
Multimodal Semiotic Analysis From Poster Captain America Series

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to examine the multimodal aspects of the Captain America series posters, focusing on how the combination of images, text, and color constructs meaning and shapes audience perception. This study employs a semiotic analysis approach to explore the visual symbolism present in elements such as characters, backgrounds, and typography. By analyzing these components, the research seeks to understand how visual and textual elements interact to communicate particular messages to viewers. The findings indicate that the posters do not merely present heroic imagery but also convey broader social and political themes, including patriotism, national identity, and moral conflict. Visual elements such as costume design, color schemes, and character positioning reinforce symbolic meanings associated with heroism, power, and ideological struggle. In addition, the textual elements and layout contribute to strengthening the narrative and guiding audience interpretation. Drawing on semiotic theories proposed by Roland Barthes and Gunther Kress, this study highlights how multimodal resources work together to produce layered meanings within popular media. Overall, the study demonstrates that multimodality plays a significant role in constructing identities, narratives, and ideological messages in film posters. These findings are expected to enhance understanding of the relationship between visual and textual communication in contemporary popular culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Series are one form of digital media that often present complex and sophisticated narratives. Although series and films share similar storytelling perspectives, they differ in duration and plot structure. Films are generally shorter and more condensed in presenting their stories, whereas series tend to develop more elaborate narratives across longer durations and multiple episodes. A series typically continues its storyline throughout several episodes within a season, while films expand their narratives through sequels or prequels, often forming a cohesive trilogy or extended storyline. Both films and series usually employ posters as part of their promotional strategies. A poster serves as an important advertising tool used to introduce and promote a product to a wider audience. In

addition, posters help establish a strong visual identity for a particular series or film. This identity is reflected through various visual and textual elements that represent the characteristics and themes of the work being promoted. These elements are the focus of analysis in this study.

The *Captain America* films follow the story of Steve Rogers, a physically frail young man who dreams of joining the military during World War II. Although initially rejected due to his weak physique, he is eventually selected to participate in a scientific experiment that transforms him into the super-soldier known as Captain America. The first film, *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011), depicts his origin story and his battle against the Red Skull, the leader of the Hydra organization that threatens the world with a powerful weapon. In *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014), Steve confronts a conspiracy within S.H.I.E.L.D. and reunites with his former friend Bucky Barnes, who has become an enemy. Later, *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) portrays a conflict among superheroes due to differing views on government oversight, as Steve attempts to protect Bucky while defending his own principles of freedom.

Another film, *Captain America: Brave New World*, is scheduled for release in 2025 as part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The film continues the story of Sam Wilson, who assumes the role of Captain America following Steve Rogers. Overall, these films explore themes of heroism, friendship, loyalty, and morality, contributing to the broader narrative of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In this study, the author analyzes four posters from the *Captain America* series. These posters present striking visual elements, including distinctive colors and prominent characters, which provide meaningful material for analysis. The study focuses on semiotic elements such as icons, indices, and symbols. To conduct this analysis, the author applies the multimodal semiotic theory proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, which provides a relevant framework for understanding the meaning conveyed through visual and textual elements in the posters.

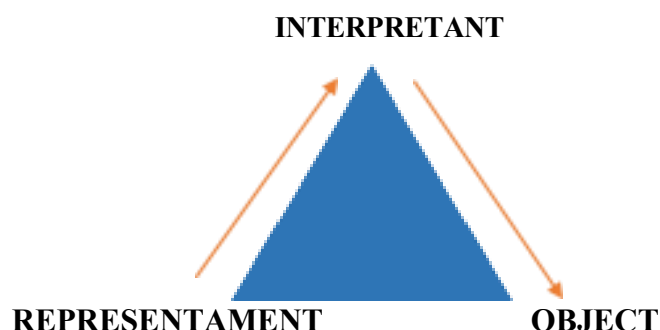


Figure 1. Triadic Semiotics of C.S. Peirce

Triadic Semiotics of C.S. Peirce

(Source: Burhan & Presume, 2021; Nawiroh Vera, 2014:22)

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The method employed in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. This research also applies the semiotic theory proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce. The analysis focuses on the three main components introduced by Peirce that are relevant to multimodal semiotic studies. Specifically, this journal uses three key concepts: object, representamen (representation), and interpretant. The object refers to the idea or concept represented by a sign. In this context, the object relates to how film producers design posters that reflect the themes and narratives of their films. Posters are created to help audiences easily understand the essence of the movie they are about to

watch and to convey the film's main message through visual and textual elements (Burhan & Assume, 2021; Prihanto, 2018).

Furthermore, the representamen refers to the form of the sign that appears visually in the poster, such as images, colors, and typography, while the interpretant refers to the meaning or interpretation generated by viewers when they observe the poster. These three elements work together to construct meaning within the visual communication of film posters. For data collection, this study employs a qualitative technique by gathering poster images from the *Captain America* series through social media platforms such as Pinterest. The search was conducted using various keywords related to *Captain America* Seasons 1–4 to obtain relevant poster data for analysis (Rezeki & Sagala, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Poster Season 1 – *Captain America*



Figure 2. Poster of *Captain America* Season 1

The poster presented in Figure 1 highlights Steve Rogers wearing his iconic Captain America suit and holding his distinctive shield, which symbolizes bravery, resilience, and perseverance. The visual composition places the main character prominently at the center, emphasizing his role as the primary hero of the story. In the background, several elements such as the American flag, fighter aircraft, and scenes of the battlefield are depicted, creating a strong atmosphere associated with World War II and reinforcing the historical context of the narrative. The presence of other important characters, including Peggy Carter and Red Skull, further illustrates the key relationships and central conflicts that shape the storyline. Additionally, the use of red, white, and blue as dominant colors reflects themes of patriotism and national identity, while darker shades suggest danger, tension, and the challenges faced by the hero. The strategic

placement of the film title and tagline also functions to attract the audience's attention and emphasize the heroic spirit portrayed in the film.

From a semiotic perspective, the poster conveys several interpretative meanings. First, the image of Captain America represents the transformation of Steve Rogers from a physically weak young man into a powerful hero, symbolizing personal growth, determination, and the search for identity. Second, the visual emphasis on national symbols and patriotic colors highlights the theme of patriotism and the responsibility that accompanies power, portraying Captain America as a representation of American ideals. Third, the character of Red Skull symbolizes the conflict between virtuous values and destructive ideologies, creating a clear moral opposition within the narrative. Furthermore, the wartime setting reflects the broader historical background that shapes the emergence of the hero and the significance of his actions within a global conflict. Finally, the characters' expressions, positions, and visual arrangement in the poster convey emotional tension and foreshadow the challenges and struggles that will unfold throughout the story.

Captain America Season 2 posters



Figure 3. Poster of *Captain America* Season 2

Representamen

The poster shown in Figure 2 prominently features Captain America, often depicted holding his iconic shield, which symbolizes determination, bravery, and resilience. In several versions of the poster, the character of the Winter Soldier also appears, adding a sense of mystery and tension to the visual composition. The color palette is generally dark and dramatic, dominated by shades of blue, black, and red. These colors create a serious and intense atmosphere that reflects the film's themes of betrayal, secrecy, and internal struggle. The background commonly presents elements such as a modern cityscape, advanced technology, or military aircraft, emphasizing the themes of political conspiracy and contemporary conflict. These visual elements suggest that the story takes

place in a modern and complex environment filled with hidden threats. In addition, the film title is typically displayed in bold and modern typography, which reinforces the heroic tone while also highlighting the seriousness of the narrative.

Interpretant

From a semiotic perspective, the poster conveys several deeper meanings. First, it reflects a moral conflict, where Captain America represents justice, integrity, and truth, while the Winter Soldier symbolizes moral ambiguity and uncertainty. This contrast illustrates the film's central theme of betrayal and the tension between idealism and harsh reality. Second, the poster suggests a tension between trust and duty, portraying Captain America's struggle between trusting the government and fulfilling his responsibility to protect innocent people. This reflects the dilemma faced by a hero who begins to question authority. Third, the presence of the Winter Soldier introduces the theme of identity and the past, as the character represents unresolved history and personal conflict. His relationship with Captain America highlights the clash between past loyalty and present circumstances. Furthermore, the dark tones and powerful visual composition create an atmosphere of power and uncertainty, symbolizing the threats and political tensions within the story. Finally, the poster often portrays Captain America as an isolated hero, emphasizing his loneliness and personal struggle as he faces a world filled with shifting alliances, lost friendships, and difficult moral choices.

Poster Season 3 – *Captain America*



Figure 4. Poster of *Captain America* Season 3

Representamen

The poster presented in Figure 3 portrays two opposing groups of heroes led by Captain America and Iron Man. This visual arrangement represents the division among the superheroes and highlights the ideological conflict that forms the central theme of the story. Each major character is clearly displayed, emphasizing their individual roles within the confrontation. The facial

expressions and body postures of the characters convey determination, tension, and strong commitment to their respective beliefs. The use of contrasting colors further reinforces this conflict. Blue tones are associated with Captain America, while red tones are linked to Iron Man, symbolizing the opposition between the two sides. These contrasting colors visually emphasize the separation of the teams and create a sense of dramatic tension. In addition, the intense and dramatic background suggests the imminent battle and reflects the serious consequences that arise from the heroes' decisions. The visual composition also illustrates the breakdown of relationships among characters who were once allies. This emphasizes the theme of friendship being tested by ideological disagreement. Furthermore, the placement of the film title and tagline reinforces the central conflict between freedom and security, adding deeper meaning to the relationships and motivations of the characters.

Interpretant

From a semiotic perspective, the poster communicates several significant meanings. First, it represents the division among heroes, illustrating that even powerful and united heroes can experience conflict when their beliefs differ. This reflects the idea that ideological differences can challenge friendships and create serious disagreements among individuals who once worked together. Second, the poster highlights an ideological conflict between two opposing perspectives: Captain America's belief in individual freedom and Iron Man's support for collective security and government oversight. This contrast raises broader questions about authority, responsibility, and the limits of power.

Third, the arrangement of the characters reflects themes of identity and loyalty, as each hero chooses a side based on personal values and experiences. This demonstrates the complexity of determining loyalty in a situation filled with moral and political dilemmas. Moreover, the dramatic setting symbolizes the consequences of actions, suggesting that the conflict between the heroes will lead to widespread chaos and significant impacts not only for them but also for the world around them. The emotional expressions and body language of the characters further reveal a strong sense of emotional tension, indicating that the conflict is not purely physical but also involves feelings of betrayal, loss, and uncertainty. Ultimately, the poster emphasizes the moral dilemma faced by the heroes. They are not only fighting against one another but are also confronting their own principles, beliefs, and values, making the conflict both personal and ideological.

Poster Season 4 – *Captain America*



Figure 5. Poster of *Captain America* Season 4

Representamen

The poster presented in Figure 4 features Sam Wilson, who has taken on the role of Captain America, prominently displayed while holding the iconic shield and appearing ready for battle. This visual representation highlights the character's transformation and development as he assumes the mantle of a legendary hero. The shield of Captain America functions as a powerful symbol of strength, responsibility, and legacy, reflecting Sam Wilson's role as the successor to this iconic identity. The poster commonly uses bright and recognizable colors such as blue, red, and white, which are traditionally associated with Captain America and symbolize patriotism and national identity. At the same time, the overall tone of the poster may appear serious and intense, representing both the hope and the challenges faced in a rapidly changing world. The background often features modern urban elements, such as a city skyline or advanced technology, which emphasize the contemporary setting of the story and the complex challenges the hero must confront. In addition, the placement of the film title and tagline reinforces the theme of struggle and adaptation within a new era, highlighting the difficulties encountered by the new Captain America.

Interpretant

From a semiotic perspective, the poster conveys several important meanings. First, it represents a transition of legacy, as Sam Wilson becoming Captain America symbolizes a shift in leadership and the continuation of a heroic tradition. This transformation reflects the broader idea that heroism can emerge from diverse backgrounds and identities. Second, the image of Sam Wilson holding the shield signifies new responsibilities, suggesting that he is prepared to face new threats and challenges. The shield becomes a representation of the burden and duty associated with being a symbol of hope, justice, and protection for society.

Third, the modern urban setting in the background reflects a changed world, indicating that Sam Wilson must operate in a different social and political environment compared to previous generations of heroes. This emphasizes the new and complex challenges he must address.

Furthermore, the combination of vibrant colors and a serious atmosphere conveys a sense of uncertainty and hope, suggesting that despite the obstacles and tensions present in the world, there is still the possibility for positive change and progress. Finally, the poster highlights the theme of identity and recognition, as Sam Wilson must prove himself worthy of the title of Captain America. He faces the challenge of establishing his own identity as a hero while overcoming social pressures and the expectations associated with inheriting such a powerful symbol.

CONCLUSION

A multimodal semiotic analysis of *Captain America* posters reveals that visual and textual elements interact to produce layered and meaningful interpretations. These posters function not only as promotional materials but also as representations of the film's central themes and conflicts. Future studies may further explore how these elements operate within the broader context of marketing strategies and audience reception.

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