

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF *MOON KNIGHT* EPISODE 5: ASYLUM USING PEIRCE'S THEORY OF SIGN

ANALISIS SEMIOTIKA *MOON KNIGHT* EPISODE 5: ASYLUM MENGUNAKAN TEORI TANDA PIERCE

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Abstract

This research presents a semiotic analysis in an episode of a television series, focusing on Episode 5 of Moon Knight, titled "Asylum." Utilizing Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model—comprising representamen, object, and interpretant—this study aims to investigate how signs and symbols function within the narrative to construct meaning, depict trauma, and illustrate the protagonist's fragmented identity. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, the research identifies key symbolic elements such as the asylum, the goddess Taweret, and the feather of the truth and examines their roles in expressing inner conflict and psychological dissociation. The researchers found and analyzed 10 symbols in the studied episode. This analysis reveals how the episode constructs psychological, mythological, and moral meanings through visual and narrative symbolic signs to represent the main character's inner emotional states. Furthermore, the analyzed episode serves as a powerful example of how visual narration and semiotic structures can merge to explore mental health, identity fragmentation, and the quest for self-acceptance.

Keywords: *interpretant, object, representamen, sign, symbol*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyajikan analisis semiotik dalam sebuah episode serial televisi, Episode 5 Moon Knight, berjudul "Asylum." Dengan memanfaatkan model triadik Charles Sanders Peirce—yang terdiri dari representamen, objek, dan interpretan—penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana tanda dan simbol berfungsi dalam narasi untuk membangun makna, menggambarkan trauma, dan memperlihatkan identitas protagonis yang terfragmentasi. Melalui pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi elemen simbolik utama seperti rumah sakit jiwa, dewi Taweret, dan bulu kebenaran serta meneliti peran simbol tersebut dalam mengekspresikan konflik batin dan disosiasi psikologis karakter utama. Peneliti menemukan dan menganalisis 10 simbol. Penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana episode tersebut membangun makna psikologis, mitologis, dan moral melalui tanda simbolik visual dan naratif untuk mewakili keadaan emosional batin karakter utama. Selain itu, episode ini berfungsi sebagai contoh kuat tentang bagaimana narasi visual dan struktur semiotik dapat bergabung untuk mengeksplorasi kesehatan mental, fragmentasi identitas, dan penerimaan diri.



Kata kunci: *interpretant, objek, representamen, tanda, symbol*

Introduction

Semiotics is the study of signs and how they are used to create meaning in communication. It does not only apply to spoken or written language but also to images, gestures, objects, and visual storytelling. In media and film, semiotics helps us understand how different elements on screen can represent deeper ideas or emotions. This approach allows people to see how TV shows convey hidden messages, reinforce ideologies, or challenge audience perceptions. By conducting semiotic analysis, we can uncover hidden meanings in signs, symbols, and motifs used throughout the narrative, examine how visual and linguistic signs construct identity, investigate how TV series integrate historical, mythological, or societal symbols into their storytelling, and many more.

Semiotics analysis is not a new field in academic research. Several previous research have explored this topic. For instance, Dzaki and Sumarlan (2024) analyzed how semiotic, according to Peirce, present migratory culture in *Ranah 3 Warna* film. This research used a descriptive qualitative method to comprehend symbolic meanings and intricate cultural contexts in the film. Based on the research

results, the researchers concluded that *Ranah 3 Warna* film is not only an entertainment but also an effective tool to depict and maintain the migratory culture of the Minangkabau people. In addition, Santoso et.al. (2023) researched the same topic. The purpose of their research is to analyze the value of humanity in the film entitled *The Giver* using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis approach. The method used is descriptive qualitative. The results of this research illustrate how the human values in the studied film are not applied or violate human norms which are the fundamentals of a human's life.

As shown by the previous research, semiotic analysis has been used to explore the deeper layers of meaning in film. Dzaki and Sumarlan (2024) used Peirce's semiotic theory to show how films can function not just as entertainment, but also as a means of preserving cultural identity. Similarly, Santoso et al. (2023) applied Barthes' approach to analyze human values in *The Giver*, pointing out how the film reflects basic societal norms. Previous studies have explored semiotics to understand cultural and social themes in film. However, both of these studies focus more on broad cultural

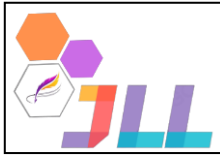


messages. There is still a gap when it comes to using Peirce's semiotic theory to explore personal and psychological identity—especially how signs reflect inner struggles, memory, or trauma. This opens the door for a new analysis of *Moon Knight*, especially in episode 5 entitled “Asylum”, which tells the story of a fragmented self, using Peirce's concepts of representamen, object, and interpretant to explore how meaning is formed within the character's mind.

This study contributes to the growing body of semiotic analysis in audiovisual media by applying Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic sign theory—representamen, object, and interpretant—to the psychological narrative of *Moon Knight* episode 5: “Asylum.” While previous research has explored semiotics in relation to culture, identity, and human values, this study offers a fresh perspective by focusing on the internal meaning-making process within a fragmented self. It highlights how symbolic elements in the episode function not only as narrative tools, but also as mediators of trauma, memory, and dissociation. This research enriches both theoretical discourse and practical approaches to analyzing complex media texts, especially those that intertwine mental health and identity construction.

The *Moon Knight* television series: Episode 5 entitled “Asylum” is chosen since it received an IMDb rating of 8.8/10, making it one of the highest-rated episodes of the series. (“Moon Knight”, 2022) Moreover, this episode stood out due to its emotional depth, psychological exploration, and Oscar Isaac's powerful performance as Marc Spector and Steven Grant. The researchers will focus on what symbols appear in this episode, and how meaning is constructed within the episode's narrative and setting. By using Pierce's semiotics theory, this research seeks to uncover the hidden meaning in the “Asylum” episode, and contributes to a deeper understanding of how television series communicate through symbolic storytelling.

“Asylum”, the fifth episode of *Moon Knight*, delves deeply into Marc Spector and Steven Grant's shattered psyches. In this episode, Marc awakens at what looks to be a mental health facility after being shot in episode 4. Focus on balancing the Scales of Justice and entering the Field of Reeds, Marc and Steven must face their most traumatic memories under the guidance of the goddess Taweret. The episode delves into Marc's early trauma, which included his mother's abuse of him and the death of his younger brother.



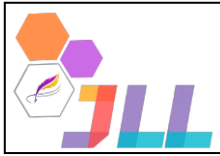
Episode 5 is a strong, emotionally stirring episode that combines identity, psychology, and mythology in a way that is both incredibly human and bizarre which are interesting to analyze through semiotic.

Beyond the most basic definition of semiotics as 'the study of signs', there is considerable variation among experts about what semiotics is and what it involves. According to Umberto Eco, "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign" (as cited in Chandler, 2007, p.2). The sign that semiotics involved here refers to not only everyday speech, but also anything which stands for something else. In addition, Saussure used the term 'semiology' to refer to "a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life" (as cited in Chandler, 2007, p.2). This study investigates the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Furthermore, Pierce (1931) defines semiotics as the process of meaning-making and interpreting signs. This process begins with the perception of something through the senses, which is then processed by our cognition. It continues with the interpretation based on learning through social convention as the last process (Hoed, 2014).

This research is based on Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics (1931),

focusing especially on his idea of the symbol, which is one of the three main types of signs in his model. Peirce's approach is especially useful when analyzing television series, where certain symbols appear repeatedly and can change or take on deeper meanings as the story unfolds. These symbols help tie the narrative together and influence how viewers interpret the story.

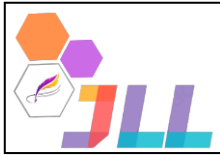
Peirce (1931) proposed a triadic model of the sign, which includes the representamen, the object, and the interpretant. The representamen is the form the sign takes such as an image, word, and gesture. The object is something that the sign refers to. Meanwhile, the interpretant is the meaning or understanding generated in the mind of the interpreter. Within this framework, Peirce categorized signs into three main types based on the relationship between the representamen and the object. They are icon, index, and symbol. Icon refers to a sign that resembles its object (e.g., portrait). Index is a sign that has a direct, causal, or physical connection to its object (e.g., smoke as a sign of fire). Meanwhile, Symbol is a sign whose connection to its object is arbitrary or based on social convention, cultural agreement, or habitual usage (as cited in Chandler, 2007).



As stated previously, this research will focus on symbols, and not icon and index. Pierce describes symbol as a type of sign where the connection between the representamen (the form of the sign) and the object (the concept it represents) is not based on resemblance but is instead entirely arbitrary or dependent on social convention. This relationship requires mutual agreement and learned understanding. Examples include spoken and written languages (including letters, words, and sentences), numerals, Morse code, and traffic signs (Chandler, 2007). The symbol is a key to all of the meaning-making processes in films, mainly across a series that is featuring reinterpreted, layered, or reused symbolic elements. Symbols are particularly powerful inside cinematic narratives because they function through cultural codes and conventions—for example, the color red symbolizes danger or passion—narrative motifs and visual metaphors, as recurring objects, costumes, or settings gain deeper symbolic importance over time, and characterization and ideology, as a character repeatedly associates with a specific symbolic object or phrase which contributes to thematic meaning (Stam, 2000).

Symbols often evolve throughout episodes in the context of a film series, and they take on new meanings as the story progresses. The role of the interpretant is highlighted in Peirce's model for fluidity. The interpretant is the viewer's understanding that does evolve and is shaped by the narrative context plus previous instalments. Thus, the symbolic sign is not static; rather, it is dynamic, offering interpretively rich, multiple layers of meaning. In a film series, a recurring object—for example, a ring, mask, or animal—may begin with a literal function. As the series develops, that object may acquire symbolic connotations that relate to identity, power, or transformation. Researchers are able, using Peirce's theory, to trace and then decide how people make and remake symbolic meanings as time passes (Chandler, 2007).

Using Peirce's concept of the symbol allows for a structured yet flexible approach to analyze symbolic systems within a film series. Specifically, it supports identifying key symbolic elements that appear across multiple films, examining their conventional or culturally established meanings, and analyzing how audience interpretation evolves across the series, exploring the symbolic



construction of themes, such as identity, morality, or ideology, within the cinematic universe. Peirce's semiotics provides an effective lens through which to examine how films use symbolic signs to create narrative depth, emotional resonance, and thematic complexity. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze symbols in *Moon Knight* Episode 5: "Asylum" using Peirce's triadic model of signs, which consists of the representamen (the form of the sign), the object (the subject the sign refers to), and the interpretant (the meaning generated in the observer's mind). This research tries to answer the question: how do signs and symbols in "Asylum" reflect psychological trauma and fragmented identity using Peirce's triadic model?

Method

This research focused on analyzing symbols based on Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics Theory in the Disney television series *Moon Knight* episode 5 titled *Asylum*. In analyzing symbols in this episode, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. According to Sugiyono (2014), the qualitative method is a research approach used to examine natural phenomena, where the researcher serves as the primary instrument

that combines data collection techniques. Qualitative research methods are also used to produce descriptive data in the form of speech, writing, and behavior of the object being observed, and to gain an understanding of something through an inductive thinking process.

The primary data source for this research is *the Moon Knight* episode 5, titled "Asylum." *Moon Knight* is an American television miniseries created by Jeremy Slater for the streaming service Disney+ Hotstar, produced by Marvel Studios. Released in March 2022, this series consists of six episodes. The researchers focused on the *Asylum* episode (50 minutes in duration) to analyze the scenes and script that contain symbols based on Pierce's Theory of sign. The data units include scenes, dialogues, visual elements, characters' actions, symbols, and cinematic elements that carry semiotic significance.

The researchers took several steps to collect the data. The researcher started by watching *Moon Knight* Episode 5: "Asylum" several times and reading the script to understand the story better. The researcher took screenshots and wrote down important parts of the scenes and dialogues. Signs were then selected based on their relevance to the

episode's main themes: identity, trauma, and reality. The researcher focused on the main character's actions and conversations to find symbols with deeper meaning. These signs were studied using Peirce's theory, which breaks each sign into three parts: the form we see or hear (representamen), what it refers to (object), and the meaning we understand from it (interpretant). Each sign was explained in its narrative context to show

how it helps express ideas about mental struggles and identity. In the end, the researcher grouped the signs by theme and used them to build a clear conclusion.

Result and Discussion

In this part, the results of the semiotics analysis in *Moon Knight Episode 5: Asylum* will be elaborated. A total of ten data of symbols will be presented.

Datum 1: Asylum Symbol (00:02:29)



Figure 1. Asylum Scene

Representamen: At first, it looks like a typical psychiatric hospital with white walls, fluorescent lights, and patients in therapy sessions, but something always feels off. It's a surreal space where time and logic seem to bend.

Object: Marc's subconscious mind or inner psyche, not a real place.

Interpretant: The hospital is a symbolic representation of Marc Spector's fractured psyche, especially his dissociative identity disorder. The viewer realizes that this is an inner symbolic world, not an objective reality.

Datum 1 is presented in figure 1. According to Pierce, a symbol is a type of sign where the connection between the representamen (the form of the sign) and the object (the concept it represents) is not based on resemblance but is instead entirely arbitrary or dependent on social convention. Based on this, the asylum in *Moon Knight*

episode 5 can be considered a symbol. The asylum is a symbolic representation of Marc Spector's fractured psyche, especially his dissociative identity disorder. It does not resemble the psyche directly, nor is it causally linked like a bruise from trauma. Instead, it is a constructed environment that audiences learn to associate with the

internal psychological process of the character, as its meaning is culturally and narratively learned within the episode. This interpretive relationship aligns with what Peirce describes as a symbolic sign, especially because the connection must be interpreted rather than being visually or causally obvious.

Datum 2: Colours of Marc and Steven in Asylum (00:06:28)



Figure 2. Colours of Marc and Steven Scene

Representamen: The shirts worn by Marc and Steven. Marc is wearing a white shirt, while Steven is wearing a blue shirt.

Object: Two colors used by the main characters of the film represent two different personalities in one human body.

Interpretant: In this datum, the main character in the TV Series Moon Knight appears in two different bodies. White clothes and blue clothes are used to make it easier for the audience to distinguish the two characters who of course have the same face and body shape considering that they are two personalities in one human body in the real world. In this datum, they are in the astral world. The colors blue and white are symbols of themselves in that world.

Datum 2 is presented in figure 2. According to Peirce theory, symbols are particularly powerful in cinematic narratives because they function through cultural codes and conventions of which color is one of the examples. Blue and white are the symbols defined in this datum. Those colors carry distinct symbolic and psychological meanings. Emotionally, blue is often associated with calmness, stability, and introspection. It can also represent melancholy or depth. Psychologically, blue is known to have a soothing effect, reducing stress and promoting focus. This color represents the character of Steven Grant, a shy and awkward gift shop employee. He is initially unaware of Marc or the other personalities, leading to confusion and fear when he experiences *blackouts* and wakes up in strange places. Meanwhile, the other one who appears in this datum is Marc Spector. He is wearing white shirt. Marc Spector is the original identity of *Moon Knight*. He was a mercenary left for dead in

the desert, where he was revived by the Egyptian moon god Khonshu. As Khonshu's avatar, he became *Moon Knight*, fighting crime with his unique blend of martial arts, detective skills, and supernatural abilities. Marc also has dissociative identity disorder (DID), which led to the emergence of his

other personas, including Steven Grant. White, emotionally, represents purity, simplicity, and neutrality. It can also evoke feelings of emptiness or sterility. Psychologically, white can create a sense of openness and clarity but may also feel cold or impersonal.

Datum 3: Taweret Character (00:06:35)



Figure 3. Taweret Scene

Representamen: The visual and vocal form of the character Taweret, which is a human body with a hippopotamus head, soft-spoken and friendly, wearing ancient Egyptian clothing.

Object: The concept of the goddess of the soul, rebirth, and guidance of souls to the afterlife in Egyptian mythology. In addition, she also embodies compassionate guidance in moments of emotional chaos.

Interpretant: Taweret is more than just a mythical figure. She represents comfort and guidance in the chaos of Marc and Steven's mind. Her calm, supportive presence in the surreal afterlife stands in sharp contrast to the pain and disorder of their trauma.

Datum 3 is presented in figure 3. In this episode, the character named Taweret is considered a symbol. Taweret appear as a human body with a hippopotamus head, soft-spoken and friendly, wearing ancient Egyptian clothing (the representamen). The character refers to the goddess of the soul, and the guidance in moments of emotional chaos (the object). In this episode, Taweret is more than just a mythical figure. She

represents comfort and guidance in the chaos of Marc and Steven's mind. Using Pierce triadic model of sign, Taweret character can be considered as a symbol because the relationship between the representamen and its object is not based on direct resemblance or causal connection. The audience needs to understand the mythological and psychological background to grasp its meaning.

Datum 4: The Boat Journey (00:08:29)



Figure 4. The Boat Journey Scene

Representamen: The boat travels through the desert-like Duat, guided by Taweret, carrying Marc and Steven.

Object: The soul's passage through the afterlife. It is a metaphor for spiritual judgment, emotional reckoning, and the path toward inner balance or dissolution.

Interpretant: The boat journey is understood as a symbolic representation of Marc's inner journey or a transformative process of self-realization and reconciliation.

Datum 4 is presented in figure 4. Through Peirce's model, the boat journey in *Moon Knight's Asylum* episode can be considered a symbol. This is because its meaning is constructed from cultural and mythological conventions. In Egyptian mythology, a soul's journey across the Duat by boat is a learned cultural association, and

Marvel adopts that symbolic framework. Thus, the boat operates as a symbol since its meaning comes from cultural, mythological, and narrative associations. As seen in Table 4, the boat journey refers to the soul's passage through the afterlife, and is interpreted as Marc's inner journey or transformative process of self-realization and reconciliation.

Datum 5: The Scale of Justice (00:09:27)

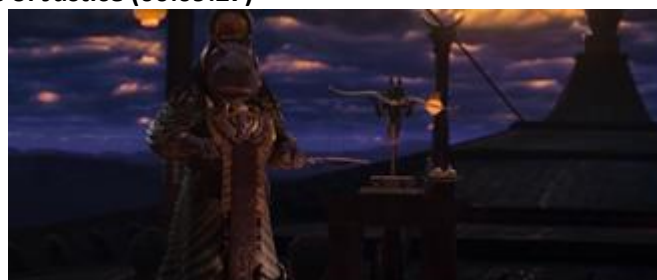


Figure 5. The Scale of Justice Scene

Representamen: The stylized golden Egyptian scale used to weigh Marc and Steven's hearts against the Feather of Truth

Object: Traditionally, it represents moral judgment or the assessment of one's truth in the afterlife. However, in this series, it also represents moral and emotional truth, as well as psychological balance.

Interpretant: The scale acts as a mirror for Marc and Steven's inner world. It shows not only guilt or innocence but also whether they have truly accepted who they are. When their hearts feel unbalanced, it is not because they are bad people; it is because they are fractured, concealing pain and avoiding their trauma.

Datum 5 is presented in Figure 5. Marc and Steven's hearts are weighed on a golden scale against the Feather of Truth. If the scales balance, their soul is judged as worthy to enter the afterlife (Field of Reeds). If not, they are dragged into the sands of Duat. Here, the scale of justice can be considered a symbol if analysed using Pierce's Theory of signs. This is because the scale itself does not inherently mean *judgment*. Its meaning depends on the cultural context of ancient

Egyptian mythology. In Egyptian belief, Ma'at (truth, balance) was judged through a ritualistic weighing of the heart. In addition, the imbalance of the scales until Marc reveals his repressed trauma adds a deeper interpretive layer. It is only through truth and self-acceptance can balance and peace be achieved. This reinforces the symbol's moral and psychological weight beyond myth, making it resonate with viewers on a universal human level.

Datum 6: The Feather of the Truth (00:09:39)



Figure 6. The Feather of the Truth Scene

Representamen: It appears as a delicate, weightless feather placed on the Scales of Justice.

Object: The Feather of Truth, associated with Ma'at, the goddess of truth, justice, balance, and cosmic order, was used in the Weighing of the Heart ceremony in the afterlife.

Interpretant: In the film, the Feather of Truth used to determine Marc and Steven's purity. The feather represents lightness and purity, embodying the ideal state of a soul free from guilt. It is linked to Ma'at, the goddess of truth and order, reinforcing the importance of living a just life. It serves as a universal measure of morality, ensuring fairness in judgment.

Datum 6 is presented in figure 6. In this datum, the Feather of the Truth is used in weighing the heart. This aligns with Ancient Egyptian mythology, where the heart of the deceased is weighed against Ma'at's feather to determine their moral purity. If the heart is

lighter or equal in weight, the soul is deemed worthy of entering the Field of Reeds (paradise). If heavier, the soul is lost in the sands of the Duat. In *Moon Knight*, the show adapts this myth by having Taweret perform the weighing instead of Osiris, who

traditionally oversees this judgment. The feather, additionally, remains a crucial element, emphasizing the theme of self-acceptance and reconciliation. Traditionally it oversees this judgment. The unbalanced hearts of Marc and Steven serve as unresolved trauma and dual identities. However, the core symbolism remains intact—balancing the scales represents self-acceptance and reconciliation. This symbolic use of the feather highlights an essential truth in Egyptian culture: true justice is

measured not by arbitrary weight or power but by adherence to the immutable laws of truth and order. The feather's lightness serves as a stark counterpoint to the moral weight of one's actions, making it an effective and enduring symbol of judgment in both myth and ritual. Beyond its mythological context, this symbolism aligns with Peirce's theory and allows the researcher to trace this development and decode how symbolic meanings are constructed and reinterpreted over time.

Datum 7: Unbalanced Heart (00:10:21)



Figure 7. Unbalanced Heart Scene

Representamen: Steven and Marc's unbalanced heart is a striking visual sign.

Object: The object in Peirce's model refers to the reality or condition that is the reference behind the sign. The object of the "unbalanced heart" symbol is the psychological condition of Marc Spector's character who suffers from dissociative identity disorder (DID).

Interpretant: In this case, the interpretation that emerges could be the understanding that an "unbalanced heart" is a reflection of the struggle to reconcile two conflicting identities. The audience, through this interpretation, is led to observe that the imbalance is not just a visual aesthetic, but a metaphor for the inner confusion, moral conflict, and trauma that oppresses the character. This interpretation also opens up space for broader reflection on the search for identity, self-acceptance, and the process of reuniting fragments of broken identities—a journey towards a whole and integrative balance.

Datum 7 is presented in figure 7. Using Peirce's triadic approach, the "unbalanced heart" in *Moon Knight* becomes much more than a dramatic visual cue: Representamen:

The visibly unbalanced heart acts as a sign—a deliberate, artful representation that grabs attention. Object: It points to the real, underlying state of Marc's internal conflict

and fragmentation, embodying the turbulent interplay of his multiple identities and the unresolved trauma they represent. Interpretant: The resulting meaning challenges both the character and the viewer to contemplate the necessity of healing and integrating these fractured parts, suggesting

that true balance—whether in a person’s soul or in the cosmic order—is achieved only through resolution and reconciliation. This layered semiotic reading enriches the narrative, offering a nuanced interpretation of how ancient mythology and modern psychology intersect in Marc's story.

Datum 8: Doors in Asylum (00:11:29)



Figure 8. Doors in Asylum Scene

Representamen: Doors in the aisle where Marc and Steven are the tangible and visible signs within the asylum.

Object: The object is the actual content behind the doors: the memories of Marc Spector and Steven Grant. In the asylum, each door opens to a specific memory or fragment of their shared—and yet fractured—history. These memorable fragments include repressed traumas, moments of conflict, and the critical times when Marc’s identity as *Moon Knight* surged forward at the expense of Steven's more vulnerable self.

Interpretant: The interpretant is the realization that each door is a symbolic trigger for introspection and self-discovery. As Marc and Steven step through or interact with these doors, they are forced to confront the duality of their existence, the trauma that has divided them, and the possibility of integration. For the audience, the doors become metaphors for the boundaries between repression and revelation—a narrative device that clearly communicates the struggle between past influences and present identities. Ultimately, the interpretant suggests that resolution and healing are attainable only when these buried memories are acknowledged and reconciled.

Datum 8 is presented in figure 8. Based on Peirce’s semiotics, the asylum’s doors in *Moon Knight* are considered symbols because they do more than just partition physical space. They act as powerful representatives (representamen) of the inner turmoil (object) that Marc and Steven experience, and they

provoke a dynamic process of meaning-making (interpretant) for both the characters and the viewers. This triadic approach reveals how these doors serve as vital narrative devices that underscore themes of memory, identity conflict, and the arduous journey toward self-integration.

Datum 9: Wendy Spector (Marc Spector's mother) (00:17:44)



Figure 9. Wendy Spector Scene

Representamen: Marc Spector's mother namely Wendy Spector

Object: Wendy Spector's portrayal visually and behaviorally echoes established archetypes of a fraught maternal figure. Wendy functions iconically by evoking the familiar idea of an oppressive or harmful parental figure.

Interpretant: Marc Spector's mother, Wendy Spector, symbolizes trauma, guilt, and the fractured psyche that defines her character in *Moon Knight*. Her role is crucial in shaping Marc's dissociative identity disorder (DID) and the emergence of Steven Grant as a coping mechanism.

Datum 9 is presented in figure 9. Wendy's character transcends her literal presence to embody broader, abstract ideas—such as the destructive potential of unaddressed trauma and the cultural narrative of maternal influence. As a symbol, she represents the internal betrayal and guilt that haunt Marc. The audience comes to interpret her not just as an individual, but as a manifestation of the broader themes of loss, moral failing, and the impact of early relational wounds on identity. Peirce (1931) emphasizes the concept of the interpretant—

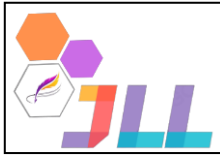
the meaning that arises in the mind of someone interpreting the sign. For viewers of *Moon Knight*, Wendy Spector becomes a conduit through which the horror, complexity, and lasting impact of familial trauma are felt. Her character triggers a reflection on the origins of self-destructive behaviors and the long-lasting effects of parental abuse. In this sense, the interpretant is the emotional and psychological understanding that the audience constructs, linking Wendy not only to Marc's past but also to the universal experience of formative trauma.

Datum 10: The Field of Reeds (00:42:40)



Figure 10. The Fields of Reeds Scene

Representamen: The golden Field of Reeds – serene, sunlit landscape with gently swaying grass.



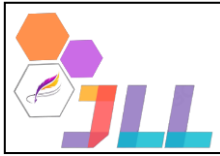
Object: The Egyptian afterlife for the righteous: eternal peace and reward.

Interpretant: A symbolic destination that represents a mythological version of paradise. This also represents Marc's inner peace, the completion of the spiritual journey, and the reward of moral and emotional reckoning.

Datum 10 is presented in Figure 10. In the *Moon Knight's Asylum* episode, the Field of Reeds serves as a powerful symbol that can be unpacked using Peirce's triadic model of the sign. The visual depiction (representamen) of this symbol is the golden field of reeds, and it refers to afterlife in Egyptian mythology and also eternal peace and reward (the object). Seen from the representamen and the object, the field of reeds can be considered as a symbolic sign as it does not resemble the abstract concept of afterlife, peace or redemption directly. It also has no causal link to Marc's journey. Instead, it draws its meaning from cultural mythology and learned associations. The Field of Reeds only means paradise because Egyptian mythology and narrative convention assign that meaning. In addition, symbolically, it also represents Marc's inner peace. Marc is finally confronting his trauma, integrating his identities, and no longer being in psychological conflict. This adds another interpretant level, enriching the symbol's meaning through character development.

Conclusion

The researchers identified and analyzed ten symbols that appeared in the *Moon Knight* television series episode 5, entitled *Asylum*, using Pierce's triadic model of sign. The symbols found are the asylum, the colors of Marc and Steven, the Taweret character, the boat journey, the scale of justice, the feather of truth, an unbalanced heart, the doors in the asylum, the Wendy Spector character, and the field of reeds. Each of these symbols was analyzed to find out the representamen, object, and interpretant. The results of analyzing these symbols using a triadic model, as presented in Tables 1 to 10, revealed how the episode constructs psychological, mythological, and moral meanings through visual and narrative symbolic signs to represent the main character's inner emotional states. On a psychological level, the asylum setting functions as the representamen that reflects Marc's subconscious (object), allowing viewers to interpret his fractured psyche (interpretant). Mythologically, the Egyptian figure Taweret serves as a visual representamen, pointing to



the goddess of the soul (object), and signifies comfort and guidance amidst the mental chaos experienced by Marc and Steven (interpretant). On a moral level, the image of the unbalanced scale operates as a representamen of Marc's dissociative identity disorder (object), generating an interpretant centered on inner confusion, unresolved guilt, and psychological trauma. Collectively, the episode exemplifies how visual narrative and semiotic structure intertwine to portray mental health, identity fragmentation, and the search for self-acceptance.

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