

## Semiotic Analysis Found in Selected Christopher Nolan's Movie Posters

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze semiotic signs in two of Christopher Nolan's movie posters; *Interstellar* and *Oppenheimer*. The method used in descriptive qualitative using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory: denotation, connotation and myth. The data of two posters *Interstellar* (2014) and *Oppenheimer* (2023) were taken from Cinematerial website which was selected and identified following Barthes' (1972) theory of semiotics. The findings yield a total of 27 data that consists of; 11 denotations, 11 connotations, and 5 myths. Through analyzing these signs, we can gain insight into the films' narratives, plot, and the art direction of the movie poster design as a communication tool. It can be concluded that semiotic analysis gives a valuable approach to understanding the deeper meanings of visual media. As such, different individual's experience or cultural background can develop their own meaning of the posters.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a method that humans have developed and used to communicate daily. In the study (Zadeh, 1975, as cited in Tseng, 2018) stated that "Language is a systematic tool for conveying ideas or feelings by using agreed signs, sounds, gestures, or signs that contain understandable meanings.". For that reason, sign and language goes hand in hand. Both can be used as a communication method. However, communication is not limited to language only. Even signs can serve a communication purpose because they produce meaning. Additionally, as a physical object sign can also act an indication of a warning, event, or clue. Therefore, signs are something that we can observe, see, and sometimes feel so that we may be able to find out if there is a meaning or interpretation that the general public may know. In a general study of signs, signs are sometimes referred to as semiotics.

Semiotics or semiology is a study of how meaning is interpreted and created. It is the study of signs, and signification. How people interpret and find meaning in something is an essential study of semiotics. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008) explained semiotics in a scientific way as a way to explore the relationships between signs, talk, and text and their intended meaning. In short, semiotics is the research of signs that can represent another thing entirely. Semiotics has an interrelated concepts within it such as denotation, connotation, and myth. There is also a concept that is proposed by Zlatev (2018), who states that "meaning is the relationship between the recipient of a sign and their personal experience of the world around them." Meaning can be created by connecting and interacting with our surrounding reality.

A picture or an image is a visual capture or representation of an idea, and it can help us depict a complex idea that words sometimes cannot. However, most pictures do not have a specific meaning to them. Pictures can be taken or made without a specific purpose. There are many usages of pictures; one of those uses is to promote a product. One of those products that pictures help visualize is a movie, specifically the poster. More often than not, posters contain a combination of pictures and text designed uniquely and in relation to the information or content. In order for the viewer to be aware that a movie exists, it needs a poster to advertise. A poster provides a message that is intended to promote a brand awareness or getting attention to a certain event (Kokemuller, 2017). When people see the poster, people can decide for themselves if the movie is worth watching or not. Some people can also decide by finding out what is the meaning of the pictures and texts that are in the movie poster, one way to analyze a movie poster is by using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory of denotative, connotative, and myth analysis.

The writer chooses Christopher Nolan's movie posters as the main object of this analysis because a lot of Christopher Nolan's movies have received awards and nominations from even the prestigious academies in the movie industry. Christopher Nolan is a director and writer from London, England. He is known for using non-linear storytelling, a story telling device that depicts the events of the story that is unfolding in a back and forth manner between past, present, and future events. Although it may seem unconventional, it often creates suspense and intrigue for the audience. Lewis-Kraus (2014) expressed that "Nolan's movies require this thick quotient of reality to support his looping plots, which accelerate in shifting time signatures, consume themselves in recursive intrigue and advance formidable and enchanting problems of interpretation." His movies invoke us as the audience to think critically and focus on what is going on in the movie. They are thought-provoking, to say the least, and that also goes for his movie posters.

Based on the explanation that has already been laid out above, Christopher Nolan's movie posters range from simple to complex designs. However, the meaning and message can still be conveyed clearly to the audience. By using Barthes's theory and understanding of signs some elements of design, such as texts, symbols, signs, images, illustrations, and other factors, can carry additional information on the film. Moreover, the writer found many signs in those selected Christopher Nolan movie posters. Each poster that has been selected has its own signs that signify its denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth to be uncovered.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to ease the flow of the discussion ahead, the writer included some information and theoretical terms about semiotics, signs, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, and movie poster in this section. The review of literature described in this chapter have an understanding of the concept of the study.

### 2.1. SEMIOTIC

Semiotics comes from the Greek word of "Semiosis" which is the literal meaning of the word "sign". Semiotics is the study of theory about the existence or the actuality of signs in societal life, semiotic is responsible for everything that can be perceived or interpreted as some sort of sign. According to Eco (1976), "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else." Semiotics is essentially a scientific study of sign. Saussure (1983) would further state that sign would explore the nature of signs and any laws that revolves around it, because signs will form some sort of social psychology which are called semiology. Although semiotic is a scientific study of a sign, the term "scientific" is misleading because semiotics doesn't involve any theoretical assumptions.

In practical life, the usage of semiotic has been widely influential. Semiotics can be used to help a researcher to understand how and why someone use something to make a decision, it is really helpful when trying to understand the reasoning behind any actions and decisions. It helps people to be more perceptive about the surrounding objects.

Roland Barthes has also wanted to give meaning of signifier in the act of writing, Barthes (1974) stated that "the author, is always supposed to go from signified to signifier, from content to form, from idea to text, from passion to expression." Writers should be able to pour their thoughts into some kind of physical form and not just a floating concept in their minds. A simple slashed P sign that we met on the road tells us that we cannot park in that spot, everyone shares this meaning and understanding. It is already ingrained in our brain and consciousness since we're little, the slashed P sign has a real or physical form that we can see or probably even feel and since we've been giving prior information about what it means we can interpret that sign. This is the basis of Saussure 'dyadic' or two-part model signs, he explained that sign consist of 2 things; a 'signifier' and the 'signified'.

A 'signifier' or signifiant is the form of the sign, this means that for something to be called a signifier it needs to have a form. Words, letters, icon, pictures, and patterns can be called a signifier. But a signifier is not limited to only a physical form, we can also identify a signifier from sound and even smell. A simple and small 'ding' sound from a phone can also be called a signifier. From the explanation before the slashed P sign is the signifier because it is the physical form of the sign.

On the other hand, if a signifier is the form of the sign, then a 'signified' or signifié is the meaning or concept of the sign. Considering we as humans like to give meanings to anything, any sign must have meanings behind it. According to Saussure (1983), "You cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a completely formless signified." In order for a sign to be deemed complete, that sign must have both the contents of signifier and signified because essentially a sign is a combination of both. Fiske & Hartley (1978) described signs as a mathematical equation "signifier + signified = sign." For a communication to be successful, there must be a form whether it's a physical object or sound, which then the mental concept or meaning is added to that form. If one loses the other, then it will be considered as a successful attempt of communication as there is no sign to be made from the interaction. Both the signifier and the signified were 'intimately linked' in the mind 'by an associative link' – 'each triggers the other' (Saussure, 1983).

To conclude, semiotic studies the importance of signs through scientific scope. Semiotic aims to uncover and understand the implanted meaning on signs, because after all we humans are the one responsible for associating and implanting a simple sign with meanings, it is better for us to understand something even if that something is foreign, we fear the unknown. That is why we strive to associate the unknowable with meanings through semiotic.

## **2.2. ROLAND BARTHES'S SEMIOTIC THEORY**

Roland G. Barthes was an influential French philosopher and a literary critic, he explores the field of social theory, anthropology, and semiotics. His studies and research on semiotics specifically had made a significant impact on society today, it left an impression towards the movement of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. Barthes theory on semiotic doesn't differ much from Saussure's dyadic theory, the signifier and the signified. Barthes also added that sign consists of two parts, the form and the concept. In this form and concept, there also exist verbal and non-verbal signs of semiotics. Verbal signs consist of language and speech that is written and can be seen e.g. words, while non-verbal signs consist of also language and speech but its form is abstract it is not written but can be seen and can be elaborated and interpreted upon e.g. a model, a colour, a clothing, etc (Barthes, 1964). Barthes explained that non-verbal sign exists everywhere, one example that he discussed is that fashion clothes is not a verbal sign because clothes itself lack words and sentences, but fashion clothes can send a message to people through elaborate codes in it, therefore despite being a non-verbal sign it is still 'speaking' in a level of verbal communication. Barthes further expanded upon Saussure's semiotic theory and created a larger model of communication which he called the signification process.

In the signification process that Barthes proposed exist a process that consists of two orders, the first is the order of meaning which includes denotation and connotation and the second order is the signification or as Barthes would like it to be called myth. Barthes expanded the theory because according to him Saussure's dyadic model of the signs were heavily focused on denotation at the expense of connotation (Barthes, 1964). However, in the field of photography connotation is more heavily focused rather than denotation meaning, connotation that exist in photography can be easily distinguished from denotation (Barthes, 1972). Barthes wanted more equal ground to be covered, not too heavily focused on denotation only but also not too heavily focused on connotation too. Chandler (2007, p. 138) explained that "denotation can be seen as no more of a natural meaning than is connotation but rather as a process of naturalization." He concluded that denotation is just a literal and obvious meaning and connotation is the association that comes with the sign such as emotion, etc.

## **2.3. DENOTATION, CONNOTATION, AND MYTH**

As established before, it is a process of identification or a literal meaning of a word, text, etc. According to Chandler (2007, p. 137) Denotation tends to be explained as "the definitional, literal, obvious or common-sense meaning of a sign." There really is no hidden meaning in denotation, it is the most common thing and first thing that comes to our mind when we heard a word. It could even be said that denotative meaning is what the dictionary aims to explain and provide literally (Chandler, 2007).

Therefore, denotation in itself deals with sign as its basic meaning that are independent from beyond their meaning in dictionary, it only represents itself as a literal or common-sense meaning that everyone first thought of. If we take the example from above, if we heard the word 'car' the first thing that comes to mind is a vehicle that is used to transport people from one place to another, in other words a literal 'real-world car'. This is as far as denotation go, there is no hidden meaning other than what that is. It is in the second order of signification the connotation part is where we attached meaning beyond the literal sense of the word.

If denotation is the literal meaning of something, then connotation extends far beyond that. It can be used to describe a feelings or emotions of the interpreter. To put it simply connotation describes the secondary meaning of the signifier from the denotation, something that we are not fully aware of the meaning at first glance. There are many ways to interpret a connotation it usually depends on our experience towards something. For example; red is a color but it can represent anger an emotion, blue is also a color but it also can represent sadness. This kind of definition does not exist in our everyday dictionary, this is something that we have to be aware of. Connotation doesn't have a form because connotation exist at the same level as the signified both focuses on meaning (Chandler, 2007).

Because of the explanation above, connotation is heavily context-dependent. The meaning can be different depending on the interpreter's age, gender, race, culture, etc. According to Chandler (2007, p. 139) "while theorist may find it analytically useful to distinguish connotation from denotation, in practice such meanings cannot be neatly separated." This means that however we try to separate the denotation and connotation from one another, we cannot. Because it will potentially ruin the whole meaning of the sign. The meaning of connotation can be influenced through the factors of culture and myths because connotation represents an interaction between the sign and the reader's emotions and cultural values.

Myth is a form of communication that in it contains an ideology inside it, it is constructed by attaching a 'meaning' to a 'form'. Myth lacks physical form to convey its meaning, myth appear as natural, as they like to undertake the task of giving a historical intention a natural justification or 'making contingency appear eternal' (Barthes, 1972). Barthes argues that myth is a fact constructed upon a future event that is never guaranteed to happen in the first place, by doing so myth seems to be void of reality or form and only seems like it's a formless thing yet full of meaning in its entirety. Barthes (1972) expressed that "Nevertheless, myths do not hide from our perception the relations of significations existing on the first level, rather they distort them by adding another layer of meaning to the form." The ultimate goal of myth is to add another meaning over the denotation and connotation through the lens of cultural values, history, and society.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, the writer chose descriptive qualitative approach because the writer described and analyzed the signs in the form of an essay. According to Aspers & Corte (2019), qualitative research is about understanding and interpretation that involves collecting various materials and approaches such as observations, rather than focusing on its objective meaning, it focuses more on its subjective meanings like individual's attitudes, motivations, behaviours, events, and situations. Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway (2016) also added that "descriptive qualitative method is a study that generates data to describe the 'who, what, and where of events or experiences' form a subjective perspective."

Based on that statement, qualitative research is a method that focuses more on the subjective meaning such as the writer's opinion rather than the fact that is already presented on an object. It gives us the freedom to judge something based on our own personal observation.

When collecting the data, the writer watched Christopher Nolan's movies specifically Interstellar and Oppenheimer, then searched and selected the movie posters from a website named Cinematerial, and finally selected and identified the data of denotation, connotation, and myth in those posters based on Barthes's (1972) theory of semiotics




### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS




Datum 1. Interstellar Poster

Table 1. Interstellar's movie poster findings

Datum	Denotation		
2.			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth

	Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathway, Jessica Chastain, and Michael Caine	These names are the names of a big time Hollywood actors back then and some still are, these names emphasize the character that they will play. These 4 names indicates that they play an important role in this movie.	Not available.
3.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	The end of earth will not be the end of us.	This sentence indicates that the plot of the movie and possibly the current situation that the people of earth are currently in. It later shows in the movie how the earth is dying and mankind is trying to survive by whatever means necessary.	Not available.
4.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	Interstellar	This is the title of the movie. It tells us that this movie is about scientific things from the name alone. Interstellar is not a common term in everyday English.	Not available.
5.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	In 70MM IMAX, 70MM FILM, and 35MM FILM on November 5 everywhere November 7	This shows when the movie is going to be aired on cinema, for USA it's on November 5 and everywhere outside the USA it's going to be aired on November 7, so that the readers can come and watch with whatever type it will be projected or shown in at the cinemas.	Not available.
6.	Denotation		

		
Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
The man wearing a space suit walking on white terrain.	This tells us that the main character is an astronaut and is currently walking through an unknown terrain or place, because he is wearing his space suit it can be inferred that he's currently walking on a foreign planet and not currently on earth.	The white pure terrain is being walked on by the presence of human. There is also a NASA logo symbol on the suit which implies that the man is on a mission for something.

In datum 2, we can see the word 'Matthew McConaughey', Matthew is the name of male artist that originally hails from America and is one of the most famous and prolific actor in Hollywood. By putting his name, it can attract viewers to watch the movie, because they will see Matthew in the movie, therefore acting as a marketing tool for the movie. Film producers will use the name of famous or main character in the movie's poster to intentionally promote their film.

Matthew McConaughey is an actor and producer. Other than *Interstellar*, he has played in other famous movies and tv shows such as; *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Dallas Buyers Club*, and *True Detective*. He often plays as a detached and unhinged man. His name is written equally in size as the other actors and actresses to emphasize that their role is equally important in the movie. Matthew McConaughey is the protagonist and main character in *Interstellar*, he played a man named Joseph Cooper a NASA pilot. His role is one of the most important roles in the movie and drives the plot with every action he makes.

In datum 3 the phrase 'The end of earth will not be the end of us' the denotation of this phrase is that if the earth were to be gone, us (humanity) will not be gone with it. This phrase shows us that the earth is in a state of decay and is on the brink of destruction, therefore humans are trying to find a solution by trying to live outside of the earth. Which eventually in the movie they built a large space station to live in space as earth is at its end times.

In datum 4 the word 'Interstellar' the denotation of the word "Interstellar". According to Merriam-Webster is located, taking place, or traveling among the stars especially of the Milky Way galaxy. From this definition it can give us an idea of what is the movie about. In this movie, the character is trying to find other habitable planets for the humans to inhabit and live by traveling across the space with a specialized rocket and satellite and when they found nothing in space, they travelled through a blackhole that connects them to possibly other galaxies.

In datum 5 we can see the phrase 'On November 5 Everywhere November 7' this shows when the movie is going to be aired on cinema, for USA it's on November 5 and everywhere outside the USA it's going to be aired on November 7.

In datum 6 'The white unknown terrain' the background for the poster is in some unknown land or planet that is mostly colored and covered in white. The planet being shown white can also exist because of a myth, the white terrain can mean that the land is still pure and are not tainted by human beings. In the western cultures white can convey a feeling of peacefulness and purity.

The myths are in line with the movie poster. In this poster, the white ground is being stepped on and walked on by an astronaut, the astronaut walking on this white terrain can also be seen as tainting the purity of the land. If we see the movie, Cooper and his colleagues arrived in this no man's land to assess whether the planet is inhabitable for the human race or not. The planet is enveloped with freezing white snow and dust. This planet is barren and devoid of any life or any organism, thus the white colour depicted in the poster and the planet itself,

symbolises how pure and peaceful the planet is until a human came to its lands. The humans in the movie only brings conflict to the newly found planet. Therefore, tainting the once pure planet with the existence of outside being, in this case a human.

Still in datum 6 the NASA logo on Cooper's space suit it shows that the denotation of the logo, NASA is a company that is responsible for science and technology related to air and space, it is an abbreviation of National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The myth is that in western culture it is said that NASA is actively searching for extra-terrestrial life or habitable planet and if we see the movie NASA's ultimate goal is exactly that, even though this was not their intended purpose or general knowledge to the public. NASA in itself is a company that focuses on the advancement of science and technology that is related to air and space. However, in western understanding NASA is believed to actively search other civilization or other planet that is suitable for humans to live in case of planet-level emergency while others, though not many, believed that NASA is sham or even a propaganda that the US perpetrated to induce fear towards the unknown darkness of space.



These 2 myths that exists in the poster that can be seen in point 4 and 6 helped push the value of the poster more because it shows us, the would-be watcher of the movie, some insight as what to expect in the movie. A man donning an astronaut suit with a NASA logo in it, while walking in a pure white terrain. It gives us a rough thought that this man is not in planet Earth anymore and is looking like he is searching for something. The myth of NASA logo would indicate that the man is searching for something significant rather than something trivial. It is also in line with Barthes (1972) understanding of myth that myth is a form of communication and in it contains ideology such as the white colour and the NASA logo.





Datum 2. Oppenheimer Poster

Table 2. Oppenheimer's movie poster findings

Datum	Denotation		
8.			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt, Matt Damon, Robert Downey JR., Florence Pugh	These names are some of the biggest Hollywood actors to date, these names signify the actors and actress that will play in this movie, the sizes of the text indicate that they all have important role to play in the movie.	Not available.
9.	Denotation		
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
Oppenheimer	This is the title of the movie. The movie will revolve around the life and	The name Oppenheimer itself carries some weight, as people would	

		<p>journey of a scientist with similar name Julius Robert Oppenheimer who is renowned as the Father of Atomic Bomb.</p>	<p>often refer to a modern-day Prometheus, his epithet as “Destroyer of Worlds”, and his Oppenheimer’s name alone carries horror for the Japanese.</p>
10.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	<p>A man standing wearing neat and tidy suit.</p>	<p>The man standing is Oppenheimer that is portrayed by Cillian Murphy, he is wearing a formal wear complete with a hat and with both hands in his pocket pose, this may signify or suggest that he is a man of importance and a high-ranking position.</p>	<p>Not available.</p>
11.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	<p>A man with a thousand-yard stare.</p>	<p>Oppenheimer or Cillian Murphy is seen facing forward with a blank stare, seemingly detached from reality as a whole and also seem to be filled with either regret, stress, or shock.</p>	<p>The blank stare is called a thousand-yard stare, a condition that many soldiers afflicted during a war or combat.</p>
12.	Denotation		



			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	Orange and brownish smoke cloud	This tells us that the smoke and cloud are no ordinary smoke. Smoke and cloud of this colour is an uncommon natural phenomenon, most probably man-made as we can imply from the device in front of it.	Not available.
13.	Denotation		
			
	Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs	Connotation	Myth
	The giant wired metal ball.	The giant ball implies that the size is massive and it's a bomb, the very first atomic bomb, considering Oppenheimer's title of the Father of Atomic Bomb.	Not available.

In datum 8 'Cillian Murphy' is the name of the male lead of this movie, he is an Irish actor and has achieved high praises in the movie industry from the likes of Golden Globe Awards and Oscar. With his name being widely known, putting his name in the poster serves as an attraction to his fans or to someone who values cinema making his name an efficient marketing tool for the movie.

Cillian Murphy has worked numerous times with Christopher Nolan, 6 times to be exact. But this is the first time he's being chosen as a lead actor in Christopher Nolan movies, he's always a side character in his other movies. Aside from being a great actor, Cillian Murphy and Christopher Nolan are real life friends both knew what each other wanted in the movie when shooting a scene, they are in sync with each other. Christopher Nolan is also known for being loyal to his casts of actors, as proven in his film as he cast the people he worked with from time to time. This gives both enjoyment to the actors and Christopher Nolan as they know how to work with one another.

In datum 9 'Oppenheimer' As the size of the text suggests, Oppenheimer is the title of this movie. A biopic movie about the scientist Julius Robert Oppenheimer, the Father of Atomic Bomb. The surrounding myths about Oppenheimer is that he is considered a modern Prometheus, Prometheus himself was a Greek god that defy his fellow Gods rules about giving fire to mankind, although fire would benefit mankind greatly it also allows for unforeseen horror to occur. Oppenheimer is like Prometheus in a sense, he was told and heeded by his fellow scientist and co-worker to not go through with his idea and plan, but he continued anyway. Although his invention led to world war-ending solution and can be used as an unlimited energy source, his invention could also be developed and exploited further and lead to a far greater calamity and untold horror than a mere nuclear war earning him the moniker modern Prometheus.

This also correlates with other myth that concerns Oppenheimer as the “Destroyer of Worlds”. Oppenheimer greatly regrets his invention at the end of his life, believing that his creation will lead to the destruction of the very world itself. Oppenheimer purpose with the atomic bomb was to end all possible war, with a weapon that is very destructive none would dare to oppose or contest. Only he forgot to consider the very nature of human that is greed and self-destructive trait of humans.

Oppenheimer’s name also brings discomfort and uneasiness to some Japanese people, since his creation led to the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Many Japanese families are affected by it and resent the name Oppenheimer, although he was never told that his invention would be used to bomb the Japanese. Oppenheimer is still a name that is used as scapegoat to blame for the tragedies by the Japanese.

In datum 10 ‘A man standing wearing neat and tidy suit’ we can see that the man is Oppenheimer, he here is seen as a clean and tidy, despite the flickering fire background he is in his suit is till clean with little to no wrinkle on it. Oppenheimer’s prominent fashion choice to wear throughout the movie is a typical work office wear since he is a renowned scientist which is a suit, coat, long pant, and his favourite round hat, though he was also seen using casual suit when he was trailing. Other than that, he uses this fashion to every occasion he attends and goes. The outfit choice makes him seem more respectable person, professional, and look upon on. His hat especially, makes him more distinct than other character in the movie, because he is the only prominent character that wears a round hat.

In datum 11 ‘A man with a thousand-yard stare’ Oppenheimer is depicted in the poster with a straight blank stare, this could mean that he is staring without thinking anything. But this could indicate that he is experiencing a dissociation likely due to stress or even traumatic events. This condition is also known as thousand-yard stare, the thousand-yard stare is a mental health issue that stems from stress and trauma, which Oppenheimer experienced ever since his completion of the atomic bomb. His gaze of nothingness tells us of an immense regret an individual can experience.

The myth surrounding thousand-yard stare is that only combatants or soldier can experience this state because of their post-traumatic stress disorder during a war or combat, but it is proven to not be the case as trauma may vary and is not exclusive only to soldiers. People that experiences heavy trauma in their life often can be seen with a blank stare that detached themselves from reality in their face from time to time.

In datum 12 ‘Orange and brownish smoke cloud’: We can see a huge smoke coming from the background with an orange and brownish hue in it, from the faint flickering of ember and fire the smoke is coming from an explosion of the atomic bomb that Oppenheimer made.

In datum 13 ‘The giant wired metal ball’ is Oppenheimer’s first prototype of the atomic bomb called the Gadget and it was tested and detonated in the Trinity test in New Mexico. The Gadget is an implosion-type plutonium bomb which need a detonator in order for it explode. The spherical shape in it contains highly nuclear fissile material. The Gadget then later developed and modified further into two more atomic bombs called Fat Man and Little Boy which would later be used in the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

These 3 myths helped the movie poster to become a hit with the media and people with no interest to history. Oppenheimer name itself is enough to drive people curious to watch the movie, but with the added myth that Oppenheimer made in his life it gave it more depth. The characterization and the myth of the blank stare also helped poster as it gives a sense of realism and a peek of how Oppenheimer is usually depicted in modern media, a man who mastered a blank stare. The myth plays a role here like Barthes (1972) stated the cultural myths in this case Oppenheimer’s name and fame helps make sense of the experience in the culture and also helps conceptualizes what Oppenheimer actually is.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of semiotic analysis and findings of the researched poster that has been conducted in chapter IV using Roland Barthes semiotic approach. The writer concluded that within the poster exists 3 meaning that can be interpreted differently depending on the perceiver experience or familiarity. In both *Interstellar* and *Oppenheimer* poster it has been shown that Barthes’s approach especially myth can play a huge role in representing the movie, for example; how Christopher Nolan depicts the planet as pure white in *Interstellar*’s poster and that it depicts the purity of the planet, and how Christopher Nolan also utilizes the name Oppenheimer in his movie to instil a sense of curiosity of the enigmatic father of the atomic bomb.

The poster however, despite having the same director, and in essence creator, have a visually different approach and how Christopher Nolan utilizes myth. In *Interstellar*, Chistopher Nolan opted to use mainly white in the poster to portray the purity of the planet and the innocence of human walking in it, the poster is calm yet gives the viewer a question as to what the human is doing in such foreign planet. While in *Oppenheimer*, Christopher Nolan opted to use mainly orange in the poster to portray the tense heat of fire that Oppenheimer created as he is the modern-day Prometheus and to indicate the possible destruction of it, Nolan also utilizes the myth that Oppenheimer’s gaze is empty from his famous photoshoot.

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