

FINAL THESIS

**THE REPRESENTATION OF HUMANITY VALUES IN SPIELBERG'S
WAR HORSE: A ROLAND BARTHES SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS**



COMPOSED BY

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Motto

Along the road to come what may,
Over the hills and far away.

Tribute

The researcher dedicated this work for

My mother and father, to family and friends who have supported researcher in every step and turn. As well as Academic Staffs who have patiently guided me.

Forewords

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Alhamdulillah, praise all be to Allah SWT for his guidance and blessing so the researcher may finish writing this final thesis paper as part of study conclusion in the Communications Study of Universitas Islam Indonesia entitled “Humanity Value in Movie: A Semiotic Analysis of War Horse”. The researcher expressed his deepest gratitude to Allah SWT who has given the researcher strength, guidance, and perseverance to undertake this research. The researcher also expressed his gratitude to his supervisor, Mrs. Ida Nuraini Dewi Kodrad Ningsih, S.I.Kom, M.A. Her invaluable guidance and patience have played an important role in the making of this thesis.

The researcher would also like to thank the lecturers and staff of the Communication Studies Program UII for their help and support during my study. The researcher expressed deep gratitude and thankfulness to his parents, other family members, and friends which provided the researcher with support and advice through material and mental support. Through this research, the researcher has attempted to contribute to the development of the Cinema industry through deep analysis on how message is conveyed in a movie. It is hoped that this thesis can serve as a basis for further research and discussion.

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Warm Regard,



Muhammad Voneza Wibella

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ABSTRACT

Muhammad Voneza Wibella. 19321133. Humanity Value in Movie: A Semiotic Analysis of War Horse (Bachelor Thesis). Communication Studies International Program, Faculty of Psychology and Social and Cultural Sciences, Islamic University of Indonesia. 2025

This research analyzes the representation of humanity values and anti-war messages in Steven Spielberg's film *War Horse* (2011). Employing a qualitative method with an interpretative paradigm, the study utilizes Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to deconstruct signs, denotations, connotations, and myths within selected scenes that depict acts of humanity amidst the backdrop of World War I. The theoretical framework for humanity values is based on Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of character strengths which includes love, kindness, and social intelligence.

The findings reveal that humanity values such as affection, loyalty, kindness, and social intelligence endure even under extreme wartime conditions, often manifesting in unique and context-specific ways that differ from peacetime norms. The film conveys its anti-war message powerfully through the innocent perspective of the horse, Joey, highlighting the futility of conflict, its devastating cost on all living beings, and the indiscriminate nature of its suffering. The study concludes that *War Horse* serves as a poignant cinematic narrative that underscores the enduring persistence of humanity values amid chaos and effectively critiques the absurdity and tragedy of war.

Keywords: Humanity Value, Anti-War, Semiotics, Roland Barthes, War Horse Film.

ABSTRAK

Muhammad Voneza Wibella. 19321133. Nilai Kemanusiaan dalam Film: Analisis Semiotik pada War Horse (Skripsi Sarjana). Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi International Program, Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya, Universitas Islam Indonesia. 2025

Penelitian ini menganalisis representasi nilai kemanusiaan dan pesan anti-perang dalam film *War Horse* (2011) karya Steven Spielberg. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan paradigma interpretatif, penelitian ini memanfaatkan analisis semiotika Roland Barthes untuk mendekonstruksi tanda, denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos dalam adegan-adegan terpilih yang menggambarkan tindakan kemanusiaan di tengah latar belakang Perang Dunia I. Kerangka teoritis untuk nilai kemanusiaan didasarkan pada klasifikasi Peterson dan Seligman (2004), yang mencakup cinta, kebaikan, dan kecerdasan sosial.

Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa nilai-nilai kemanusiaan seperti kasih sayang, kesetiaan, kebaikan, dan kecerdasan sosial bertahan bahkan dalam kondisi ekstrim peperangan, sering kali mewujud dalam cara-cara yang unik dan spesifik konteks yang berbeda dari norma masa damai. Film ini menyampaikan pesan anti-perangnya dengan kuat melalui perspektif innocent seekor kuda, Joey, yang menyoroti kesia-siaan konflik, biaya yang menghancurkan bagi semua makhluk hidup, dan sifat penderitaannya yang tidak memandang bulu. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa *War Horse* berfungsi sebagai narasi sinematik yang menyentuh yang menekankan kegigihan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan di tengah kekacauan dan secara efektif mengkritik absurditas dan tragedi perang.

Kata Kunci: Nilai Kemanusiaan, Anti-Perang, Semiotika, Roland Barthes, Film War Horse.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

B. Background

The definition of humanity appears intuitively graspable, yet remains difficult to articulate precisely. The meaning of humanity derives in part natural law and from shared moral commitments (Teitel, 2004). In peacetime, this set of moral values may be easier to determine, but the concept becomes more ambiguous in times of conflict, such as war, when person had to take the life of another human being who just happen to be wearing the uniform of the opposite faction in order for himself to survive the bloodshed. Such actions represent a fundamental contradiction to the very notion of humanity. Since the dawn of humankind, war has persisted continuously, as if it is part of human nature. Since war has become part of human civilization, people overtime have developed a shared understanding of morality during crises, enabling individuals to endure the extreme trials of warfare with greater psychological resilience. Rules of war have been known by mankind as far as the ancient Greco-Roman tradition goes. Although less complex than contemporary frameworks, these early norms, particularly those associated with *jus in bello*, played a significant role in re-establishing humane principles during wartime, from prisoner-of-war rights and the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate methods of combat.

In Islam, Prophet Muhammad commanded that those who did not participate in war shall not be attacked, houses of worship shall not be damaged, and unnecessary destruction is forbidden (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1731). In modern times, universally agreed rules of war, such as the Geneva Conventions, are binding upon all nations. No creature can life without the existence of others.

As of 2026, the persistence and escalation of armed conflict worldwide highlight the continued relevance of war studies for international peace. Comprehensive global data show that 2024 experienced the highest number of armed conflicts since 1946, with 61 active conflicts recorded across 36 countries, indicating a structural shift toward widespread violence rather than isolated outbreaks (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2025; Hurriyet Daily News, 2025). Prominent contemporary wars such as the protracted war involving Russia and Ukraine, which has resulted in tens of thousands of military and civilian fatalities and millions of displaced persons demonstrate the profound human cost of modern state-based warfare, with displacement within Ukraine reaching nearly 4 million and over 5 million fleeing abroad by

early 2026 (Reuters, 2026). In the Middle East, estimations indicate that the Gaza conflict caused more than 75,000 deaths in its first 16 months, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations (The Guardian, 2026). Such widespread and multifaceted violence not only disrupts social, economic, and political systems in affected regions but also raises critical questions about the efficacy of international law, norms of proportionality in warfare, and the mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Animals are ubiquitous to human life, and permeate a diversity of social contexts by providing humans with food and clothing, serving as participants in research, improving healing, and offering entertainment, leisure, and companionship (Bastion, 2015). Humans are not the only species present on battlefields; throughout history, various animals, including pigeons, camels, elephants, boars, and horses, have been domesticated for military use.

Since their domestication in mainland Eurasia, horses have accompanied humans to go to battlefields. They initially served as a means of transporting goods before evolving into mounts for soldiers in combat. Horses proved themselves to be the backbone of human civilization until they were replaced by man-made machines in modern times. The great service of horses in warfare is depicted in Steven Spielberg's film *War Horse* (2011). This fictional film centered on Joey, a Bay Irish Hunter horse in his journey through the Great War, also known as World War I, the last war in the history of mankind where horses played a big role in the war. This film portrays the realities of war through the perspective of a single horse, depicting its impact not only on the battlefield but also on individuals directly and indirectly affected by the war. The film features Jeremy Irvine, Emily Watson, Tom Hiddleston, Peter Mullan, and others in leading roles. Numerous films explore the human-animal relationship, such as *Life of Pi* (2012), *Air Bud* (1997), and *The Jungle Book* (2016); however, *War Horse* is among the first to illustrate the profound historical impact of a specific animal on human civilization. Moreover, in 2011 the National Board of Review and the American Film Institute named *War Horse* one of the top ten films of the year and in the following year, this movie has managed to get nominated in almost fifty awards although failed to win the Oscar. The awards won by *War Horse* include: (1) Film of the year 2011 by American Film Institute Awards. (2) Film music award by BMI Film & TV Awards. (3) Best cinematography by Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards. (4) Best sound editing: Sound effect and Foley in a feature film by Motion Picture Sound Editors.

Golden Reel Awards. (5) Top ten films by National Board of Review Awards. (6) Best cinematography by Satellite Awards. The film also received seven Academy Award nominations, five BAFTA nominations, and two Golden Globe nominations.

Anti-war movies are films that criticize armed conflicts in a general sense, illustrating that war is futile and a loss for all sides involved in the conflict. By nature, war does bring the victors what they wanted, but it profoundly affects both sides in ways that do not end when the war is over, its consequences often persist long afterward. In fact, its impact will never disappear from the history of mankind. Armed conflicts not only cause physical destruction, but also inflict deep psychological effect on those who are directly fighting the war or those who serve behind the line away from imminent danger. In various forms of cultural expression, such as arts and media, war is often raised as the main theme. One of the most influential mediums for disseminating anti-war messages in movies. Through visual and audio, film has the capacity to evoke personal feelings to its audience and convey perspectives on the impact of war. In the cinema industry, numerous movies depict war as their central theme. However, not all war-themed movies support nor glorify armed conflict. On the contrary, many if not most war movies explicitly or implicitly contain an anti-war message. This message aims to highlight the negative impact of war towards life in general. Anti-war movies often depicted the hardships endured by both military personnel and civilians, aiming to raise awareness of humanity values buried inside every individual. Anti-war movies are not exactly a new invention, since the early 20th century, plenty of filmmakers already utilize this medium to convey their criticism of war. For example, one of the earliest anti-war movies, "All Quiet on the Western Front," released in 1930, depicts the physical and psychological devastation experienced by soldiers during the First World War. This movie highlights how war, often portrayed as heroic and patriotic, was in reality a source of immense suffering for those involved. Movies like this highlight the old saying: "There's no true victor in war" because every battle fought, every war won inevitably results in profound consequences to every individual in the society.

Anti-war messages in movies had a tight relationship with humanity values. Values like empathy, human rights, justice, and peace constitute the core messages conveyed by antiwar films. In the movie War Horse, these anti-war messages were delivered in rather unique way, presenting the horrors of war from the perspective of a horse, a creature that has no intelligence

or knowledge for the concept of warfare and yet present in almost every human conflict throughout the history.

Throughout the film, viewers encounter numerous scenes carrying moral significance; however, the underlying ethical messages are sometimes overlooked by audiences. Many viewers primarily focus on the narrative, cinematography, and humor rather than deeper thematic content. However, when closely examined, a film can serve as a source of inspiration for the audience. (Rembang, 2015). Therefore, in this research we shall take a deeper look on the semiotic signs that appear in this movie to better appreciate the film as a whole. The analysis will adopt a distinct perspective, as the researcher acknowledges the need for an alternative interpretation. The researcher must emphasize that the analytical standard differs, guided by the adage 'all is fair in love and war.' Given that the film portrays extreme human conditions, social norms may differ than in peace time where people act in ways that are typically viewed as unfair and disregard the accepted norms of behavior.

As a Study in communication science, research on anti-war messages in various media investigates how communication channels shape public opinion, political engagement, and resistance narratives during periods of armed conflict. Empirical research demonstrates that individuals dissatisfied with mainstream media coverage are more likely to seek alternative digital sources and participate in anti-war political action, indicating that media consumption patterns significantly influence civic mobilization (Hwang et al., 2006). Recent discourseanalytic research on social media further shows that anti-war messages tend to employ transparent and reflective language strategies that encourage critical engagement, contrasting with persuasive techniques commonly found in pro-war rhetoric (Author(s), 2025). Additionally, scholarship on anti-war activist in the information age highlights how new media technologies enable decentralized communication networks that support protest coordination, collective identity formation, and alternative information flows beyond traditional mass media structures (Gillan et al., 2008). The significance of communication research on anti-war messaging lies in its capacity to reveal how mediated discourse influences democratic participation, challenges dominant narratives, and contributes to public deliberation about war and peace. By examining linguistic patterns, media structures, and activist communication strategies, this study provides essential insights into how contemporary media ecosystems shape political awareness and social

movements, making it highly relevant for understanding communication dynamics in modern conflict contexts.

Based on the information above, the film War Horse is very worthy to be analysed, as the film's broad audience includes individuals from diverse backgrounds who may lack familiarity with military contexts and thus may not fully grasp its underlying messages. understand the message of the film fully since not all people came from the same background and had the knowledge on how things work in battle. Therefore, the analysis aims to assist readers in comprehensively understanding the film's central message and the human values it conveys. Previous studies have examined human values in war films, including research by Euis Meinawati et al. from UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta on War for the Planet of the Apes, research conducted by Febrianto Adi Saputro about Saving Private Ryan movie using Max Scheler's hierarchy, and research by Enjelita Laowo and Catur Nugroho from TELKOM University about the humanity values in Indonesian movies. This research employs Roland Barthes' theory of semiotic analysis, as outlined in "Mythologies," where he states that the function of ideology is to expose what 'goes without being said' and to reveal the broader connotative meanings embedded in cultural texts. Accordingly, Barthes' semiotic approach is particularly suitable for this study, which aims to uncover the implicit meanings embedded in this movie. This research offers the readers a new insight on humanity values that emerge under extreme conditions and are rarely evident in peaceful daily life.

C. Research Question

Film serves as a medium for spreading messages to the broader audience. There are symbols or messages in movies that can be read and understood in a variety of ways. War Horse is an anti-war film that portrays enduring human values that still remain in the middle of the world's first global conflict, World War I or the Great War, where people from both sides tried to kill each other just because they wore uniforms that happened to belong to the opposite faction. This study seeks to examine the symbolic messages or the representation of humanity values conveyed in War Horse movie, as well as the types of moral behavior that may emerge

in wartime contexts and whether these can be recognized as manifestations of humanity values. In accordance to what has been conveyed in the background section, this study aims to find out:

1. What humanity values are represented in War Horse through Barthesian semiotic signs?
2. How does the film construct anti-war meaning through denotation, connotation, and myth?

D. Research Objective

1. To interpret the meanings of human values represented
2. To examine how the anti-war messages are conveyed in the movie.

E. Research Benefit

1. Theoretical Benefit

This study is expected to serve as an eye-opener regarding alternative standards of humanity values and offer new insights into the nature of warfare to the general public.

2. Practical Benefit

This research can guide future filmmakers in effectively conveying thematic messages through cinema, while enabling the general public to recognize and appreciate humanity values portrayed in war narratives.

F. Previous Research

The first previous research is the research by Novia Brahnita Arni, Ririn Ambarini, and T Sri Suwarti (2021) from PGRI University titled “An Analysis of Human Values in the Film

Maleficent and Its Contribution to Students' Character Building." This research is based on the film *Maleficent*, directed by Joachim Ronning. The research focuses on how the humanity values portrayed in the film may influence audiences, particularly in relation to student character building. A key similarity between this research and the current study is that both studies examine the representation of humanity values in film; while, a major difference lies in context where Arni et al.'s study explores these values in a peacetime, whereas the current study analyzes their portrayal during wartime. As for the theoretical framework, this research mainly employs Munir's concept of film as a teaching medium. The methodology involves observing the film and analyzing it based on the plot. This research reveals that messages conveyed in films are effective tools to deliver the valuable message to the audience. This study provides a methodological approach for analyzing the representation of humanity values in a film.

The second research is a study by Sambells and Chelsea Ivy Meaghan (2016) titled "Humanity in time of war? The evacuation of French and Belgian children to Switzerland, 1940-1945." This study investigates the evacuation of 60,000 children from occupied Europe to neutral Switzerland in times of World War II. A key similarity between this research and the current study is that both studies address human values during wartime; however, a major difference is that this Sambells and Ivy's research does not involve film analysis. This research involved the examination of historical records and interviews with individuals who experienced the events. This research found that the act of humanity in war doesn't always have a noble motive since it can also be used to increase influence or power for certain factions. This study encourages a more critical analysis of acts reflecting human values in war film.

The third research is titled "Humanism value of main character in *War for the Planet of the Apes* Movie" by Euis Meinawati, et al. (2020) From UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. This research focuses on the human values portrayed by the film's main protagonist. A key similarity between this research and the current study is that both studies examine human values in wartime, with each presenting war from an animal's perspective. However, a major difference is that this research analyzes a science fiction film in which animals exhibit humanlike behavior. This research uses the theory of humanity value by Windelband in which he mentions that "Morality can encompass life, particularly issues concerning human dignity and prestige." This research reveals that war films featuring animals as central characters can effectively convey messages about human values that individuals should uphold.

The fourth research is conducted by Febrianto Adi Saputro (2014) titled “Film Saving Private Ryan from the Perspective of Max Scheler’s Value Hierarchy.” This research examines the underlying values in the film Saving Private Ryan using Max Scheler theory of value hierarchy. A key similarity is that both studies analyze films directed by Steven Spielberg. However, this research does not primarily focus on humanity values in terms of social relationships, but rather explores personal dimensions such as spiritual and vital values. The methodology involves analyzing the entire film and categorizing the values depicted according to Max Scheler theory. This research found that war movies can portray human values—the qualities that define humanity—in ways that enable audiences to empathize with characters in the movie. From this research the researcher can take various considerations of human value that appear in film.

The last research is by Enjelita Laowo and Catur Nugroho (2017) from TELKOM University titled “Representation of Humanity Values in Indonesian Films.” This research examines the film Soegija. A key similarity between this research and the current study is that both studies employ Roland Barthes’ semiotic theory; however, a major difference is that this research is based on colonialism theme movies. This approach within a constructivist paradigm. This research found that valuable humanity values can be conveyed implicitly in movie. This study serves as an example of how Roland Barthes’ semiotic theory can be applied in film analysis.

The table 1.1 below presents a comparison of similarities and differences between previous studies and the current research. The numbering corresponds to the order of the preceding discussions.

Table 1.1

No	Similarities	Difference
1	Both researches examine how human values in film influence audiences.	The previous research explores human values in peacetime narratives, whereas this research focuses on their representation during wartime.

2	Both researches address the theme of human values in war.	This previous study does not analyze a film.
3	Both studies explore human values in wartime through films featuring nonhuman central characters.	The previous research uses fictional movies in which non-human characters display human-like morality, whereas this research examines a historically based narrative in which animal behavior aligns with natural instincts.
4	Both researchers analyze war films directed by Steven Spielberg.	The previous research emphasizes more on individual moral and spiritual values rather than human values within social or interpersonal relationships.
5	Both researches use semiotic theory developed by Roland Barthes.	The previous research analyzes a colonialism-themed film that does not depict full-scale war, although it includes conflict-related elements.

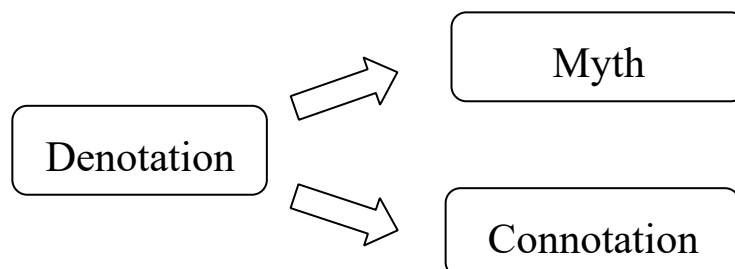
Based on the reviewed studies, this research fills the gap by applying Roland Barthes' semiotic framework which focusing on sign, denotation, connotation, and myth into a historically grounded war movie, namely War Horse directed by Steven Spielberg. While previous research has examined human values in films across peacetime narratives, fictional wartime settings, or non-film historical contexts, few studies integrate a comprehensive semiotic analysis with an explicit focus on humanitarian values represented in a realistic war environment. This research synthesizes methodological insights from earlier film analyses and extends them by systematically interpreting cinematic signs and symbols to uncover layered meanings related to humanity during wartime. Through Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation, the study explores how visual and narrative elements construct immediate and implicit meanings, while the concept of myth is used to interpret broader cultural messages about war, sacrifice, and human relationships. By doing so, this research contributes a nuanced understanding of how war movies encode and communicates humanity values, positioning film

not only as artistic expression but also as a complex semiotic system that shapes audience perceptions of conflict and morality.

G. Theoretical Framework

1. *Semiotic Theory by Roland Barthes*

Barthes' semiotic theory is divided into two levels of signification, namely denotation and connotation. The term 'connotation' derives from the Latin *connotare* (to mean) and refers to culturally constructed meanings that extend beyond literal definitions, culturally constructed meanings that extend beyond literal definitions, often involving symbolic, historical, or emotional associations. In his book *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes analyzes the cultural connotations of various aspects of people's daily lives in France, such as steaks and frites, detergents, Citroen cars, and wrestling. According to Barthes, the aim of myth analysis is to reveal what 'goes without being said'—to expose the underlying ideological connotations embedded in everyday cultural phenomena. Barthes also sees a third level of meaning—'myth'— which functions to define some people. According to Barthes, "myth" is at the second level of marking, thus once a sign-signifier-signified system is established, the sign will transform into a new marker with a second sign and create a new sign. Therefore, the concept of denotation will become a myth when a sign's connotative meaning transforms into a denotative meaning.



Map 1.1

From map 1.1 above, understanding connotation and myth requires an analysis of denotative signs. Technically, Barthes states that myth is the second order of the semiological system, while signs are in the first order in the system (i.e. a combination of sign and sign) and become a marker in the second system.

Denotation

According to Berger (2014, as cited in Nasution, 2019) in semiology, the meaning of denotation and connotation play an important role than they do in linguistics. Denotative meaning is literal and direct, and can be called a picture of a signified. In fact, the signifier and the signified form a linguistic sign. Denotation serves as a marker in the connotative system or myth system

Connotation

Connotation is a sign whose marker has an open meaning or implicit, indirect and uncertain meanings. Connotative meaning varies across contexts and will be associated with the culture that implied in the wrapper about the meaning contained therein (Berger, 2014, as cited in Nasution, 2019)

Sign

Signs are made from Signifiers (what you see/hear) and the Signified (What it means).

Myth

Myth is a communication system; it functions as a message. Myth cannot be an object, concept, or idea. Myth is a way of marker (signification). Myth is a speech type; anything can become a myth when expressed through a discourse. Myth is not

defined by the object of the message, but by the manner in which meaning is communicated (Barthes, 2011).

The selection of scenes for analyzing humanity values and anti-war messages in this research is based on a qualitative interpretive framework using semiotic and thematic principles. In Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, meaning is produced through signs that operate at three levels, namely denotation, connotation, and myth (Barthes, 1977). This concept helps the researcher to identify scenes that contain strong symbolic elements and are relevant to the focus of the study. Therefore, the scenes are selected purposively based on their representational importance, especially moments that clearly show interactions between characters, moral conflicts, or visual symbolism related to humanity values. This method is in line with purposive sampling in qualitative research, where data are selected because of their relevance to the research problem, not because they represent statistical numbers (Creswell, 2013). In addition, representation theory explains that media scenes are places where cultural meanings about war and humanity are constructed and negotiated (Hall, 1997). By combining semiotic analysis with purposive selection of scenes, this study ensures that each chosen part of the film contains meaningful signs that help interpret how humanity values and anti-war messages are encoded and communicated. Through this framework, the selection of scenes is not random, but systematically connected to theoretical concepts about meaning-making and representation in film.

Humanity Value

The goal of humanism is for people to live their lives in a way that is kind, that is empathy and respect for human dignity. Human and moral challenges are deeply connected to the core values of humanism. Challenges are deeply connected to the core

values of humanism. dignity. Humanism serves to renew the sense of humanity in order to live a better life (Euis, 2020). In this context, the film *Into the White* (2012) illustrates human values during wartime. Based on a true story, it depicts a group of German and British pilots during World War II stranded together on top of a snowy mountain, set aside the hostilities among them in order to survive in the desolate landscape. At the core of human values, Peterson and Seligman (2004) identify three personal strengths: love, kindness, and social intelligence.

a. Love

Love is a person's cognitive, conative, and affective condition. It is defined as the capacity to receive and express love, and to care for oneself and others by accepting their strengths and sins (Peterson et al & Seligman, 2004). Kelley, in Peterson & Seligman (2004) argues that love equips individuals to face the problems of everyday life. Peterson & Seligman (2004) classify love in three forms. First, love serves as a primary source of affection, protection, and care. Second, love involves caring for individuals who provide safety, comfort, assistance, and emotional support, often placing others' needs above their own. Third, love involves the desire to sexual, physical, and emotional attachments to individuals perceived as special, who in turn make one feel valued. Love can take different forms and evolve over time. A relationship can be formed with one form of love and later develop to acquire other forms of love. A romantic relationship is unique in that it is the only social bond that has three forms of love.

b. Kindness

Peterson & Seligman (2004) defines kindness as a character strength that motivates individuals to be generous and assist others freely, although the person being helped is unknown. This power encompasses two key components: sympathy and empathy. Kindness is closely linked to humanity, reflecting the belief that all individuals deserve care and recognition simply by virtue of being human, regardless of merit or reciprocity. Kindness isn't grounded on the principle of reciprocity, personal gain, or character development, although such benefits may arise incidentally.

c. Social Intelligent

Social intelligence is the capability to perceive and influence oneself and others in ways that enable effective adaptation to social environments (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Social intelligence is described as “the ability to understand and behave wisely in interactions with others.” The authors explain that social intelligence refers to the capacity to effectively navigate and manage complex social relationships, distinguishing it from general intelligence by emphasizing interpersonal understanding, adaptive behavior, and social performance within group contexts. This contemporary perspective highlights how social intelligence remains a central construct for explaining individual differences in social behavior and the ability to function successfully in social environments. (Liebeskind et al., 2023)

The researcher chooses to use the semiotic theory developed by Roland Barthes because it provides an approach to interpreting signs through two levels of signification, making it particularly suitable for this study. Barthes’ aim of revealing "what goes without being said" proves valuable in uncovering the implicit ideologies embedded in the scenes of War Horse Movie.

H. Research Method

Research Paradigm and Approach

This research uses semiotic analysis by Roland Barthes with an interpretative paradigm approach. The interpretative paradigm is selected because it acknowledges that truth and reality are multifaceted and can be understood from multiple perspectives, resulting in a high degree of subjectivity in interpretation. In this research, the researcher will use a qualitative method by taking samples from various scenes of the movie War Horse by Stephen Spielberg that depict human values as defined by Peterson and Seligman. These scenes are analyzed to examine how such messages are communicated. The researcher chooses this method because it enables a detailed analysis of individual scenes, consistent with Barthes’ assertion that semiotics views communication as

composed of Signs. Signs are composed of signifiers (what you see/hear) and signifieds (what it means). There's also Connotation, Denotation, and Myth.

To ensure the credibility and rigor of this qualitative semiotic study, this research applies trustworthiness strategies through triangulation and reflexivity. These strategies are essential in interpretative research to enhance the reliability of findings and minimize subjective bias.

Theoretical triangulation is done by combining Roland Barthes' semiotic theory with Peterson and Seligman's humanity values framework. Barthes' concept of denotation, connotation, and myth is used to analyze the signs and meanings in the film, while Peterson and Seligman's theory help to interpret the moral values shown in the scenes. By using these two theories together, the research does not rely on only one point of view and can produce a more balanced interpretation. Data triangulation is carried out by repeatedly watching the selected scenes and analyzing different film elements such as dialogue, visuals, character behavior, and narrative context. Each scene is examined more than once to make sure the interpretation is consistent and not based on a single observation. The researcher compares several scenes that show similar themes to find patterns related to humanity values and anti-war messages. This process helps to confirm that the findings come from recurring evidence in the film.

Reflexivity is important in this research because the researcher is the main instrument in interpreting the film. Since semiotic analysis involves personal interpretation, the researcher is aware that personal background and perspective can influence how meanings are understood. During the analysis, the researcher tries to reflect on personal assumptions and focuses on observable evidence from the film. Every interpretation is supported by specific scenes and explanations so that readers can follow how the conclusions are made. The researcher also keeps notes during the analysis process, including reasons for selecting scenes and how meanings are interpreted. This documentation helps to maintain transparency and allows others to understand the analytical steps taken. By applying reflexivity, the research aims to reduce subjective bias and keep the interpretation grounded in the film itself, while recognizing that qualitative research always involves an interpretive element.

The unit of analysis in this research is selected scenes from the movie War Horse which show important signs related to humanity values and anti-war messages. This study does not analyse the entire film scene by scene. Instead, focuses only on scenes that are relevant to the research objectives. A unit of analysis is defined as one complete scene that has a clear narrative situation, where visual elements (such as actions, camera shots, and objects), dialogue, and character interactions can be examined together. These scenes are chosen purposively based on how strongly they represent values like love, kindness, and Social Intelligence. Each selected scene is then analysed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework through the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth to understand how meaning is constructed in the film.

Research Object

The research object is the film War Horse, directed by Steven Spielberg and released in 2011, with a worldwide box office gross of \$177.6 million against a production budget of \$66-70 million. This 146-minute film is an adaptation of the novel War Horse by Michael Morpurgo, published in 1982. The novel was adapted into a stage play by Nick Stafford, premiering on October 17, 2007, at the Royal National Theatre in London. This film is selected because it presents a unique narrative perspective, i.e. the story is told through the experiences of a bay Irish Hunter horse. The focus of analysis is limited to scenes that depict humanity values.

Research steps

Researcher will watch the entire War Horse movie and identify scenes that reflect humanity values as defined by humanity value that is accorded to Peterson & Seligman. After that the researcher will break down each of the chosen scenes and analyze using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Each scene will be examined in terms of its Denotation, Connotation, Sign, and Myth. After conducting the main step of the research, the final and critical phase involves drawing conclusions. The conclusion must address the

research questions, specifically explaining how human values are portrayed in the film War Horse.

Chapter II

THE RESEARCH OBJECT

The unit analysis of this research is scenes that portray humanity value in movies. The film War Horse, directed by Steven Spielberg (2011), is selected for analysis, and scenes portraying humanity values are identified using Peterson and Seligman's definition of humanity as the basis for selection.

War Horse's movie plot

In Devon, England, a bay Irish Hunter was born in 1912. To his wife Rose's dismay, farmer Ted Narracott outbids his landlord Lyons at an auction for the colt despite the fact that the family needs a working horse that can plow the field, not an Irish Hunter. Their son, Albert, names the colt Joey and trains him to respond to an owl-call mimicry, with the help of his best buddy Andrew. They become really close. The child and his horse overcome all odds to successfully plow a rocky area, rescuing the family's land.

Rose tells Albert that his father still bears the psychological and physical scars of the Second Boer War as she hands him Ted's regimental pennant and displays his medals from the conflict. The family's crops are destroyed by heavy rain in 1914, just as war with Germany is declared, compelling Ted to give Joey to the army. Albert tries to halt the transaction out of devastation, but it is too late. Captain James Nicholls vows to take care of Joey after observing Albert's bond to the horse. Before the company leaves, Albert ties his father's pennant to Joey's bridle and promises to find him again, though he is too young to enlist.

Joey develops a relationship with Tophorn, a black stallion with whom he receives military training. Nicholls and Major Stewart are in charge of the flying column that is sending the horses to Flanders. They direct a cavalry attack through a German camp, but machine gun fire decimates the regiment. The Germans seize the horses as Nicholls and nearly all of his fellow cavalymen are dead.

A young German soldier named Gunther is tasked with looking after Joey and Tophorn. Gunther gets the horses and the four of them flee the fighting when his brother Michael is sent to the front lines. The boys are quickly found by the German soldiers and killed for deserting, but the Germans move on without spotting the horses. The following morning, a French girl named Emilie discovers them. At her grandfather's farm, German soldiers are waiting, but Emilie conceals the horses in her bedroom. On Emilie's birthday, her grandfather lets her ride Joey, but they encounter Germans who take the horses away. Grandfather of Emilie retains the pennant.

In 1918, Albert had finally enrolled and was participating in the Second Battle of the Somme with Andrew. Albert and Andrew miraculously cross over to the German line after a

British charge into no man's land, when a gas bomb detonates. Albert survives the gas attack but is briefly blinded, killing Andrew.

Under the supervision of Private Hengelmann, the Germans transport artillery with the help of Joey and Tophorn. He provides for them as best he can, but Tophorn passes away from exhaustion. Hengelmann, who had grown to care for the horse, is devastated by its death. He rebels against his superiors and is imprisoned, but not before releasing Joey from his reins. Joey manages to escape, barely dodging a tank, and gallops into uncharted territory before becoming trapped in barbed wire. A British soldier named Colin approaches Joey while carrying a white flag and tries to set him free.

Together, they free Joey after a German soldier named Peter arrives with wire cutters. Flipping a coin to choose who should ride the horse, Colin prevails and leads Joey to the British trench. As he recovers, Albert learns about Joey's rescue. Joey hears Albert's owl call just as he is about to be put down by a veterinarian who believes the horse is too hurt to recover. Joey is reunited with Albert after he describes Joey in great detail while still sporting bandages over his eyes. Joey will be nursed back to health, the doctor decides.

As only the horses of officers will be allowed to return home after the end of World War I, Joey is to be sold at auction. To bid for the horse, Albert's allies gather money. The winner of the auction is Emilie's grandfather, who makes the implication that the horse is all he has left of Emilie after she passed away. However, after Albert begs him to reconsider, the elderly man acknowledges the depth of the tie between the soldiers and gives Albert's pennant and Joey back. Joey follows Albert back to the farm where his parents live, where he embraces his mother and hands his father the pennant as Joey looks on.

General Information about movie War Horse



Table 2.1

Directed by	Steven Spielberg
Produced by	Steven Spielberg Kathleen Kennedy
Based on	Novel by Michael Morpurgo
Starring	Emily Watson David Thewlis Peter Mullan Niels Arestrup Jeremy Irvine
Screenplay by	Lee Hall Richard Curtis
Cinematography	Janusz Kaminski
Music	John Williams
Edited by	Michael Kahn
Production House	DreamWorks Picture Reliance Entertainment Amblin Entertainment The Kennedy/Marshall Company

Distributor	Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures
Release date	4 December 2011
Duration	146 minutes
Language	English
Budget	\$66-70 million
Gross Revenue	\$177.6 million

The movie *War Horse* is based on the 1982 novel of the same name *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo, which tells the story of World War I through the perspective of a young man and his horse, Joey. Spielberg became interested in adapting the story after witnessing the acclaimed stage production by the National Theatre, whose innovative use of life-sized horse puppetry emphasized the emotional bond between humans and animals amid wartime devastation. Recognize the narrative's potential for epic visual storytelling and emotional resonance, Spielberg pursued a film adaptation that would combine historical realism with a classical adventure style reminiscent of early 20th century war epics. Production of the film was undertaken by DreamWorks Pictures in collaboration with international partners, reflecting Spielberg's intention to create a large-scale historical drama grounded in authentic wartime settings. Extensive research informed the film's depiction of World War I battlefields, rural English life, and cavalry warfare, with filming locations selected to replicate early 1900s Europe. Spielberg emphasized practical effects, natural lighting, and traditional cinematography to evoke the aesthetic of classic cinema while maintaining historical credibility. This approach positioned *War Horse* not only as a literary adaptation but also as a tribute to the cinematic traditions of war storytelling, blending personal narrative with broader historical context to explore themes of survival and the human cost of conflict.



Chapter III

FINDINGS

a. Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research by analyzing selected scenes from War Horse using the semiotic framework of Roland Barthes. From the total number of scenes screened in the film, 12 scenes were purposively selected for in-depth analysis due to their analytical relevance. The following scenes were selected based on their explicit visual and verbal indicators of humanity values, as well as their representation of anti-war messages. Each selected scene is considered analytically significant because it contains strong symbolic elements that reveal how the film constructs meanings related to humanity and the consequences of war.

Table 3.1

Scene 1	
 <p style="text-align: center;">(A)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">(B)</p>
Time	01.06.51
Sign	Siblings, voice tone, persuasion
Character	Gunther, Michael

Dialogue	<p>Gunther: “You are not going, I’ll tell them that you are only fourteen, that you are a boy!”</p> <p>Michael: “Father signed me in; he knew</p>
	<p>my age and so do they”</p> <p>Gunther: “I promised to her (their mother), I made a vow and promise that you will be safe with me Michael. They never have made a count, there’s too many of us, you can stay here, sleep underneath the bed until they all gone”</p> <p>Michael: “Then what? Gunther, I will be fine, and when all the war machine breaks down and they call for horses, I’ll see you at front and we will be together again”</p>

Denotation

This scene depicted couple of young German siblings which the older brother tries to persuade his younger brother who’s are underage to stay in desperate speaking tone. Contrary to previous scenes, this scene utilizes more shaky camera movement and darker colour for visual ambience. The scene taken place in a military camp with soldiers standing in columns. The dialogue of characters in this scene emphasizes on the big brother’s promise toward his parents to keep his younger brother safe.

Connotation



The dialogue in this scene signified the character’s expression of love. Gunther’s desperate tone in speaking reinforced this idea, it reflects of one love, kindness and care to their kin. Their fearful tone and confined setting symbolize vulnerability and the desire for safety rather than glory. The visual colour kontras from earlier scene of cavalry charge to this scene presented a rather ironical suggestion where the previous battle scene has more vivid and brighter

background while this scene use darker and grimmer surrounding colours. This visual irony and fact that Michael is underage signifies how the innocents being caught in the brutality of war. Especially with the columns of soldiers in the background still wearing *Pickelhaube* helmet stated that it was still very early on the war, it stated that even in its infancy, war already dragged the innocents. The shaky movement of the camera in this scene symbolized how tense the situation actually is for the siblings as it was matter of life and death.

Myth

This scene challenges the myth of heroic patriotism. Instead of presenting soldiers as proud warriors, it portrays them as frightened young men who simply want to survive. The scene reinforces the anti-war message that war forces individuals into moral dilemmas were love for family conflicts with obedience to authority. It constructs war as a system that punishes compassion and individual choice, showing that true humanity values is often contrasted with the rigid demands of militarism.

Table 3.2

Scene 2	
	
(A)	(B)
Time	01.30.00
Sign	Dialogue, action
Character	Hengelmann, Unnamed Officer, Joey, Tophorn

Dialogue	<p>Unnamed Officer: “Hengelmann! These are yours. They look strong, should last a month or two”</p> <p>Hengelmann: “(to the horses) You’re beautiful, it’s a pity they found you. Such a pity”</p> <p>Unnamed Officer: “Hengelmann! Bring up another horses, Black one!”</p>
	<p>Hengelmann: “He’s good horse sir, but if we move him up to the heavy gun he will be no use at all because of his condition, his leg sir”</p> <p>Unnamed Officer: “You’ve given them a name? you should not give name to something that you certainly will lose”</p>

Denotation

In this scene, Joey and other horses are forced by German soldiers to pull a very heavy artillery cannon up a steep muddy hill. The horses struggle physically, breathing heavily, one of them collapse because they cannot continue anymore and instantly putted out of its misery by lead. War torn exhausted looking soldiers shout commands and push them to keep moving. The environment looks dark and dirty, dominated by brown and grey colours. The camera shows close-up shots of the horse tired face and bodies, and also wide shots to show how heavy and difficult the situation is. The sound of wheels, mud, and heavy breathing makes the scene feel intense and painful.



Connotation

This scene shows clearly the suffering of innocent creatures who do not understand the war. The horses here symbolize purity and innocence. The way they are forced to pull weapons of destruction shows the absence of kindness and how war removes compassion. There is no love in this situation, only orders and force. Compared to the earlier scenes where Albert treated Joey with care, this moment strongly contrasts the loss of love and emotional bond. The close-up shots make the audience feel empathy, which are a trait to social intelligence, because audience are invited to emotionally recognize the injustice happening to the horses.

Myth this scene presents war as a event that sacrifices not only soldiers but also innocent creatures and even future generations. The artillery that the horses are pulling represents destruction that will continue beyond the present moment. War here is not shown as heroic, but as something that destroys humanity values slowly. It shows that when humanity values such as kindness and love are removed, what remains is exploitation and suffering. The scene also suggests that the consequences of war do not stop on the battlefield, but can affect the future, because violence creates a cycle that continues. In this way, the film reinforces its antiwar message, displaying that war damages innocence, removes compassion, and creates longterm suffering for both humans and animals.

Table 3.3

Scene 3

Scene 3	
	
(A)	(B)
Time	01.53.04
Sign	Dialogue between enemy, action, gesture
Character	Joey, Peter, Colin

Dialogue	<p>Peter: “I tough you might need this, for the barbed wire”</p> <p>Colin: “You speak a good English”</p> <p>Colin: “So how’s the housing in your trench?”</p> <p>Peter: “Delightful, we read, we knit sweater, and train our rats to perform circus tricks”</p> <p>Colin: “if you need any more rats, we could always send them off to yours”</p> <p>Colin: “Alright Fritz, you call it”</p> <p>Peter: “My name’s not Fritz, it is Peter”</p> <p>Colin; “I am Colin, Thanks. See you later mate”</p>
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Denotation



Joey runs into no man’s land and gets trapped in barbed wire between British and German trenches. He struggles and injures himself while both sides initially aim their weapons. A temporary truce happens when one soldier from each side carefully approaches Joey to cut him free. The environment is dark, foggy, and filled with destroyed battlefield remains. The camera alternates between long shots showing the dangerous open space and close-ups of Joey tangled in the wire. The sound is mostly quiet except for distant gunfire and nervous speaking voices. The dialogue between the two soldiers is calm and respectful despite them being enemies.

Connotation

This scene strongly represents kindness and shared humanity values in the middle of violence. Even though the soldiers belong to opposing sides, they choose compassion over hostility. Their cooperation shows social intelligence, because they recognize each other as fellow humans instead of enemies. Joey in this scene visualized as neutral party which symbolizes innocence caught in human conflict, and the soldiers freeing him becomes a shared moral action. The quiet atmosphere and careful camera focus create emotional tension and empathy, highlighting how fragile life is during war. This moment contrasts sharply with the usual brutality of the battlefield.

Myth the scene suggests that beneath uniforms and national divisions, all humans share the same basic humanity. It challenges the idea that enemies must always hate each other. Instead, it presents war as an artificial barrier that separates people who are capable of kindness and cooperation. The act of saving Joey reinforces the anti-war message that compassion can still exist even in extreme situations, and that war is unnatural because it forces people to ignore their basic human values of love and empathy. Therefore, reinforcing the idea how pointless war actually is.

Table 3.4

Scene 4	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>(A)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>(B)</p> </div> </div>	
Time	01.01.04
Sign	Action, voice tone, dialogue
Character	Major Jamie Stewart, unnamed German officer, Tophorn
Dialogue	Unnamed Officer: “What? Do you think our garrison, on open ground, will be undefended? Look at yourself!! Who do you think you are?!”

Denotation

After a failed British cavalry charge, Major Jamie Stewart is captured by German forces. Many of his soldiers lie dead or wounded on the battlefield, and the surviving cavalymen are surrounded and disarmed. A German officer confronts Stewart and criticizes his decision to launch a direct charge, calling it foolish and questioning the unnecessary loss of life. The setting is filled with fallen soldiers and horses, broken equipment, and smoke from battle. The camera shows wide shots of the battlefield destruction and close-ups of Stewart's exhausted and defeated expression. The tone of the dialogue is firm and critical, while the atmosphere feels heavy and somber.



Connotation

This scene connotes the tragic consequences of poor leadership and blind military tradition. The German officer's reprimand highlights the lack of social intelligence in Stewart's tactical decision, emphasizing how pride and outdated strategies can cost many lives. The dead soldiers and horses visually represent the price of such mistakes. There is an absence of kindness and love, as the men become victims of decisions made by those in command. The emotional weight of the scene forces the audience to confront how war often sacrifices individuals for questionable objectives.

Myth the scene breaks the myth of glorious cavalry heroism and replaces it with the reality of senseless loss. The German officer's criticism suggests that even enemies can recognize the absurdity of war decisions. This reinforces the anti-war message that war is driven by flawed human judgment and systems that value victory over life. It presents war as a structure where authority figures can waste lives through pride or miscalculation, showing that the true outcome of such actions is not honor but rather shared tragedy which has been overlooked for millennia.

Table 3.5

Scene 5

	
Time	00.44.20
Sign	Desperate persuasion, voice tone
Character	Captain Nicholls, Albert
Dialogue	<p>Captain Nicholls: “And how old are you, Albert?”</p> <p>Albert: “Nineteen, sir.”</p> <p>Captain Nicholls: “Is that the truth?”</p> <p>Albert: “No sir. But...but I look nineteen and I’m bigger than most nineteen-year-olds, sir! And I’m strong, sir! And I... I’m not afraid of anything.”</p>

Denotation

Captain Nicholls buys Joey to become his mount. Albert runs after him and insists that he should be allowed to join the army so he can stay with his horse. Albert speaks emotionally and tries to convince Nicholls that he is capable of serving. Captain Nicholls listens but calmly refuses because Albert is too young. The scene takes place in recruitment event at Albert’s hometown with newly enlisted soldiers preparing for departure. The camera focuses on medium and close-up shots of Albert and Nicholls, highlighting Albert’s desperation and

Nicholls composed reaction. The dialogue is emotional on Albert’s side and gentle but firm from Nicholls.

Connotation

This scene shows strong love between Albert and Joey, as Albert is willing to risk his safety just to remain with his horse. His emotional plea reflects attachment and loyalty. Captain Nicholls response demonstrates kindness and social intelligence, because he understands Albert’s feelings but also recognizes the danger of war and the responsibility to protect a literal child from it. The interaction suggests a moment where compassion briefly interrupts the harsh reality of military duty.

Myth

At the myth level, the scene presents war as something that attracts youthful idealism but is controlled by adult authority that knows its dangers. It reinforces the anti-war message by showing that war is not a place for innocence. Albert’s desire to follow Joey symbolizes how war pulls even the young into its orbit, while Nicholls’ refusal represents an attempt to preserve innocence and morality. The scene suggests that true humanity lies in protecting the young from violence rather than glorifying participation in war.

Table 3.6

Scene 6

Scene 6	
	
Time	00.56.04

Sign	Intention, number of audiences
Character	Major Jamie Stewart
Dialogue	Major Jamie Stewart: “Gentleman. It is an honor to ride beside you. Make the Kaiser rue the day he dared to cross swords with us. Let every man make himself, his King, his country, and his fallen comrades proud! Be brave. Fear God. Honor the King!” All England Soldier: “Fear God. Honor the King!”
	Major Jamie Stewart: “Draw swords!”

Denotation

Before the cavalry charge, Major Stewart lines up his mounted soldiers and gives a short speech to encourage them. The men sit on their horses in formation, holding their weapons while listening closely. The environment is a forest opening area with morning light and light fog. The camera stayed still at distance at distance showing the whole picture of the numbers of men. There are medium and close-up shots that focus on Stewart while he speaks, and wide shots that emphasize the size and order of the cavalry unit. His voice is confident and motivational, while the soldiers remain mostly silent.

Connotation



Visually, the organized formation and calm lighting create a sense of discipline and unity. Stewart’s speech represents leadership and duty, appealing to the soldiers’ sense of honor and chivalry. At the same time, the tense facial expressions and quiet atmosphere suggest fear hidden beneath courage. The scene contains a moral contrast which on the surface it shows bravery and loyalty as form of love toward country and comrades, but it also hints at the emotional pressure placed on the soldiers. Stewart tries to inspire confidence, showing a form of social intelligence in motivating his men, yet the calm before the charge creates dramatic irony because the audience senses the danger ahead.

Myth

This scene builds the traditional image of heroic warfare, where soldiers are united under a leader and ready to sacrifice themselves. However, when viewed together with what happens after the charge, it becomes a critique of that myth. The speech symbolizes how war uses ideas of honor and unity to prepare men for sacrifice. This supports the film's anti-war message by showing that behind inspiring words lies the reality of massive loss. The scene suggests that moral values like loyalty and courage are often manipulated in war, turning human virtues into tools that send people toward destruction.

Table 3.7

Scene 7

Scene 7	
	
Time	00.10.10
Sign	Confrontation, reassurance
Character	Rosie, Ted

Dialogue	<p>Rosie: How much, Ted Narracott?</p> <p>Ted: I won't tell you a lie, though I would love to. Thirty guineas.</p> <p>Rosie: Thirty guineas! He's not worth ten! Are you out of your mind? What about the rent?</p> <p>Ted: He's a strong one, Rosie. Look at the way he holds his head!</p>
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Denotation

Ted brings Joey home, Rosie then asks him how much money he spent to buy the horse. They stand outside their farmhouse while Joey is nearby. Ted hesitates before answering, and Rosie reacts with shock and frustration when she learns the high price. Their dialogue is tense and emotional, showing a disagreement between spouse. The setting is simple and rural, with warm natural lighting and earthy colors. The camera uses medium shots to capture both characters in the same frame, focusing on their facial expressions and body language during the argument.

Connotation


This scene reflects the struggle of a working-class family trying to survive financially. Rosie's reaction shows concern and responsibility for the family's wellbeing, while Ted's decision to buy Joey suggests pride and personal hope. Their argument reveals love in the form of family care, even though it appears as conflict. Rosie's worry represents kindness toward her family, as she fears the purchase may endanger their survival. The interaction also shows social intelligence, since both characters understand the consequences of their choices and try to negotiate their responsibilities. The warm colors contrast with the tension, suggesting that family bonds remain strong despite the hardship.

Myth

The scene presents the everyday human cost beyond personal ambition and economic struggle. It suggests that before war even begins, ordinary families already face difficult moral and financial decisions. The emphasis on family love and responsibility reinforces the idea that humanity values exist in simple domestic life. When connected to the later events of war, the scene strengthens the anti-war message by reminding the audience what is at stake peaceful family stability that can easily be destroyed by larger forces beyond their control.

Table 3.8

Scene 8

	
Time	02.09.20
Sign	Affection, solidarity

Character	Colin, Albert
Dialogue	<p>Colin: “We’ve all clubbed together. It’s everything we have. There’s twenty-nine pounds there. Buy him back.”</p> <p>Albert: “Does the Major know?”</p> <p>Colin: “The Major put in ten. Mum’s the word where the Major’s concerned. Your friend on the crutches over there.”</p>

Denotation

Joey is put in an auction to be sold. Albert wants to buy him back but does not have enough money. Seeing this, Albert’s fellow soldiers gather around and voluntarily contribute their money to help him. The scene takes place in an open auction area with civilians and soldiers watching. The camera focuses on various characters bidding on the auction, and on Albert’s emotional reaction. The colors used in this scene are warmer compared to previous battlefield scenes, and the background sound is calmer, filled with voices of the crowd and occasional quiet music.

Connotation



This scene strongly expresses kindness and solidarity among the soldiers. Their willingness to share their limited money shows empathy and mutual care formed through shared wartime experience. It also represents love, not only Albert’s love for Joey but also the emotional bond between soldiers who support one another. Their collective action demonstrates social intelligence, as they recognize the importance of Joey to Albert’s emotional recovery after war. The warm lighting and softer sound create a feeling of relief and hope, contrasting with earlier scenes of violence.

Myth

the scene naturalizes the idea that shared suffering in war can produce deep human solidarity. It promotes a view where compassion and cooperation become a form of healing after destruction. At the same time, it subtly suggests that ordinary people, not institutions, are the ones who preserve humanity values after war. This supports the anti-war message by implying that what truly restores meaning after conflict is not victory, but human connection. The representation benefits the idea that community and empathy are more powerful than the divisions created by war.

Table 3.9

Scene 9

Scene 9	
	
Time	00.40.51
Sign	Affection, Love
Character	Rosie, Ted Narracot
Dialogue	Ted: "I used to believe that God gave each man his fair portion of bad luck. I don't feel that any more. I've had more than my share. You'll stop loving me, Rose. And I won't blame you when you do." Rosie: "Well, I might hate you more but I'll never love you less."

Denotation

After the heavy rain destroys their crops, Ted and Rosie talk inside their small farmhouse about their worsening situation. The room is dimly lit, with simple furniture that shows their modest living condition. Ted looks stressed and defeated, while Rosie speaks in a worried but controlled tone. They stand close to each other while discussing their financial problems. The camera for this scene uses medium and close-up shots to focus on their faces and body language. The color inside the house is warm but muted, and the background is quiet, making their conversation the main focus.

Connotation


The dark indoor setting creates a feeling of emotional closeness and pressure at the same time. Their home, which should be a safe space, now becomes a place filled with anxiety. The conversation shows love in the way they share their worries and face hardship together. Rosie's careful tone reflects kindness and concern for the family's future, while Ted's defeated posture shows the heavy responsibility he carries. Their exchange demonstrates social intelligence and love, as both try to understand their reality and communicate honestly about their problems. The muted warm colors in the dark environment suggest fragile comfort that is being threatened.

Myth

The scene naturalizes the idea that family becomes the last line of stability during crisis. It presents a worldview where survival depends mainly on personal resilience and domestic unity. This representation makes economic struggle appear as a normal part of ordinary life, something families are expected to endure quietly. When connected to the later impact of war, it strengthens the anti-war message by showing that conflict does not happen in isolation but it falls on top of already fragile lives. The ideology that becomes common sense here is that hardship is carried privately by families, while larger forces continue to shape their fate.

Table 3.10

Scene 10

	
Time	01.10.40
Sign	Care, Social Intelligence
Character	Michael, Gunther
Dialogue	Michael: "Will Father be ashamed?" Günther: "He will pretend to be. Maybe at first, he will be. But in the end, he will be glad." Michael: "And us? What about us? I was ready to go. I was proud to go. I wanted to go."

Denotation

Scene took place inside the windmill, Günther and his younger brother Michael hide after deserting the German army. The space is enclosed and quiet, with soft natural light entering through the wooden gaps. They speak in low and emotional tones about not wanting to return to war. Michael looks young and uncertain, while Günther appears protective and serious. The camera uses close-up shots to capture their facial expressions and medium shots to show them sitting close together in the confined space. The environment inside the windmill is calm, contrasting with the war happening elsewhere.



Connotation

The close-up camera shots emphasize the emotional conflict in their faces, especially Michael's uncertainty and Gunther's protective seriousness. The confined wooden interior visually reflects how trapped they are, both physically in the windmill and psychologically in their situation. The soft natural light entering the dark space suggests a fragile hope for safety. Michael's dialogue about pride and shame shows his inner struggle between social expectation and personal fear, while Günther's calm response expresses love and kindness as he tries to comfort and protect his brother. Their quiet voices and close sitting position highlight intimacy and trust. The contrast between Michael's proud words and their hidden position visually reinforces the tension between youthful idealism and harsh reality. Their conversation also demonstrates sign of social intelligence as Gunther recognizes the true cost of war and chooses survival and family over blind obedience.

Myth the scene questions that honor and patriotism must come before family bonds. It challenges the established idea of the time that that being a "good son" or citizen means sacrificing oneself without question. Instead, it naturalizes the idea that protecting loved ones is a valid moral choice. The representation shows how militaristic systems benefit from turning pride and shame into tools of control, while ordinary families carry the emotional consequences. This reinforces the anti-war message by exposing how war pressures young people to confuse glory with duty, even when it threatens their humanity.

Table 3.11

Scene 11

	
Time	01.32.00
Sign	Dialogue, affection
Character	Henglmann, Unnamed German officer
Dialogue	<p>German Officer: “You have given them names?”</p> <p>Henglmann: “Yes, sir.”</p> <p>German Officer: “You should never give a name to anything you are certain to lose.</p> <p>Henglmann: “But, His leg is not good enough, sir.”</p> <p>German Officer: “Private, you will do as you are told. Hook him up.”</p> <p>Henglmann: “As you see, sir, this one is stronger.”</p> <p>German Officer: “Hook him up.”</p>

Denotation

While working with Joey and Tophorn, Henglmann speaks with a German officer about the animals he is taking care of. Henglmann shows emotional attachment to the horses

and refers to them by names. The officer calmly advises him not to name the horses, explaining that getting too attached will only make their suffering harder to bear in war. They stand near the horses in a muddy military work area. The camera alternates between medium shots of both men and close-ups of Hengemann's thoughtful expression. The officer's tone is calm and serious, and the background sound is filled with distant military activity and the movement of the horses pulling the artillery piece.

Connotation


The medium shots placing both men beside the horses visually connect their conversation directly to the animals they are discussing. The officer's calm voice and steady posture suggest experience and emotional restraint. His advice about not naming the horses reflects a coping strategy, showing social intelligence in understanding how emotional attachment can become painful in wartime conditions where person's mental might be at its lowest. Hengemann's facial reaction in the close-up shots shows inner conflict, because naming the horses is his way of expressing kindness and empathy toward them. The muddy and noisy environment contrasts with the personal tone of their conversation, emphasizing how fragile compassion is in this harsh setting. The dialogue reveals a tension between emotional survival and moral sensitivity.

Myth

The scene naturalizes how emotional detachment becomes a survival mechanism in war. It presented that suppressing compassion is necessary to function inside violent systems. This representation suggests that war benefits from turning empathy into a weakness, encouraging individuals to distance themselves from suffering. At the same time, the scene quietly questions this logic by showing Hengemann's desire to treat the horses with humanity. This reinforces the anti-war message by exposing how war pressures people to limit their kindness in order to endure its cruelty.

Table 3.12

Scene 12

	
Time	02.13.00
Sign	Affection, Sincerity
Character	Albert, Joey
Dialogue	Albert: "Don't be worried, boy, when I go. I won't worry over you none. Hey, I found you, didn't I, and you found me. And we'll both... we'll both know that we made it through. Now go on."

Denotation

Emilie's grandfather wins the bid for Joey. Albert stands close to Joey and says his farewell, while gently touching and holding the horse before stepping back. His expression is emotional and restrained, while the old man watches quietly. The background setting is dispersing crowds after auction ended but the sound ambience gradually softens, focusing on Albert's voice and Joey's movements. The camera uses close-up shots of Albert's face and his hands on Joey, and medium shots to show the distance slowly forming between them. The colors are warm but subdued, and the background noise of the crowd fades behind the moment.

Connotation

The close-up shots of Albert touching Joey emphasize their deep emotional bond, directly showing love through physical gesture. His quiet farewell and controlled voice suggest emotional pain and sacrifice. The slow camera distance forming between them visually represents separation and loss. The softened background sound isolates the moment, making their connection feel personal despite the public setting. Emilie's grandfather standing silently reflects kindness, as he recognizes the importance of Joey to Albert and allows him a proper goodbye. The warm but muted colors of this scene suggest bittersweet emotion of relief that Joey is safe, but sadness at the separation. Albert's acceptance of the situation demonstrates social intelligence, as he understands reality and chooses dignity over resistance.

Myth

the scene naturalizes a worldview where love sometimes requires sacrifice. It presents the ideology that emotional bonds can survive separation, even when war and circumstance force people apart. The representation suggests that ordinary individuals preserve humanity through small acts of compassion and understanding. This supports the anti-war message by showing that war repeatedly interrupts personal relationships, forcing people to let go of what they love. The scene implies that while institutions organize war, it is individuals who carry the emotional cost. Strengthening the idea that war still affect everyone even after peace

CHAPTER IV

THE ANALYSIS OF HUMANITY VALUES IN "WAR HORSE" MOVIE

Before further elaborate the research, researcher will be reviewed about the humanity value in this movie. War Horse is a Movie that describe a man's love to the animal especially horse. In every scene, film-maker use different characters. But the contents are still the same that is a man's love to the animal. Besides that, the movie also gives some difficult situations to describe how character will take action. It is about sincerity, bravery and other values of what make us, human. In the movie, Film maker always gives messages either it will be explicitly or implicitly. In this chapter, researcher would like to present the analysis from the findings of this research.

A. The Humanity Value of the movie War Horse

1. Love

In *War Horse*, love appears as one of the strongest humanity values that drives the characters to act, decide, and survive in the hardship of war. From the semiotic analysis of the selected scenes, love is not shown only as emotion, but as a form of commitment and attachment that is visible through concrete actions, visual gestures, and dialogue. According to the theory of love by Seligmann, love is understood as a deep human connection that involves care, devotion, and willingness to endure suffering for the sake of others. The film repeatedly constructs this value through the relationship between human and another human, as well as between humans and animals, especially through Albert and Joey.

If we look deeper into the findings, as seen in *Table 3.2* and *Table 3.4*, love in this movie is always translated into action, not just words. For example, when Albert protects Joey from being forced to plow beyond his ability, the denotative level only shows a boy standing in front of his horse. But, that positioning becomes a sign of responsibility and emotional attachment. The camera frames Albert physically between authority and vulnerability, which visually communicates that love means standing as a shield. It is not dramatic romance type of love, but protective and grounded love that is shown through bodily gesture and risk-taking behavior. The value of love is constructed very strongly through the visual language of the movie. As seen in *Table 3.2* and *Table 3.9*, the film repeatedly uses framing, lighting, and body positioning to visually represent emotional attachment between characters. Value of love is shown through how characters are placed close to each other in the frame, how the camera lingers on touch and eye contact, and how the environment surrounds them. For instance, scenes between Albert and Joey frequently use medium and close-up shots that isolate them from the background, visually separating their bond from the chaos around them. The warm natural lighting and soft color tones in these moments create a visual atmosphere of intimacy and safety, suggesting that love exists as a protective space even in unstable conditions.

Love is also constructed in scenes beyond Albert and Joey, the conversation between family members during financial crisis, or between soldiers in moments of fear, visually emphasizes

closeness. In *Table 3.9*, where recurring visual motifs such as touch, eye contact, and synchronized movement function as repeated signs of attachment. Hands placed on shoulders, gentle physical contact between spouses, and characters moving in the same direction inside the frame visually express solidarity. These repeated images build a recognizable visual code where love is associated with closeness and coordinated action.

These cinematic elements function as signs that highlight attachment and care even when war and poverty threaten to break relationships. In those scenes, love are the emotional glue that prevent total collapse of humanity values. It is shown in simple sentences or in physical gestures such as holding hands, embracing, or refusing to leave someone behind. At the myth level, the repetition of these signs naturalizes the worldview that love is the ultimate source of strength in human life. War might destroy everything, but it cannot easily destroy genuine attachment. Humanity is preserved through love, not through power or violence. Those who hold onto love are portrayed as morally centered and worthy of empathy. Meanwhile, the war system itself appears cold and mechanical. In this way, the film positions love not only as personal feeling but as moral resistance against dehumanization. Through its visual patterns, dialogue construction, and narrative focus, *War Horse* consistently encodes love as the core humanity value that allows individuals to endure suffering without losing their moral identity.

2. Kindness

The value of Kindness in *War Horse* is constructed as a humanity value that appears quietly but powerfully in moments where characters choose compassion over cruelty. Kindness in this movie is not presented as grand heroic action, but as small moral decisions that protect humanity values and moral amid the violence engulfing the world. Visually and narratively, these scenes show that even within the structure of war, individuals still have the capacity to act with empathy. As seen in *Table 3.3*, in the scene where opposing soldiers cooperate to freed Joey from the barbed wire strongly encodes kindness through visual contrast of the actual situation where they suppose to kill each other. The camera frames them in the same space without emphasizing national difference. Their uniforms remain different, but their body language

mirrors each other. This shared action signifies mutual recognition of suffering beyond political identity, a fellow common soldiery. The focus shifts from enemy status to shared humanity. The calm pacing, steady camera, and careful gestures while freeing the horse visually communicate respect and restraint. Additionally, them removing their own respective helmets become a great sign of “becoming neutral” since in that dark setting of background, the silhouette of their helmets became their most recognizable part of the uniform. This scene naturalizes the worldview that kindness is universal and can interrupt even the logic of war. The ideology that becomes common sense here is that compassion is instinctive, while hostility is constructed by systems of power.

As reflected in *Table 3.12*, the moment when Emilie’s grandfather gives Joey back to Albert without demanding payment carries a meaning that goes beyond a simple act of generosity. In *War Horse*, this scene feels like a moral statement from Spielberg about what remains after war takes almost everything. The grandfather has lost his granddaughter to her illness, his home has been occupied by the Germans, and his recent life has been shaped by grief. Yet in that condition, he still chooses to give. This decision suggests that kindness is not dependent on abundance, but on moral awareness. It is easy to be generous when one has nothing to lose, but the film shows the opposite which was how true humanity appears when someone who has suffered still refuses to become bitter. Through this scene, Spielberg seems to represent kindness as a quiet resistance against the logic of war. War teaches possession, control, and domination. Therefore, Spielberg positions kindness as a foundational humanity value that restores dignity in a world damaged by violence.

3. Social Intelligence

In *War Horse*, social intelligence is represented as the ability to understand emotional situations, read consequences, and respond wisely within complex social and wartime structures. This value appears not simply as intelligence in strategy, but as awareness of human’s limitation, morale, and responsibility toward others. The movie shows that in the middle of hierarchical military systems and violent conflict, characters who possess strong social awareness are able to navigate their way of emotional tension, authority, and survival more thoughtfully. As reflected in *Table 3.11*, the German officer who advises Hengelmann not to become too attached

to the horses demonstrates a form of social intelligence rooted in psychological awareness. He understands the emotional cost of war and tries to prepare his subordinate mentally for inevitable loss. This advice is not delivered harshly, but in a controlled and composed manner, showing that leadership sometimes involves protecting others from emotional collapse. The scene is framed with steady medium shots that place both men within the harsh military setting, while the muted color palette and restrained background sound create a quiet, reflective mood. Spielberg seems to suggest here that social intelligence includes the ability to balance empathy with realism. The officer recognizes Hengelmann's compassion, yet he also understands the brutal system they operate in. The larger message implied is that emotional regulation is necessary for survival in institutional structures like the military especially during dire time.

Meanwhile, *Table 3.6* highlights Stewart's address to his men before the cavalry charge. The visual composition of this scene strengthens the idea of social intelligence as performative leadership. Low-angle shots position Stewart as a commanding figure, while the camera alternates between his confident expression and the anxious faces of the soldiers. The swelling background score and the rhythmic sound of horses and equipment create a sense of anticipation and shared tension. In this moment, social intelligence appears in the form of motivational leadership. Stewart reads the fear and uncertainty among his soldiers and attempts to transform it into collective courage through confident speech, upright posture, and controlled gestures. He performs authority not only through rank but through emotional influence. However, the film subtly presents the tension between morale-building and strategic judgment. His speech unites the men, yet the rapid shift to chaotic wide shots during the failed charge visually exposes the gap between inspiring rhetoric and battlefield reality. This contrast suggests that social intelligence must go beyond inspiring words; it also requires critical assessment of reality. This critique becomes clearer in *Table 3.4* when the German officer reprimands Major Stewart for his mistake in tactical decision that cost many lives. The scene is visually more restrained, using tighter framing and cooler lighting that strip away the heroic atmosphere seen earlier. The officer's stern voice cuts through the quieter background, and the camera lingers on Stewart's subdued posture as it pans out, emphasizing the weight of accountability. Here, social intelligence is framed as responsibility and rational evaluation. The reprimand is not only about military defeat, but about the failure to consider the human cost of command. The movie director seems to emphasize that true leadership requires awareness of consequence, not blind obedience

to tradition or pride. Through these interconnected scenes, supported by deliberate camera angles, sound cues, and visual contrasts, the movie constructs social intelligence as a humanity value that demands emotional awareness, ethical responsibility, and thoughtful decision-making. It implies that war often punishes those who lack this awareness, while highlighting that genuine wisdom lies in understanding both human feeling and practical reality.

B. Anti War Messages in the War Horse movie

Steven Spielberg's "War Horse" serves as a particularly powerful reminder of the terrible effects that war has on both people and animals in the world of war movies. We are led on an emotional trip that reveals the terrible cost of war through the eyes of Joey, a remarkable horse, and his young owner Albert. This part discusses how "War Horse" effectively conveys the futility of war, giving audiences a deep comprehension of the real cost of war, evoking their awareness of the nature of armed conflict.

1. The innocence of Joey

The movie War Horse use rather uncommon point of view to tell the horrors of war through the eyes of a horse named Joey. As an animal, it is natural for Joey to not understand what war is. Through his entire life, humans are the very creature who cared for him and love him. However, when the war breaks out, he was forced to enter the world of modern warfare and face with the harsh reality to the fact that not all humans is good or at least as good as his carers would be. From his original owner, Alberth Narracott to various characters he meets along the way, Joey keeps changing hands, reflecting how war has taken the control from every individual and rested their fate over to God. As a horse, Joey doesn't understand the concept of hatred nor loyalty to certain faction, this made him a true symbol of neutrality and a symbol that portray war from a perspective that is free from any propaganda.

In most war movies, we usually watch conflict unfolded from the perspective of either military personnel or civilians. A creature that has well understanding of the situation of war and its political agenda. However, in War Horse, this paradigm cannot be seen in the same light as this movie follow a creature who has no understanding about nationality nor politics. The innocent of Joey in seeing his surroundings further

illuminate how war desolate life indiscriminately. In his journey, Joey becomes the witness to the suffering that was caused by the conflict. He seen death, destruction, and hopelessness that engulfed humans and even his fellow horses. One exemplar is the scene we see at **01.32.00** where we see Joey, Topthorn, and another unnamed horse being used by the Germans to draw a heavy 6,680 kg artillery piece commonly known as Mörser 16 up upon a hill. These horses were forced to work without mercy to pull the instrument of death. As result, many of the horses were exhausted and perished because of it. This scene showed that not only humans fell victims to the horror war brought, but also those who simply doesn't have understanding of the concept of war itself.

War Horse also highlight how war involve those who had no voice in the society. Joey in this case, represent all the victims of war who had no choice nor deep understanding of what war may bring to them. From a humble family of farmers who had to "gave away" their steed because of their financial problem to young soldiers who basically "forced" by society to took parts in the fight for not being called a coward, this movie showed how war broke apart families and took away the happiness without clear reason. Within same paradigm, Joey also becomes a symbol to those young soldiers send away to the frontlines without fully understand the reason they go to war. Many common soldieries in the Great War come from teenagers who saw war as their opportunity for escape from their mundane life and seek adventure of the life time. Others as mentioned above, doesn't wanted to be called cowards by society and forced themselves to enrolled in the uniform, even if its mean to lied about their age. Spielberg use Joey as metaphor to show the innocence that was lost in war, how innocent people had to carry the burden of ambitions of those in power.

One of the aspects that made the anti-war message in warhorse quite strong is how Spielberg show the full kontras shown in the movie. In the beginning of the movie, we are shown how life in countryside of Britain prior of the war were peaceful despite the struggle. We see Joey born and grow to adulthood in peace. We see Albert took care of Joey with love and teach him how to work the field until successfully do what horse of his breed usually cannot do. These scenes showed hope of life to flourish. In contrary, later in the movie when Joey was sent to war, he sees a completely different world from what he used to where life doesn't have more meaning other than statistical numbers,

where human use animals solely to achieve victory. From this contra, Spielberg showed how war desolate the beauty of life and peace within it. This message remind audience that war is not only about the battle of two side but also about loss of something far more valuable than wealth. Humanity.

2. The Futility of Conflict

War is often seen as a means to seek glory. However, in War Horse movie, war is being depicted to bring more suffering than it is bringing victory. From the perspective of Joey, we the audience witnessed how war is not exactly about right versus wrong like often depicted in most movie. Instead, war is just a continuous circle of violence that indiscriminately decimates everything its eye set upon, both humans and animals in this case. Throughout the movie, we seen many characters in the movie from British soldiers to the Germans and even civilians were all suffering from a conflict that they themselves, not fully understand. What are they fighting for? Why they must kill another person just because they are wearing different uniforms? The answer to such questions was never fully given to them. Instead, they were forced to swallow the propaganda answer that might has been spiced up with lies. Not knowing that there's never be a true victory in war, only lost and despair coming from it.

One of the scenes that depicted the absurdity of war is in **01.53.04** when Joey entangled on barbed wires amid the no man's land and soldier from both sides worked together to save him. This scene really showed how in the end, all soldiers is just normal people who trapped in a gore that they didn't even want to participated on. Just like a saying that goes "If there is no war, all soldiers are brothers".

Unnecessary sacrifices happening a lot in war. In War Horse, it is shown that these sacrifices not only come from humans but also animals. Joey who are beloved steed of the Narracott household had to suffer from hunger, fear, and great physical pain because he was used as a tool to win the war. All because some humans with authority who thinking of war as a solution make some bad decision. On the other side, we also seen how tons of soldiers lost their life in meaningless battle. The trench assault scene shown in **01.41.00** depict how one attempt of advance to claim small piece of land occupied by

enemy costed so many lives. From the moment the whistle blown, a lifeless body already dropped to the ground. Even when they finally succeed to capture the trenches, it all became futile as the Germans deploying the gas weapon and unableing the British to claim the ground. This last part is what tells us how in the end, such effort and sacrifices became futile. In another instance, Captain Nicholls, the new owner of Joey rode him to war with full of pride to just to get slaughtered in a failed cavalry raid. His demise is not only an irony but also shows how individuals in war are just pawns who can be sacrificed any times. Even as ranked officer, he cannot escape from the fact that in war. Each person is not seen as a human but just numbers. Numbers on how many pawns to throw at enemy by his superiors and numbers on how many enemies slayed by the enemy. This analogy seems to be present in the scene as the Cavalry charges were greatly showing how many soldiers participating on it at beginning and at the end, as the camera pans out, we see how many were slaughtered in the process. Similar thing happens to the German siblings who attempted to desert from the war, only to get captured on hiding and sentenced to death by their own fellow soldiers without fair trial. They are not criminals by any mean, just big brother who afraid the safety of his little brother and underaged naïve teenager blinded by tales of glory. Nevertheless, cruel law of war says different thing, they lost their lives for it and adding their name to the unending long list of victims of war.

3. Shared Humanity Values Amid the Chaos

Soldiers in the battlefield develop relationship between one another that only exist in combat as they shared trenches, keeping each other safe the entire moment, they have seen and withstand suffer and death together. They develop a bond that is stronger than death. One aspect that War Horse pointed out is how war brings together people who previously didn't know each other, did not know other's existence, but then connected together in a way because of single horse named Joey.

Albert the first master of Joey, keeping him with cares not only using him as farming equipment but also treat him as equine companion. When the war broke out, he had to lost Joey as he (the horse) had to be enrolled as military mount animal. From here he meets Captain Nicholls who understand the affection Albert had for Joey. He personally

doesn't want to separate the horse from the owner but circumstance forced him to do different. As cavalry officer, he needed a mount to ride on battle and promised to Albert that he will treat Joey with respect and care to his extend. Promising that when the war ends, he will bring back Joey to Albert in health. Under Captain Nicholls, Joey was treated more than just tool for war. He acknowledges how brave and strong Joey were. Unfortunately for him, fate decided different end for him as he was slain in battle. Only manage to bring back a sketch of Joey and words of admirations to Albert in a letter as way to fulfil his promises. From here, things go downhill for Joey as he were captured by the opposing forces. Nevertheless, Joey still managed to meet sparks of light in humanity amid the chaos unfolded in war. The two German siblings saved him from being executed. Later, Joey and Topthorn found by little sickly girl named Emilie and her grandpa. Even in the middle of war surrounding their home, they still keep Joey and Topthorn with great care. Giving them safe and warm place to stay. As both horses and many others were found and forcibly taken by the Germans, they were forced to become draft animals mean to pulling heavy load of battle equipment. Even here, we see the "strange" kind of humanity value where the soldiers executing the horses who are too scrawny and weak or injured to continue pulling the artillery as a way to put them out of their misery, preventing them to suffer even more as the condition is not meet for them to cares the horses when the available resource can't even safe fellow human being. Once again, we see how humanity values managed to persist in war as Topthorn finally coming to his demise after some time skip showing how the two horses come in perfect shapes now stained with scars and wound. Hengemann who has been taking care of the two-show sincerity and mourned the death of one of the horses. Later as Joey entangled on a barbed wire. Soldiers from both side risking their life in managing a truce just to save a single scrawny horse trapped in killing zone. As Joey reunited with Albert who now serve in the military, we see how his fellow soldiers donated sums of their money to Albert to bought Joey back in an auction as Joey is officially state property.

This movie shows us the audience how war torn apart families, there is a bond that cannot simply be destroyed. The bond between humans and animals, the friendship formed in combat among soldiers, as well as small moments where enemies help each

other setting aside their uniforms. Proving that in any circumstances, even in one where chaos and death engulfed, Humanity will always be finding its way to be persisted

4. The True Cost of War

This movie captured a perfect depiction of what war truly costed the society. From the beginning of the movie, though the story of Ted Narracott we already witness how common people already struggling financially to support their lives. As the war being declared, he had to sold his belongings and that include his only draft animal, Joey. Despite not showing to us directly what happened after the war ended but the scenes in this movie manage to foreshadow what will happened to those who manage to survived the carnage. One of the most highlighted damages of war that goes on beyond the battlefield is the psychological trauma that prey not only soldiers but also those who they left behind at home. We can compare Albert personality from the cheerful teenager he was at the beginning of the movie to the stoic battle harden yet tired soldier he has become at the trench offensive scene. In this scene we see Albert break down emotionally when he reunited with his friend from back home, Andrew. However, what soon follow might haunted him for the rest of his life as he witnessed the death of his friend Andrew as he engulfed by mist from gas attack. Just like most soldiers of its time, Albert most likely will develop *Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder* (PTSD) or what people back in WWI era commonly referred as Shell Shock. Back in those days, the mental trauma is not yet fully understood and often being seen as sign of cowardice. This common misconception usually led to those who suffered from it not getting the medical assistance they needed. Moreover, the emotional wound that the war bring will be inherited long after its end. Families who lost their member will have to struggle in deep sorrow. Parents who lost their child Wife who lost his husband, and Children who lost their father will bring great psychological damage in the society.

Needless to say, this war also brings physical trauma especially to those who served in the front line. In the movie, we see how Albert lost his eyesight temporarily from gas attack in trench scene. The chemical warfare used in this era mostly consisted of chlorine or mustard in form of gas released towards enemy position when the wind

direction is right. When in direct contact, the gas will cause burn to skin, blindness, respiratory problems, and possible long-time disabilities or even death. In the end of the movie, we see Albert coming back home after “fully” recover from the gas attack had burn scars across his face. In other instance, we see Collins getting shoot in the leg as he charged toward German trench. We see him later in the movie standing around using canes, indicating that he’s either not recovered yet or will never to.

The end of the war doesn’t mean the end of struggle. In economical case, its only the beginning. War caused a great economy disaster, as mentioned above, the Narracott family had to sold their horse due to financial struggle they’re in and that was before the war started. Later we see how war destroyed the rural economy as the military conscript came to town and took away most of the work force in that rural community which left the plant field left unattended. As war raging, demands always outnumber supplies and in some instance, soldiers had to turn into raiding party especially in occupied territory. We see how German soldiers in the movie raided the farmstead owned by French family, Emilie and his grandpa for foods and medical supplies. Even when the war is finally ended, the struggle for those who fought in frontline is just began. War veterans often have a hard time re-integrating to society after years of military services. Physical and psychological trauma they suffer only prolong this problem as they often struggling to get a job because the damage from war unable to make them productive. Moreover, war usually damaged or even destroyed the industries infrastructure. This causes a great economy stagnation which actually happen in real life. Back in 1929, decade after the Great War ended, most of the world experience a great economy disaster named the Great Depression, it was claimed to be the worst economic crisis in the history of industrialized world which began as stock market crashed in 1929 which coined as “*Black Thursday*”. The First World War laid the groundwork for the economic instability as the war impacted the international trade and global financial system. Particularly in Europe, nations struggling to repay war debts and some unable to recover from it.

C. War Horse as Ideological text and Media of Symbolic Representation

As a piece of media, *War Horse* works as an ideological text that shapes how audiences emotionally understand war. Film is never just a neutral reflection of reality for it selects certain perspectives and values, then the movie frames them in a way that feels natural and believable. In this movie, war is not centered on strategy, victory, or national pride, but on the fragile lives caught inside it. Through repeated focus on personal relationships, suffering bodies, and moments of compassion, the film builds an ideology that questions the romantic image of war. The battlefield is visually grand, but the camera often returns to intimate closeups of faces, trembling hands, and exhausted animals, reminding viewers that behind large historical events there are individual experiences of fear and care. In this way, the film positions war as something deeply human and deeply tragic, not heroic spectacle.

As a representation of war, *War Hores* softens the sentiment of violence by filtering it through humanity values. Instead of showing endless brutality, the narrative constantly interrupts destruction of the conflict with scenes that showcased love, kindness, and social understanding. Warm lighting during reunions, gentle musical themes during moments of care, and lingering shots on gestures of empathy create emotional persuasion that guides the audience to feel tenderness in the middle of chaos. This cinematic strategy does not deny the horror of war, but reframes it through emotional contrast and irony. The suffering becomes more painful precisely because it is surrounded by reminders of what everyone's fighting for. By embedding humane moments inside violent settings, the film suggests that the true meaning of war is measured not by territorial gain but by the damage it causes to relationships and moral values. The origin of the story reinforces this humanitarian orientation. Michael Morpurgo, the writer of the original novel, was moved after learning that around eight to ten million horses, mules, and donkeys died during World War I. This historical discovery shaped the narrative into a tribute to forgotten victims of conflict. By centralizing the story on an animal, Morpurgo transformed statistics into an intimate journey that audiences can emotionally follow.

The movie *War Horse* frames war through a lens of humanity. It presents conflict as a force that tests moral character and exposes the importance of compassion. By softening the sentiment of war with persistent displays of love, kindness, and social awareness, the movie invites viewers

to reconsider what should be valued in times of violence. The emphasis is not on who wins battles, but on what kind of human beings emerge from it.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter describes how humanity values and anti-war messages are conveyed in movies. The researcher chooses the movie *War Horse* as the object to be analyzed. The data were drawn from four scenes that depict human values and anti-war messages. The human values and anti-war messages were analyzed using Roland Barthes' theory of semiotic analysis to identify signs, denotations, connotations, and myths in each scene.

Euis (2020) explains that the goal of humanism is for individuals to live with kindness. However, throughout the ages human civilization cannot be separated from war. A study conducted by Auliyak (2019), a student at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Salatiga, titled 'An Analysis of Human Values in the Film Zootopia, found ten human values in this movie: universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction. The study by Marcelina Boleng (2018) revealed that the movie reflects five categories of human values: individual values, family values, professional values, moral values and spiritual values. Researcher found that there are four kinds of individual value, eight kinds in family values, one kind of professional values, six kinds of moral values, and one kind of spiritual values. (2) Of the five aspects of human values identified, five are associated with character development in the Indonesian context: honesty, tolerance, hard work, love, peace, and social care. Meanwhile, character building honesty, tolerance and hard work are found in family values. Character building love, peace and social care found in moral values.

A. Conclusion

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and frameworks related to humanity values, this study examines how the messages of humanity and anti-war themes are conveyed in an unconventional manner in the movie *War Horse* (2011). These messages are primarily communicated in character dialogue and in the historical context underlying the scenes, which together shape the interpretive framework through which these actions are recognized as expressions of "Humanity Value". Without giving the historical context behind these scenes, a

number of human value messages conveyed in the scenes may be misinterpreted or fail to be perceived coherently.

From this study above, the meaning of the representation of humanity value in war horse movies can be summarized in one statement: *“Humanity will always persist among people, even in times of war”*. Throughout the film, viewers are presented with forms of humanity values that may not occurred nor that it is acceptable in peace time. The antiwar messages Throughout the film, viewers are presented with forms of humanity values. Through Joey’s journey, the film illustrates how innocent animals became one of the victims of human greed, how futile the war itself was, how humans manage to retain their humanity values amid global conflict, and reveals that even after the war ends, its consequences persist and exact a profound cost on individuals and societies.

B. Limitation

The signs in the movie may have different meanings in different historical and cultural contexts. This study might not adequately represent the ways in which different demographics (such as Western versus non-Western viewers) understand the human values in War Horse, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.

C. Recommendations

In conclusion, several recommendations are offered for future research:

1. Future researchers can conduct a more in-depth analysis of the significance of the film’s visual signs.
2. Future studies could apply alternative semiotic theories to analyze the movie War Horse.

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