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Investigation and Application of Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Components in Michal Batory's Poster with a Defamiliarization Approach

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ABSTRACT

Pictorial semiotics is considered a branch of semantics that translates and interprets the hidden meanings within an image through sign analysis. The poster is a medium used in graphic design where pictorial signs, aided by other signs, convey a message to the audience. The image in a poster must have sufficient appeal for the audience. This appeal is sometimes created through the contrast between color and form and sometimes through the executive method used. Therefore, the selection of forms, signs, and the relationships between them, as well as their alignment in message transmission, are crucial factors in poster design.

According to the great semiotician Peirce, whose theory forms one of the main foundations of modern semiotics, a sign is defined as anything that is determined by something else, called its Object, and creates an effect on a person, which is called the Interpretant.

The current research studies the topic of investigation and application of Peirce's semiotic components in Michal Batory's semantic posters. Furthermore, based on the research findings, it seeks to achieve its main goal, which is the relationship between the Representamen and the Object from the audience's perspective and understanding, using the Defamiliarization approach. Peirce's semiotic theory is used as the theoretical framework, and the Defamiliarization approach is employed as the aesthetic approach in this research.

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Introduction

From a semiotic perspective, signs are meaningful units that manifest as words, sounds, gestures, and objects (Chandler, 2024). According to Peirce, A sign is a sign only when it has the capacity to be transferred to another sign which gives it the power to flourish, and it reaches interpretation when its meaning is discovered a discovery that occurs by the audience, which is a purely human phenomenon.

Pictorial semiotics is a specific branch of the science of semantics that particularly seeks to understand the nature of the characteristics of meanings, or the semantic expression, known as the image. When we approach the study of meaning from a discursive perspective, we arrive at two crucial characteristics: first, signs are subject to a processual system, and second, signs are studied in large semantic aggregates meaning that signs are meaningful based on the relationship between them and the connection created in the discursive context (Shairi, 2009). Therefore, the production of meaning is a dynamic, interpretive, and endless process that is constructed in the mind of the audience, not merely in the sign or the object. This process unfolds in the form of a chain of signs (Semiosis), where each interpreter becomes a new sign and creates a new meaning. Since signs can be interpreted in different ways across various contexts, meaning is constantly evolving and being reproduced.

In graphic works like the poster, where the message is discovered and interpreted by the audience, the manner of using signs and the relationships between them are crucial. The reason for this importance is that every sign carries a semantic load and connotation for the audience, and its use and placement in a poster can lead to diverse interpretations for the audience. Each audience member perceives and receives the message based on their mindset, and cultural and social context. Therefore, the inadequate use of signs that are not aligned with the subject can significantly impact the reading and interpretation of the image.

Michal Batory is one of the prominent contemporary graphic designers whose posters are primarily cultural, artistic, or theatrical. He uses Defamiliarization in employing visual elements and signs in his designs to achieve a surreal and poetic visual composition. His conceptual and semiotic approach also allows the researcher to analyze and investigate the hidden layers of meaning in his posters using semiotic methods. The reason for choosing Peirce's theory among other semioticians is its greater adaptability to works of visual arts, especially graphic works like posters.

Therefore, in this research, we aim to analyze the signs used in Michal Batory's conceptual posters and interpret their meaning by considering Peirce's semiotic components. Based on the assumption that, from the perspective of Peircean semiotics, there is no predetermined effect of a sign on an interpreter, and the audience interprets the sign based on their lived experience, and also that signs can be classified and given meaning based on their material nature, their

relationship with their Objects, and their relationship with their Interpretants, we seek to answer two research questions:

How can Michal Batory's posters be analyzed based on Peirce's semiotic theory?

How can the audience or interpreter interpret the relationship between the Representamen and the Object in Michal Batory's posters?

Sign and Semiotics

Anything that signifies something other than itself a phenomenon, concept, object, or subject is a sign. The sign is the means for creating a work of art, or, as an analogy, it is the alphabet of art (Naghizadeh, 2004). In art, the sign is used to convey meaning and establish communication. The sign is an analytical concept; the analyst first encounters the text and may then resort to a tool called the sign and how it relates to other signs within other sign systems (Mafi, 2019).

Semiotics is not merely a method for textual analysis; rather, it is concerned with the theory, analysis of signs, codes, and processes of signification (Chandler, 2024). It is the interpretive process for scientific inquiry in which signs are studied, identified, and classified (Mafi, 2019). In semiotics, there are two divergent traditions, stemming from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) (Chandler, 2024). Saussure viewed the sign as a necessary and inseparable relationship between the signifier and the signified. Peirce, however, saw it as an asymmetrical relationship. For him, a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. This definition shows that the Peircean sign is not binary, unlike the Saussurean sign, but rather quadripartite: 1. Something (the sign); 2. Something else (the object); 3. For somebody (the interpretant); 4. In some respect or capacity (the ground) (Shairi, 2009).

Thus, the sign is the factor that creates relationships of varying intensity among different societies and cultures. Consequently, when we speak of art as a medium for transmitting meaning and a means of dialogue, signs naturally play the role of letters (Naghizadeh, 2004). Artistic signs are both familiar to the artist familiarity with them makes the creation of the artwork possible and they hold a corresponding place in the minds of the audience. Because of this mental background, the possibility of understanding and comprehending the message and meaning of the artwork is increased, providing the grounds for communication and interaction (Naghizadeh, 2004).

Peirce's Semiotic Theory

The connection between Peirce's three philosophical categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) is correct in that it forms the foundation of his semiotics. However, they are not absolute; rather, they can be subject to change through influence from the environment or the creation of new conditions. In this respect, a kind of pluralism and relativism is inherent in Peirce's thought. In the context of his semiotics, this viewpoint allows the interpretation of a reality to always remain open and renewable. (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011)

Peirce's semiotics, as a process and not a static entity, includes three essential components:

1. Representamen
2. Object
3. Interpretant

In the first element, the Representamen or sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity (Jappy, 2013).

In the second element, the Object is what the sign refers to. In contrast to Saussure's abstract signified, Peirce considers the referent to be a thing in the world (Chandler, 2024). A crucial point here is that the sign only creates a particular conception of the object but cannot convey the truth of that object. In other words, the sign alone does not create knowledge about the truth of the object. The sign can show the meaning or one of the characteristics of the object only on the condition that the interpreter has already known the object through other signs (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011).

In the third element, the Interpretant is defined as the meaning that results from the sign (Sojoodi, 2019). This term does not refer to a single interpreter, but rather to the cognition that is produced by the sign. The interpretation that forms in the audience's mind itself becomes another sign; thus, it can re-enter the cycle of sign-action. This is a process that apparently has no conceivable end, and the meaning of a representamen is nothing but another representamen. While the semiotic process is potentially infinite, it is limited by habit. For this reason, Peirce calls the final logical interpretant a habit. By this concept, he means the human tendency to attribute a specific meaning to a sign based on a context they know better and are accustomed to. This habit typically causes the sign to be referenced to the interpretant and to other signs. And this reality is necessary, because if this process were to continue indefinitely, comprehension and mutual understanding between humans would never be possible. Therefore, habit causes this process to cease and bestows specific meanings upon signs so that humans can communicate and understand each other (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011).

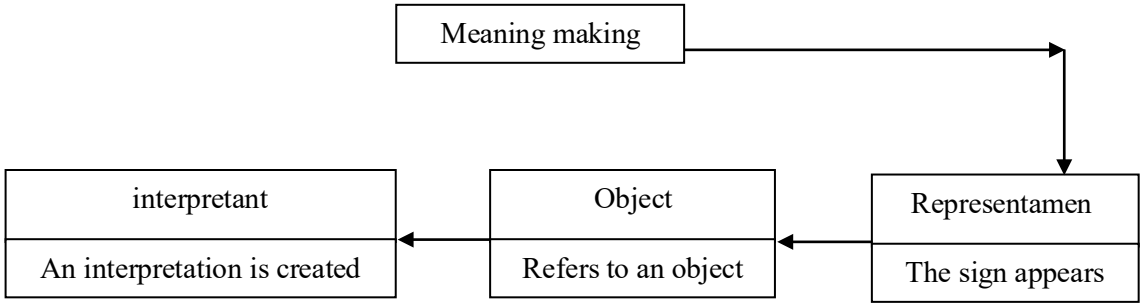


Figure 1. The process of meaning making based on Peirce's triadic theory (Source: Authors).

Therefore, these three elements interact in a dynamic process, and meaning is formed as a result of this interaction. According to Peirce, this interpretive process of sign-action that

addresses the production and interpretation of meaning through signs is called Semiosis. One of the most important characteristics of Peirce's semiotics is the study of the sign based on a triadic or three-dimensional understanding of it and the process of Semiosis.

Peirce distinguishes between the Object that exists in itself in the external context and the Object that is shown by the sign. He calls the first the Dynamical Object and the second, the Object that is conceived by the sign, the Immediate Object (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011).

Types of Signs Based on Their Relationship with the Object and the Process of Semiosis According to Peirce's Theory

Peirce considered the Object and the process of Signification or Semiosis in such a way that he believed a sign can signify its object through three distinct modes, thereby establishing three relationships:

1. Relationships of Similarity: In the first mode of signification, the sign is called an Icon (Iconic), and the relationship is based on similarity.
2. Relationships of Textual Contiguity: In the second mode of signification, the sign is called an Index (Indexical), and the relationship is based on contiguity or a causal connection.
3. Relationships of Laws: In the third mode of signification, the sign is called a Symbol (Symbolic), and the relationship is based on convention or law (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011).

In Peirce's Semiotics, the goal is not to arrive at a single meaning but rather to understand the multilevel structure of significations. Therefore, when analyzing the sign, the object, and the relationship between them in a poster, we can simultaneously use all three categories of Peircean signs (Iconic, Indexical, Symbolic). By creating interaction and connection between these three levels of signification, we can achieve a more complete and accurate analysis of the subject. This analysis is, of course, derived from the scientific and everyday experience of each individual in their position as an audience and interpreter.

One of the primary objectives of Peircean Semiotics is to explain how signs move from a latent and unconscious stage to the stage of being a sign of something and being a pointer to something for a human being. In seeking to answer this key question, Peirce points to the existence of a mode of inference called Abduction to articulate the interdependence between different signs. In his view, signs gain meaning in relation to one another and show something to the person (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011).

Therefore, based on Peirce's theory, the Semiosis (the interpretive process of sign-action) of a poster involves the production and interpretation of the signs used within it and their relationship with the Object. Cognition and interpretation are not predetermined matters; rather, they occur gradually through the selection of the best interpretation and by considering the individual experience of each sign. Based on Peirce's theory of semiotics, when we see an object, we cannot necessarily grasp its meaning through Deduction or Induction. However, by using Abduction, it

is possible for us to arrive at the best explanation of that sign. Of course, the best explanation does not mean truth itself, but rather that which is closer to the sign's actual signified. Therefore, cognition is realized gradually and not instantaneously (Razavifar, Ghafari, 2011). Consequently, the works of Michal Batory, which are primarily cultural, artistic, or theatrical posters, and which employ a conceptual and semiotic approach in their design, are analyzable based on Peirce's Semiotics.

Theory of Meaning in Graphic Design

Graphic design is a type of visual language that expresses meaning through pictorial elements (color, form, composition, texture, and typography). Within this framework, signs play a key role. Graphic design doesn't just transfer information; it also communicates narratives, emotions, and attitudes through these signs. The goal of pictorial semiotics is to discover the rules for reading an image and to understand its meanings by identifying the visual elements that constitute the image's surface appearance. This leads to an analysis of the configuration of visual elements and subsequently the analysis of forms and the discovery of the meanings of the visual model (Mafi, 2019). The definition of graphic design as an art constantly changes and renews itself based on the expectation of effective visual feedback in any given era. For this reason, graphic designers must continually make more accurate substitutions in their repertoire and always seek to discover a new, fresh, and creative tone for presenting their artworks. Given the importance of the poster as one of the most significant tools for information dissemination from the past to the present, and the lack of attention by inexperienced and unprofessional designers to the impact of an appropriate and creative visual tone in its design, employing defamiliarization may be a suitable strategy for the poster designer (Khazaei, Ismaeili, 2019). Sometimes, visual symbols and signs can convey information that words cannot. According to Barthes, the image is more effective than writing. The image is a more precise sign; the model is many times closer to the subject (object). The image, from the moment it signifies, transforms into a form of writing, and thus, like writing, it is called a reading unit. Nevertheless, what we recognize as linguistic systems also contribute to the production of media and meaning through intertextuality, sometimes lending a narrative meaning or narrative denotation to the subject (Mafi, 2019).

Defamiliarization

The concept of Defamiliarization, which originates from Russian Formalism, emphasizes that everyday objects are freed from habitual perception and become meaningful again to the audience when placed in an unusual context. It is one of the key applied concepts in theories of art and literary criticism, first introduced by Viktor Shklovsky in 1917 in his essay titled Art as Technique (Khazaei, Ismaeili, 2019). Shafiei Kadkani first proposed the Persian equivalent, Defamiliarization. Today, this aesthetic method or approach is used in various fields of art.

Excessive use of specific signs within a discourse or an over-emphasis on a single hermeneutic interpretation of those signs can lead to a condition that can be called sign fatigue. Here, a discourse can be defined as "an arena of information exchange, that is, as a system of relations between parties engaged in communicative activity (Khalilnezhad, Sharifzadeh, Goodarzparvari, 2022.) In such conditions, avant-garde artists often resort to defamiliarization and sign-breaking, thereby accelerating the dialectical process of history (Taheri, 2020). Defamiliarization of objects removes their familiar aspect to draw our attention to their unfamiliar aspect (Abedinifard, 2009). Therefore, the condition for entering the realm of creativity is to get used to abandoning habits. We must not see objects only as they are familiar to us; we must remember that we see things that capture our attention. In other words, things exist for us when we consciously perceive them. Defamiliarization is an essential condition for capturing the audience's attention (Niroumand, 2011).

As Babak Ahmadi points out in his book Truth and Beauty to the similarities between Modernism and Defamiliarization, he considers defamiliarization to be one of the most important aspects of Modern Art. Consequently, Michal Batory, as a contemporary artist with Modernist roots, was able to convey the mental concepts associated with objects to the audience by using defamiliarization and visual experiences in his posters, derived from the relationships between those objects. In fact, with the help of a specialized code, he managed to create his own personalized world to transform the audience's perception of the poster. Involving the poster's audience in the communication process increases the message's impact and plays a vital role in persuading the audience. The important concept advanced by the Formalists, namely alienation or defamiliarization, is a technique based on the audience's reception and interpretation. In this technique, the crucial matter is to break the familiar and ordinary perception so that the audience does not settle for their first sensory perception of the work but rather engages in interpretation through the contiguity and unfamiliarity of the language and expression. (Ahmadi, 2021) Just as Derrida, like Peirce, believes that meanings are not fixed and change according to context and subject, the meaning of a word in one context is often different from its meaning in another. Michal Batory uses this very approach in his posters to create a surreal and poetic space (Adams, 2015). By using the combination of two familiar objects and blending them in his own style, he constructs an unfamiliar and novel object or element so that the audience must think and reflect to read the image and receive the message. According to Shklovsky, the use of defamiliarization and the breaking of everyday and ordinary clichés contributes to the power of art and the creation of creative work (Lawrence, 1984).

Changes in defamiliarization are possible through various methods and approaches, which are categorized into the following frameworks:

1. Displacement, this involves creating a change in the point of view, location, function, size, and color, as well as the substitution of one image for another.

2. Inversion or Reversal.
3. Exaggeration in the presentation of the product's function.
4. Combination and Juxtaposition of images.
5. Use of Visual Figures of Speech (Rhetorical Devices), including: Metaphor, Ambiguity/Pun, Paradox, Irony, and Symbol (Manavi Rad, Anbar Dabaghian, 2014).

Analysis of Michal Batory's Posters

For this study, two posters from Michal Batory's body of work specifically from his cultural and theatrical posters have been selected: the poster for the opera The Gypsy Baron (Figure 1) and the poster for the play Roberto Zucco (Figure 2). These posters facilitate the decoding of different levels of meaning because of their use of familiar elements in an unfamiliar composition. This approach allows the researcher to recognize the work's layers of meaning, especially in cases where the image appears simple yet conveys a complex and metaphorical message.

Poster Introduction: The Gypsy Baron

The poster is for the opera Baron Cygański (The Gypsy Baron), a work by Johann Strauss. This operetta addresses themes of social class, focusing on the aristocracy and the Roma people (Gypsies). The core of the story centers on the opposition between poverty, freedom, wealth, and social pretension/display. In designing the poster for this dramatic opera, Michal Batory used an unfamiliar and unexpected combination of objects and a part of the human body to visually reproduce the play's main concepts in a metaphorical expression. The image features leather boots overflowing with jewels that are somehow attached to a bare human leg. These visual expresses the class contrast and the contradiction between poverty and luxury/wealth using a tone that is simultaneously humorous and critical.

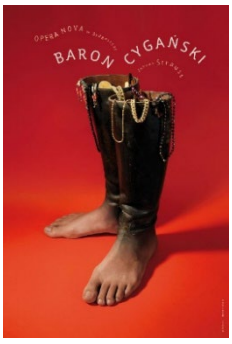


Figure 2. Baron Cygański poster (https://www.michalbatory.com/assets/images/af38-2000x2952.jpg).

Table 1. Analysis of the Components of Peirce's Semiotics (Source: Authors).

Component type	The relationship between the component and the sign	Semantic Interpretation
Representamen The sign itself, which is perceived in the image	An old pair of leather boots. Jewels overflowing from the boots. A bare leg.	A realistic image of the boot, feet, and jewelry that is the same representation as the image.
Object The subject to which the sign refers	Bare leg: Sign of poverty and lack of belongings, or a simple life. Old leather boots: Sign of social power and aristocratic life. Jewels: Symbol of wealth, glamour, and power. The combination of these signs and elements creates a contrast between poverty and wealth, which is the central theme of the opera.	The bare leg, combined with boots overflowing with jewels, signifies the social contradiction and the two levels of aristocratic pretense and the reality of human poverty (Gypsy life).
Interpretant The meaning created in the mind of the audience (interpreter)	The bare leg initially signifies poverty and the jewels signify luxury.	In the cultural interpretation stage, the initial image elicits a sense of humor, but the meaning gradually grows and expands in the mind, leading to reflection.

Table 2. Examining semantic implication based on the relationship between the sign and the subject (Source: Authors).

Type of Relationship	Matched relationship with the sign	Mode of Signification
Iconic	Bare leg. Leather boots. Individual jewel.	relationships of similarity: The sign of realistic resemblance is external to the object.
Indexical	The bare leg attached to the boot. The contradiction between poverty and wealth. Boots overflowing with jewels: wealth and, in fact, a direct link to the aristocracy class.	relationships of textual contiguity :The sign signifies based on a causal relationship with the object. In fact, it has a direct link to social class.
Symbolic	The boot overflowing with jewels, a symbol of wealth and aristocracy and difference.	relationships of laws: The relationship is one of law (or convention) and is interpreted based on cultural and social conventions; meaning is transmitted through convention.

Table 3. Analysis of the Use of Defamiliarization (Source: Authors).

Type of Method	explanation
Displacement	In the image of a boot that turns into a foot and becomes a new image. A boot that in its semantic definition represents a covering for the foot or a guard and protection or nobility, but here it becomes a place-to-place jewelry and actually acts like a chest and a change in its function has taken place.
Inversion/Reversal	Falling jewelry indicates great wealth.
Exaggeration of Function Display	Exaggeration in the combination of the boot and the foot. Exaggeration in the type of texture of the boot and the foot.
Combination and Juxtaposition	The shadow created on the ground helps with the stability and resistance of the foot. The combination of text and image is well formed and helps with the

	presentation of the opera.
Use of Visual Figures of Speech	Metaphor: Bare feet between boots, showing the contrast between nobility and poverty. Symbol: Boots, symbolizing nobility and power, and bare feet, symbolizing poverty. Jewelry, symbolizing great wealth. Paradox: Modern Man (naked man hidden behind symbols of power and wealth)

Graphic elements: The red background color is a symbolic sign of passion, power, and danger. The color of the boot leather reflects aristocratic life. The shadow created in the background helps to stabilize the legs. The type of writing that is placed in an arc above the boots, in addition to the appropriate composition, shows the sense of musicality of the show.

Poster Introduction: Roberto Zucco

The poster is for the play Roberto Zucco by Bernard-Marie Koltès, which was staged at *Teatr Poleski w Poznaniu*, one of the best and oldest theaters in Poland. The play revolves around a real and tragic character a man who has committed murder and is searching for meaning and identity. This drama explores concepts such as violence, loneliness, guilt, and the alienation of contemporary man. Michal Batory transformed these words and concepts into a metaphorical image using the technique of Defamiliarization and the executive method of assemblage.

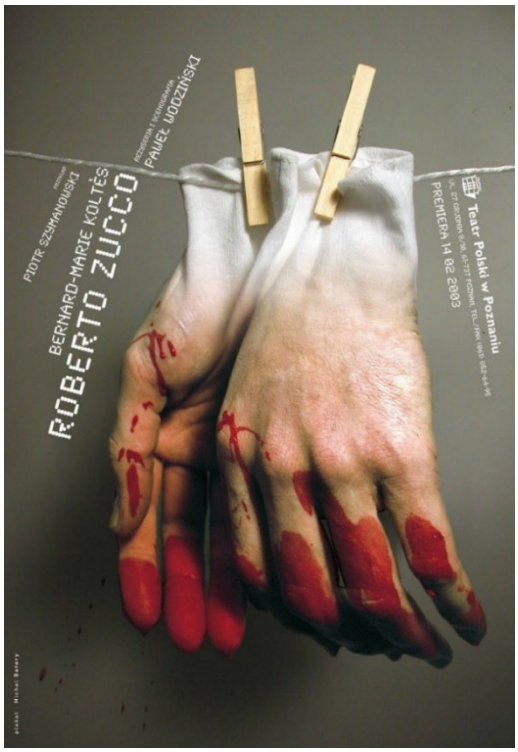


Figure 3. Play Roberto Zucco poster (https://www.michalbatory.com/affiche_theatre.html).

Table 1. Analysis of the Components of Peirce's Semiotics (Source: Authors).

Component type	The relationship between the component and the sign	Semantic Interpretation
Representamen The sign itself, which is perceived in the image	Two male hands. White gloves. Rope. Wooden clothes hanger.	The combination of these elements together seems realistic at first glance, but with its unexpected and illogical combination together, it transcends mere representation and denotation and becomes metaphorical semantics.
Object The subject to which the sign refers	Blood, which represents murder and violence. Glove - a hand hanging from a rope, which represents the cleansing or washing away of sin. The alienation and identity of the criminal, whose two hands are visible in the image.	The poster indirectly refers to the show's main character (Roberto Zucco), who is torn between innocence and crime and guilt.
Interpretant The meaning created in the mind of the audience (interpreter)	Bloody human hands, a sign of murder. Hanging hands, indicating a sense of guilt. A glove hanging on a cord with two clips, indicating remorse and guilt.	The image shows the problems, shortcomings, and moral crises of modern man. The audience has their own interpretation of the image and a sense of guilt, empathy, or disgust develops in them.

Table 2. Examining semantic implication based on the relationship between the sign and the subject (Source: Authors).

Type of Relationship	Matched relationship with the sign	Mode of Signification
Iconic	Realistic image of hands, clothespins, blood stains, cloth gloves	relationships of similarity: The sign of realistic resemblance is external to the object.
Indexical	Bloody cloth glove: murder Bloody hand: murderer Heaviness of hanging hand: emphasis on the severity of the incident or crime	relationships of textual contiguity : The sign signifies based on a causal relationship with the object.
Symbolic	Hand hanging from a clothesline: washing and purity Two hands hanging: regret or remorse	relationships of laws: The relationship is one of law (or convention) and is interpreted based on cultural and social conventions; meaning is transmitted through convention.

Table 3. Analysis of the Use of Defamiliarization (Source: Authors).

Type of Method	Explanation
Displacement	The glove has become a man's hand with the texture of the fabric, and the fabric has been integrated into the texture of the skin of the hand, and this integration is in a visual way that the fabric glove and the hand have become a new image of the glove.
Inversion/Reversal	By twisting the hand and feeling it hang down: Regret or guilt is induced. A severed hand hanging from a clothesline without being attached to the body.
Exaggeration of Function Display	Exaggeration in the combination of gloves and hands. Exaggeration in the hanging of the hand by the clothespin, which shows the gravity of the hand in crime and murder.

	The blood that flows from the hand refers to the recentness of the incident.
Combination and Juxtaposition	The image and text are placed side by side, as if they were part of a garment hanging on a hanger.
Use of Visual Figures of Speech	Symbol: A bloody glove represents a hand that is bloody, indicating a murder. Allusion: A hand hanging from a clothesline symbolizing washing and cleansing. Symbol: A cloth glove symbolizing a murderer. Blood symbolizing murder and the killing of a person.

Graphic elements: Soft lighting, high-resolution photography where all textures and details are clearly visible. Light reflections on blood stains. Gray background color. Pixelation of the main character of the story. Typography that hangs like clothes on a line. It well shows the sense of mystery of the story, which is about a murder.

Interpretation

As observed in analytical Tables 1 and 2, the analysis of the first poster utilized Peirce's three fundamental components (Representamen, Object, and Interpretant). The relationship of each component to the sign, its semantic interpretation, and the graphic elements were analyzed separately. Michal Batory's choice of sign types, elements, and his semiotic approach, along with the method of Defamiliarization employed in creating the images, enable the process of Semiosis to occur, necessitating a multi-layered semiotic analysis for both posters. In essence, the signs must be translated layer by layer to interpret the main meaning of the play.

In the first poster, Michal Batory uses a metaphorical and semiotic language to depict the essence of class contradiction. The Representamen the boot, the bare leg, and the jewels serves as the audience's first perceptive stimulus due to its realistic visual structure. The bare leg is a sign of poverty and destitution, while the boot filled with jewels is a sign of possession, luxury, and power a human who is outwardly wealthy but inwardly poor. By blending these objects using the Defamiliarization method and disrupting the audience's perceptual habit, the artist has created an image that moves the audience from the initial, humorous perception to a layer of contemplation. It's as if a human is trapped between their existential truth and a social mask. The background color intensifies this tension and evokes the idea of a material and tempting world in the mind. Therefore, Batory uses the familiar-unfamiliar image to reference the social meaning of the work's recreation, drawing the audience toward the discovery of meaning through the redefinition of signs.

In the second poster, the artist used pictorial defamiliarization to create an image that cannot be devoid of meaning for the theater audience. Upon seeing the play's title and the image, the theater audience is immediately drawn into the analysis of signs and the process of Semiosis, translating the image's layers of meaning. The image seems to speak about moral and psychological meanings. The realistic image of two hands, a clothesline, wooden clothespins, bloodstains, and a cloth glove an image which is a realistic representation of an external object establishes the Iconic aspect of the image through its natural color and texture. The hands stained

with blood and the bloody cloth glove serve as an Index and a causal sign of violence, murder, and the manifestation of sin. Furthermore, the hands hanging from the clothesline, which recalls washing and hanging laundry, and the bloody hands, are, based on social conventions, Symbols representing purification, sin, the murderer, and the occurrence of a crime, respectively. This discordance and the creation of a familiar-unfamiliar image led to the conclusion that the artist, by utilizing Defamiliarization, has forced the audience to move beyond a superficial understanding and engage in reflection. This very act of reflection and the eventual attainment of meaning is what encourages the audience to see the play.

The dynamic interpretant resulting from this composition engages the audience in rethinking the nature of violence. Through Abduction and their lived experience and cultural/social conventions, the audience makes guesses: Was a murder committed? Is the killer a fugitive or imprisoned? Did a guilty conscience force him to run? However, a final and definitive answer is never available because, according to Peirce's theory, the Interpretant is the cognitive meaning produced by the sign, and the first interpretation can generate subsequent interpretations in the audience's perception. This cycle of sign-action, or Semiosis, can continue indefinitely. Therefore, this poster is not merely an advertisement for a play, but a form of contemporary visual statement about a human being caught between innocence and guilt, and the wandering state of the body and soul seeking purification. From Peirce's semiotic perspective, this poster is a perfect example of the endless process of meaning generation, where every audience member constructs a fresh interpretation upon encountering it, and meaning is reproduced with every reading.

Conclusion

This research investigated meaning in the visual signs of Michal Batory's posters, based on the theoretical framework of Peirce's Semiotics and the approach of Defamiliarization.

1. Phase One involved the identification and detailed description of the visual elements of each poster based on Peirce's trichotomy (Representamen, Object, and Interpretant).
2. Phase Two utilized Peirce's three-fold classification (Iconic, Indexical, and Symbolic) to specify the relationship between the sign and its object.
3. Phase Three examined the method of employing Defamiliarization in the creation of the pictorial signs.
4. Phase Four focused on the production of meaning within the cultural, thematic, and artistic context of the work.
5. Phase Five assessed the reception of the message based on the semiotic structure of the work.

In a pictorial sign, when all three types of significations (Icon, Index, and Symbol) occur together, they are mutually complementary. The Icon establishes the feeling (Firstness), the Index establishes the reality (Secondness), and the Symbol constructs the social and cultural conventions (Thirdness). Meaning emerges from the continuous interaction between the sign, the

world, and the mind not as a final, static product, but in an endless flow of interpretation (Semiosis).

Michal Batory uses simple, everyday objects (like boots, jewels, a cloth glove, blood, a clothes rack, a bare leg, etc.) and combines them to create an image that is unfamiliar yet presented in a familiar form, inviting the audience to discover a fresh meaning. This is precisely what Shklovsky termed Defamiliarization, which makes our perception of things deeper, longer-lasting, and more meaningful. The audience is no longer a superficial observer but moves from mere looking to thinking about the meaning, especially in these two posters, which address a cultural audience. The audience engages in the discovery of meaning by unveiling the image's layers and translating them. This process can motivate the audience to attend the play to complete the poster's meaning through the performance, or it can lead to a visual translation based on their lived experience and the cultural/social conventions they associate with the signs. Therefore, the sign in Michal Batory's work is not merely the mediation of a reference but a means of reconstructing the audience's habits of interpretation. It stimulates the audience, compelling them to think and react. His posters are a prominent example of contemporary visual expression rooted in Semiotics and Defamiliarization, which, by creating layers of meaning, guide the audience toward longer interpretation and deeper contemplation. This approach makes the audience more discerning and raises their expectation level for graphic design works, particularly posters.

Author Contributions

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Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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