironic, tragicomic, and experimental nature, and the relationship of modernist narratives in Turkish cinema with cultural and universal contexts is evaluated.

The focus of the study is to examine how the representations of color, light, costume, and character in the trailer visually support the film's ironic and tragicomic atmosphere. In this context, the combination of universal figures such as Freud and Chaplin with Yeşilçam stereotypes reflects the experimental approach of Turkish cinema in the 1990s. By emphasizing the role of film trailers in promotional strategies, the research will discuss how visual texts generate meaning within a cultural context. This analysis aims to contribute to film studies by shedding light on the semiotic dimension of trailers.

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic model based on the distinction between denotative and connotative meanings, the article analyzes a visual segment from the *Bay E* trailer and offers an original perspective on a rarely studied film in Turkish cinema. The finding that the colors, lighting, costumes, and character postures in the visual support the theme of irony highlights the experimental nature of the film, providing a new perspective on modernist and ironic narratives in 1990s Turkish cinema. Additionally, by identifying representations of universal figures such as Freud and Chaplin and linking local elements in Turkish cinema (Yeşilçam's leading man stereotype) to global contexts, the interdisciplinary approach strengthens the article's original contribution.

### Highlights:

- Investigates the blurred boundaries between cinematic aesthetics and promotional strategies through film trailers.
- Decodes the representational and associative layers of Sinan Çetin's "*Bay E*" using Barthesian semiotics.
- Analyzes the multisensory construction of meaning by integrating visual, auditory, and linguistic signs. Explicates how interdisciplinary frameworks enhance the interpretive depth of contemporary media artifacts.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study examined a selected visual segment from the trailer of Sinan Çetin's 1995 film *Bay E* using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method. Semiotics is a discipline that aims to reveal the representational and associative meanings of different sources, such as language, images, music, sound, and concrete action, and the choices made from these sources (such as texts, interactions, and events) [42].

Barthes' model enables the differentiation of the signifier and the signified within a visual, allowing for analysis of meaning production processes at the denotative and connotative levels. In this context, the visual segment chosen through purposive sampling (at 1 minute and 12 seconds, the cathartic point of the trailer) was examined in detail in terms of color, lighting, costume, character postures, and symbolic elements. The analysis aimed to interpret the film's ironic and experimental structure by decoding the aesthetic and thematic layers of the visual within the framework of cultural codes and cinematographic techniques. Thus, this study seeks to analyze a visual segment from the Bay E trailer through Barthes' semiotic method, examining its aesthetic and thematic layers within cultural codes and cinematographic techniques to elucidate the film's ironic and experimental nature.

Semiotics, as a discipline, studies the relationships among meaning structures, representations, and the interactions between them. These representations, also referred to as signs, can take various forms, such as linguistic-auditory concepts and images, socially regulatory symbols, visual images, objects, gestures, and facial expressions [66]. To define and delimit semiotics, it suffices to consider how the discipline itself characterizes its existence. According to Barthes [10], semiotics is a dynamic and continuously evolving field that fundamentally examines signs and sign systems composed of the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to a unit representing a concept or image outside itself, while the signified corresponds to the represented idea. Modern semiotic theory has two largely independent pioneers: the American school's Charles Peirce and the European school's Ferdinand de Saussure [41].

Peirce [46] argued that the meaning of a thought in the mind has no inherent value; its significance lies in what it can represent through subsequent thoughts, making the meaning of a thought fundamentally virtual. Peirce centered logic in his analysis and classified signs through a triadic structure: sign, signifier, and signified [42]. Contemporaneous to Peirce, Swiss linguist Saussure grounded structuralist thought in the concept of the sign [13]. In both frameworks, a sign is the product of a relationship within defined boundaries [1]. A sign functions as a structure connecting the signifier and the signified, reflecting another independent image; the signifier is a purely relational component and cannot be defined separately from the signified [10]. Linguists, for example, define sound as the signifier and its conceptual meaning as the signified [49]. In this study, Barthes' semiotic method was employed. Barthes expanded the concept of the "signified," which corresponds to the objective reality, by including a dimension of meaning, asserting that every phenomenon has both a denotative and a connotative meaning. According to him, language consists of elements of addition, and meaning is primarily an act of differentiation and abstraction [10]. For decoding the image and codes within the text, the distinctions of signifier, signified, denotative, and connotative meanings are utilized. These categories, which can also be referred to as style and content classifications, allow the abstraction of textual elements from context while simultaneously being influenced and transformed by the surrounding cultural context.

In this study, a visual segment from the film Bay E was examined using a purposive (intentional) sampling method. Purposive sampling refers to the subjective selection of a sample by the researcher that has the capacity to characterize the population [68]. Within this context, to conduct a holistic and detailed analysis of a single photographic image, the segment selected from the 2-minute 25-second Bay E film trailer was the catharsis point in the second half (1 minute 12 seconds), which was considered to have a multi-layered structure. Another

factor influencing the selection of this sample was that the visual was emphasized within the dramatic narrative through elements such as sound effects and scene transitions; however, the analysis focuses solely on visual elements, excluding auditory elements such as sound effects, music, or dialogue.

The selected visual segment was chosen because it contains elements reflecting the main themes of the film (irony, tragicomedy, individual inquiry); details such as the portrait on the wall, character postures, and the use of color and lighting reveal the experimental and multi-layered structure of the film. As a dramatic turning point in the second half of the trailer, this segment gains narrative significance through sound effects and scene transitions, enhancing its suitability for analysis. Furthermore, multi-layered symbols such as representations of Freud and Chaplin, Yeşilçam stereotypes, and the drama mask, along with technical details such as color, lighting, and costumes, provide rich material for Barthes' semiotic analysis of denotative and connotative meanings. As noted in the article, although the selection of the visual through purposive sampling is based on the researcher's subjective assessment of its "multi-layered structure," it renders the visual suitable for analyzing its aesthetic and thematic richness.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

*"The Strange Story of the Intellectual Mr. E"- "My son said, 'Dad, make a film where events follow one another and everything changes.'- So I filmed whatever came to my mind at an incredible speed. Bay E can be considered my most personal film"* (Sinan Çetin).

The 1995 film *Bay E* attracted considerable attention upon its initial release due to its extraordinary plot and unconventional, non-linear narrative technique. The story follows the peculiar journey of the main character, Mr. E, encompassing his internal reflections on himself, his loved ones, people he knows and does not know—in short, the "reality" of his entire life. At the beginning of the film, the protagonist, Mr. E (İsmet), loses his wife and embarks on an adventure to find her. This marks the start of the journey that unfolds throughout the film.

While searching for his wife, Mr. E encounters numerous tragicomic situations. At one point, he is mistakenly accused of a murder unrelated to him and attempts to flee from the police, only to be slandered by another woman he does not know, becoming the target of public outrage. The story continues with constantly surprising new ironies. Throughout the film, various socio-economic subtexts, references, common political representations, figures, and character types are employed. This makes the film highly suitable for semiotic analysis. Semiotic theory treats all forms of written, visual, and auditory content as readable texts. In this context, semiotics has broadened the concept of "text" into a more comprehensive phenomenon [3].

Umberto Eco fundamentally refers to three dominant conditions in a text: "Intentio auctoris (Author's Intention), Intentio lectoris (Reader's Intention), Intentio operis (Work's Intention)." According to him, *intentio operis* essentially aims to produce the model reader. The model reader is defined as: "the reader who reads the text in the way it is designed to be read, despite all its polysemous conditions" [20]. Polysemy, or an open-ended conclusion, is particularly a result of the positioning of relationships between images and representations on a multi-layered structure in visual texts. Sometimes, these visual representations can further reinforce existing meanings by being strengthened through linguistic messages. Prominent examples of this phenomenon are cinema and advertising [48].



Figure 1. Bay E trailer visual section  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lJpzZLyEmIs> (Film Trailer, Duration: 01.12))

**Signifier:** The portrait on the wall

**Denotative Meaning:**

A portrait of a man is hung on the wall.

**Connotative Meaning:**

When looking at the hairstyle and mustache of the man in the picture, it is seen that a nostalgic choice has been made. There is an allusion to Yeşilçam actors. Considering the types and character formations in Yeşilçam cinema, in male characters and stereotypes, the characters' background, personality, and socio-economic class are reflected in the hair, beard, and mustache styles. For uneducated, lower-class, or rural character types, long beards and thick mustaches are often preferred; in contrast, educated bourgeois male characters are often depicted with a clean-shaven face, a thin European-style mustache, and the neatly side-parted popular short hairstyle of the period (Figure 2). The man is wearing a white crew-neck sweater. This is also one of the common costumes used in the Young Turk male stereotype in Turkish cinema.



Figure 2. Hairstyles and Mustache Styles of Yeşilçam Characters



Figure 3. Excerpts from the Trailer of Woody Allen's Film *Bananas*  
Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJn2siU6KB4>

In the visual, the wall in the background and the picture hanging on it appear to be made of thin cardboard or a similar lightweight, careless, and cheap material. Cinematically, this gives the scene a cartoon-like texture reminiscent of comic strips, commonly seen in situation comedies and especially in Woody Allen films. This technique, frequently used in "New Hollywood" productions, particularly in Allen's films, separates objects in the composition clearly from the background, creating a kind of animated graphic effect. To support the sarcastic narrative of the image, character costumes and/or graphic elements (such as text animations) often use high-brightness colors and informal lettering styles that contrast with the overall scene (Figure 3). These productions generally employ minimalist and realistic sets to direct the viewer's attention to the characters, textures, and structures. In contemporary art, where visible reality has gained importance, it is widely believed that texture, structure, and consequently the perception of reality are fundamental indicators and the most evident evidence. From another perspective, Eco [21] states, "Structure is that which does not yet exist. If it does exist and we can detect it, we have merely captured one link in the chain that ensures the existence of a structure" (p:440). In this context, spatial and technical arrangements, detailed close-ups, and texture lighting techniques in contemporary audiovisual productions have started to gain attention, especially as they approach a three-dimensional sense of reality. Highlighting the portrait hung on the wall in the visual implies, given that photographs displayed in public spaces typically depict famous leaders or relatively significant figures recognized by society, that the man in this portrait is also someone admired and respected by the community.

**Signifier:** The man in the front facing the camera

**Signified (Denotative and Connotative Meaning)**

**Denotative Meaning:**

The bespectacled man positioned at the very front of the frame is looking directly at the camera and appears to be speaking.

**Connotative Meaning:**

The character speaking directly to the camera recalls a type of interview technique, whose use in cinema has primarily been possible through independent film works. In this context, experimental "film-within-a-film" productions come to mind. The story character within the film is aware of the situation and communicates something to the audience. This method, frequently used in epic theatre, encompasses concepts such as alienation and presentational acting.

Presentational acting aims to minimize the audience's identification with the character. In traditional dramatic storytelling, the actor is expected to embody the character to persuade the audience, whereas in presentational acting, a distance is created between the actor and the character. Instead of becoming one with the character, the actor stands alongside, creating the space needed to evaluate the character and adding a critical dimension to the performance [60].

Similarly, the alienation technique is designed to constantly remind the audience that they are watching a performance and to encourage critical observation of what they see. According to Brecht, who focused on theoretical studies of epic theatre, there are fundamentally two types of alienation: "achieving naturalized appearances by revealing or explaining the structures in the background to estrange the familiar" and "an alienating confrontation with the unknown, with previously questioned or reified structures of the self" [69]. This kind of awareness created between the actor and the audience removes the trance state intended in classical storytelling and establishes a space for discussion. The most common example of this is, as observed in the

analyzed visual content, characters turning to the camera and speaking directly to their audience.



Figure 4. Lennon glasses

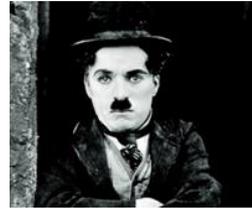


Figure 5. Charlie Chaplin



Figure 6. Drama Mask



Figure 7. Commedia dell'arte mask

Indeed, the character seen at the forefront in the visual is designed as an ironic figure reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin, featuring a geometric contrast created by his striped shirt and horizontally striped tie, thick John Lennon-style glasses, and a prominent nose. When examining the character's face closely, one is reminded of masks, an important element used in theatre from ancient times to the present for various purposes. Initially introduced for technical reasons in Ancient Greek theatre, masks were later used for grotesque expressions, and in Ancient Rome, for entertainment and comedy. Up to that period, masks emphasizing fixed facial expressions became central in Commedia dell'arte, serving to create the illusion of continuity for characters and types. Following the transformation of contemporary theatre toward realism and individuality, masks began to function as a tool to disrupt reality, emphasizing the extraordinary [65].

The face and expressions of the character highlighted in the composition, particularly the wrinkles on the eyebrows and temples, convey a look of horror and sadness, reflecting a tragi-dramatic emotion. Another interpretation could consider the positions of the background characters, who appear to be listening, in contrast to the foreground character being in an interview-like situation.

**Signifier:** Blonde woman in the back left, resting her hands on her chin

**Signified (Denotative and Connotative Meaning)**

**Denotative Meaning:**

In the visual, a blonde woman located at the back left of the scene rests her hands on her chin and looks toward the camera.

**Connotative Meaning:**

In an environment with multiple people, the body posture of an individual provides important information about their relationship with others [40]. The female character's slightly right-leaning position at a distance from the person next to her indicates that she is not very close to them. Additionally, the listening pose—supporting her chin with her hand—creates the perception that the listener is approaching the speaker critically and does not agree with what is being said [45]. The woman's blank and expressionless gaze can be interpreted as a result of her neutrality and disinterest in the matter, creating a dichotomy with the intense facial expressions of the front male character, who is the

main subject. Dichotomy, which refers to the ontological complementarity of inherent opposites in an entity, has historically been used across cultures—from epic narratives to fictional texts—to rhetorically strengthen stories and establish causal relationships within the text [43]. In monotheistic beliefs, dichotomy is associated with images of “heaven and hell,” while in Chinese narratives, it is depicted through the Yin-Yang, representing darkness and light [9]. Additionally, as a design principle, simplifying certain elements to emphasize others, or highlighting the foreground object while misting the background, is a commonly used method. In this context, the contrast between the intense theatrical expressions of the foreground character and the blank facial expressions of the background characters strengthens the dramatic structure of the visual.

**Signifier:** A man sitting in the center at the back  
**Signified (Denotative and Connotative Meaning)**

**Denotative Meaning:**

An elderly man wearing glasses, sitting next to the blonde woman at the back, is tilting his head to the right and looking across.

**Connotative Meaning:**

Examining the character’s thoughtful and absent-minded gaze along with his glasses, chin, and beard structure, it can be said that this appearance is often used in many productions for characterizations such as “philosopher” or “modern thinker.” Additionally, if this type is considered in isolation, his pensive posture, partially visible suede jacket, and overall facial features evoke Sigmund Freud, the founder of Psychoanalysis and a 20th-century neurologist. Freud is regarded as the founder of modern thought and the developer of Psychoanalysis, the first scientific tool to investigate the human “mind” as a spiritual entity [24].



Figure 8. The man sitting in the back

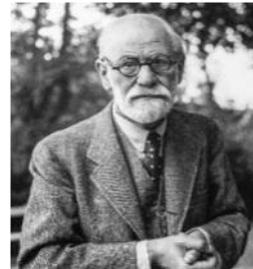


Figure 9. Sigmund Freud



Figure 10. Aristoteles Ethos, Pathos, and Logos [31]

Freud, who examined the concepts of “soul” and “dream,” which are among metaphysical discussion topics, has been described by the scientific community with terms such as extraordinary or revolutionary. The character depicted in the visual, with a thoughtful and absent-minded facial expression, parallels a caricatured representation of Freud. When considered as a listener in an interview, the character also evokes the type of critic or expert who is knowledgeable yet not

particularly enjoying the topic. This can be argued to be a concretization of the critical perspective found in Debord's Society of the Spectacle. According to Debord, in the society of the spectacle, if something is visible, it is good; if it is not visible, it is bad. The spectacle assumes its ontological existence as a state of flawless perfection [17]. From a visual perspective, two characters are seen in the back row, listening to the speaker standing in front of the camera and using all the narrative-enhancing elements of Aristotle's Pathos, yet appearing to have lost interest in the subject.

**Signifier:** Use of Lighting

**Signified (Denotative and Connotative Meaning)**

**Denotative Meaning:**

On the right and in front of the subject, a light source has been used sufficiently to illuminate the scene.

**Connotative Meaning:**

By examining the illuminated sides and shadow directions of the characters and objects, it can be inferred that the light comes from the right side of the frame. However, it is also noticeable that a fill light at a 90-degree angle has been used to illuminate the facial and expression details of the frontmost character. Alton [4] conveys the functional importance of using fill and additional light sources in the image with the following statement: "When a character lights a match, the flame itself glows, but its effect on the face and surroundings is very weak photographically. In this case, using lighting effects, which provide a great advantage in increasing the mystery of a scene, an additional effect should also be created on the face itself. Indeed, in contemporary visual arts, there is no better opportunity than mysterious lighting for realistic illumination" (pp:45-47). In the visual, a gradient-colored texture is created in the background with light, highlighting the portrait hanging on the wall. In this way, it can be suggested that an attempt was made to create cinematographic richness.



Figure 11. Original Image, Pixelated Image, RGB Color Codes of the Image (<https://photocolorpicker.com/>)

**Signifier:** Color Usage

**Signified (Denotative and Connotative Meaning)**

**Denotative Meaning:**

Yellow and red tones are predominantly used, and their saturation levels are high.

**Connotative Meaning:**

Throughout human history, various meanings have been attributed to colors. Color, especially in visual arts such as cinema, is a powerful tool for dramatic storytelling [16].

When the image is examined, it is observed that yellow and red tones, as well as warm colors such as orange and brown, are used intensively (Figure 11). In this context, to determine a detailed weight distribution among colors, the original image was pixelated to clearly present intermediate colors. Looking at the image in the RGB color space,

it is evident that, alongside the intensive use of warm undertone intermediate colors, cool blue tones were also utilized in character shading. According to studies in psychology, warm tones evoke movement and intimacy, while cool tones suggest calmness and coldness. For instance, staring at a bright lemon yellow for a prolonged period irritates the eye, which then involuntarily seeks blue and green tones to relax [56]. In this context, the image employs intense contrast and sharp shadows to impart a sense of "mystery" and "unconventionality" to the subject. Furthermore, the high use of color saturation and warmth exemplifies the effort to create "irony," as seen in the character design, by taking advantage of contrasts.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In this study, when the visual content under examination is translated into a system of signs and its denotative and connotative meanings are analyzed, it is observed that details within the composition, such as the portrait on the wall, the characters, and their costumes, correspond to specific sets of meaning sequences. Some of these include the enactment of an interview, Freud associations, elements related to the Yeşilçam "Young Turk" stereotype, and so on. It was also determined that dichotomous elements are predominantly used in the visual. Contrasting gestures and facial expressions between characters, as well as contrasts among colors, are balanced within the composition to strengthen the narrative. Additionally, through texture lighting and the use of highly warm and saturated colors, an impression of movement is created within the static image.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the posture and physical positions of the characters within the composition may provide clues about the storyline. The female character sitting in the background, positioned at an angle away from the person beside her, may indicate intellectual distance and/or formality between characters. When examined from a holistic perspective, the portrait on the wall and the main character of the composition—the bespectacled man—are placed side by side and symmetrically. This arrangement, where the gestures and facial expressions of these two seemingly opposing characters contrast, can be seen as evoking the "drama mask" symbol from ancient theater tradition, representing a combined comedy and tragedy dynamic along the axes of human joy and sorrow. It is also noteworthy that while the visual displays many unrelated cues from the source film, it does not provide holistic contextual information. Photographic data captured as stills from moving images, which usually depict dynamic objects and story details, are replaced in this visual by disconnected, static images and figures representing different contexts. Given that the visual is a still taken from the Bay E film trailer, it can be assumed that it aims to enhance elements of mystery and curiosity. This aligns with the approach of Finsterwalder et al. [70], who argue that showing too many details of the story in the trailers kills the sense of mystery for the viewer, prompting the question, "What's the point of watching if you show everything?" Indeed, Karray and Debernitz [35] describe this as an knowledge gap, suggesting that these gaps increase the film's financial success.

The analysis results confirm that the visual, reflecting the experimental nature of the film, strengthens the theme of irony through technical details such as color and lighting, as well as costume and set components. In particular, the heavy use of warm tones (yellow, red, and orange), contrasted shadows, and high saturation create an impression of motion and mystery within the static image; while the representations of Freud's contemplative figure and Chaplin's ironic characterization combine universal intellectual references with Yeşilçam stereotypes

(Young Turk hair and mustache styles), forming a multi-layered system of meaning. While the experimental and modern (discontinuous) structure in the trailer surprises the viewer, it can be said that the references to mustaches and Yeşilçam (Turkish classic cinema) aim to create a safe haven by providing a sense of 'continuity' [37], preventing the viewer from disengaging from the film. The findings indicate that the trailer visual is designed in a way that conceals its context, thereby enhancing feelings of curiosity and mystery in the viewer. Trailers are video excerpts frequently used in cinema and television for advertising, promotion, and marketing strategies. They generally aim to convey the main actions, characters, and ambiance of the story to the audience, arousing curiosity and motivating viewers to watch the film, and they hold critical importance in determining the success of the film [30]. In his research on British television commercials, Johnston [32] sought to answer the question of "whether trailers are merely shortened versions of feature films or completely re-created from scratch" and examined the potential transitional issues arising from broadcasting trailers across different platforms in terms of both their aesthetic and technical structure. Among the significant findings of the study is the extensive use of isolated close-up shots to ensure narrative fullness in trailers, as well as the increasingly complex editing and montage styles employed. Indeed, a recent study by Dilek Akdemir and Akgül Çelimli [18] also on trailers found that the Barbie film trailer, which remained prominent in the media for a long period, reached 1.3 million views shortly after its release and rapidly generated a transmedia spread, prompting influencers to produce Barbie-themed content.

While serving as an effective promotional tool, Tieri [61] emphasizes that trailers' multilayered content planes allow the multiple-meaning strategies used in trailers (cinematographic techniques, visual and auditory symbols, metaphors, colors, etc.) to be analyzed into sub-ideological components through semiotics and linguistics, highlighting the power of contemporary trailers in establishing socialization between the audience and the production. From a neuroscientific perspective, Boksem and Smidts [14] found that high-frequency neural activity during trailer viewing is a strong predictor of population-wide commercial success. This suggests that the complex semiotic layers and dichotomous elements identified in the Bay E trailer are not just artistic choices, but effective stimuli for capturing viewer attention and enhancing memory encoding, which are critical precursors to the consumption of experiential products like cinema. This strategy reinforces the marketing role of trailers within the film industry. Furthermore, dichotomous elements (e.g., theatrical expressions in the foreground versus impassive expressions in the background) and symbolic representations (allusions to drama masks) support the tragicomic structure of the film, illuminating modernist tendencies in 1990s Turkish cinema.

In this context, experimental productions like *Bay E* contribute to the cultural transformation of audiovisual arts by breaking traditional narrative patterns. The originality of this study lies in its semiotic analysis of a rarely examined Turkish film trailer, linking local elements (Yeşilçam codes) with global references (Freud and Chaplin representations). However, the analysis is limited because it focuses on a single visual segment, and the exclusion of auditory elements (sound effects, music) restricts a holistic trailer analysis. Future research may comparatively examine similar trailers to explore the evolution of trailers on digital platforms (e.g., transmedia effects). In conclusion, this study highlights the semiotic potential of film trailers, reinforcing the role of visual texts in the production of social and cultural meaning.

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The author declared no conflict of interest.

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#### **DECLARATION OF ETHICAL STANDARDS**

The author of the article declare that the materials and methods used in this study do not require ethics committee approval and/or legal special permission.

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