

## The voices and schizophrenia: A critical multimodal analysis – An abridged version

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### Abstract

We are all aware of how strong mass media is today in influencing our society's mind and the way it construct our reality through their products. Film, as one of the products of mass media, attracts most people years after years due to the development of the story and the detail of cinematography to finally become a fortune for those who are making it. However, a film may also be able to tell a story while creating diverse interpretations at the same time. The Voices movie presents a story of a schizophrenic patient which brings the audience into the perspectives of the patient. This film will be analyze to unfold the messages behind it by using Critical Multimodality Analysis. The analysis will be utilized to analyze both, the movie clips and scripts, which results' will be aim at revealing the hidden agenda behind this movie, through the eyes of the film producer, which is to give the understanding of Schizophrenic people's conditions in their daily life based on their common symptoms. Furthermore, it will also be utilized to demonstrate the Critical Multimodality Analysis' use in Public Relations', especially in demonstrating how producers use texts and images as the resources to produce meaning, as well as for audience to make meaning.

*Keywords:* The Voices movie; Critical multimodal analysis; Schizophrenia; film;

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### 1. Introduction

*“Good cinema is what we can believe and*

*Bad cinema is what we can't believe”*

~ Abbas Kiorastami (An Iranian film director)

Many people would agree that most moviemakers have successfully constructed the society's idea of reality by making some great movies, worth billions of dollars. It is obviously one great film that could turn the moviemakers' perspective into the audiences' perspectives. Otherwise, people would not be able to receive the ideas and the messages which moviemakers have tried to transfer to their viewers through the films. Today the film industry is getting more creative years after years, many films now adopt the people's interest to bring up as their story. This research is will focus on a film which tells a story of a schizophrenic person, and how it has described the life of this severe human being as agreed by all the society. In this case, people with schizophrenia has often featured on thriller or horror movie such as *The Voices* (2014) starring Ryan Reynolds as Jerry Hickfang, a young schizophrenic man who works for a bathtub company, living his life under the pressure of the voices in his mind that drives him to behave in an impulsive manner towards people around him. The daily voices which confuse him come from his own pets, a dog and a cat which as he believed, his pets are able to talk and give him good and bad suggestions that lead him to his actions. Unlike another movie about schizophrenic people such as *The Roommate* (2011) which tends to show how miserable it is to have a schizophrenic roommate who is overly possessive and violent. *The Voices* movie, on the other hand, tries to portray the life of a schizophrenic patient through their own perspective. It shows how Jerry, the schizophrenic patient, is struggling to communicate with others and cannot simply think clearly after hearing the voices around him that urge him to do something violent. It also shows how much Jerry wants to have a normal life by being in love with someone, working like a normal person to support his life and trying to be involved in work's employee day celebration, but all his good intentions of having a normal life is scattered around after hearing the voices.

Film could tell many stories as it is capturing many aspects of reality and shapes our society's paradigm very simple. Film is multimodal, meaning that it is involving other modes in creating the meaning such as visual, audio, linguistic and more. This research attempts to answer the following research question: How does the Voices as a movie try to represent the life of a schizophrenic person?

The aim of this research is to show how one of the products of mass media tries to picture the other side of schizophrenic patient's life. Knowing that there are still lack of discourse in film analysis to be further analyzed into diverse sections of study fields, this journal is projected to be one of the literatures as the references for the next researcher to analyze further about film and how it supports and relates to the study.

## **2. Literature review**

Mass media today is a strong platform to construct reality. In communication studies, the role of mass media is an integral discourse that never cease to be discussed within forums, and continually being researched as it develops rapidly. Talking about the advantage of mass media, it reaches a wide range of mass and it clearly eases media practitioners in spreading messages by one simple 'shoot' as defined by Hypodermic needle theory by Lazarsfeld (1948), the variety of mass media attracts more public due to its easy access and uniqueness. But Van Dijk (1991, 1993) on the other hand, considers the role of mass media in the society to be less positive, considering how frequent some media covers the ethnics and racism severely as well as the involvement of political elites that uses them for their own personal agenda and interest. I could not agree less to Van Dijk's statement about the effect of mass media.

Noam Chomsky on his interview with Ouverture radio in Canada in 2005 with the topic of Mass Media, Globalization, and the Public Mind, has stated that for mass media practitioners, it is extremely important to control the public's mind because nowadays, we are no longer able to force people to be controlled. Thus, the least we could do is to control their beliefs and their attitude (Chomsky, 2005) because audience is one of the elements to support the success of a media product (Rasit, 2014). As part of mass media products, film has the possibility to control people's mind and attitude by penetrating the message which considered as salient because the films that people has been fancy to watch are audio-visually able to manipulate its viewers by directing their beliefs and thoughts (Mohammad Hatta, 2006).

To go specifically, in the research subject, which is the discourse of one type of mental illness called Schizophrenia, which considered as dangerous and predictable (Crisp et al, 2000) as cited from Stout, Villegas and Jennings (2004) . Media often frames an individual with schizophrenia severely, as the source of information which trusts many of the people in the world, media is believed to have a big role in creating stigma toward people with mental illness by showing the characteristics of people with mental illness through images which are also involving misinformation-communicated, the improper use of psychiatric terms and the unproven, yet miserable stereotypes of people with mental illness (Wahl, 1995). According to the research review done by Wahl on the accuracy, frequency and exposing the life of people with mental illness through mass media (1992), he found that the deceptions of people with mental illness has been widely spread all across the media such as film (6%), television (10-20% during the prime-time) and renown magazines (Wahl,1992).

### *2.3. Reading images*

Visual grammar is culturally constructed and cannot be understood transparently and generally, yet it is still inseparable from the verbal grammar. In order to understand clearly the image that is being examined, an individual is allowed to add some elements from their native language or any other language which they understand to create meaning out of it (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Talking about visual grammar, the discussion later will be directed to the term multimodal by Kress and Jewitt (2006) from the Institute of Education, University of London. Today's entertainment is one example of multimodality, when a text is created by collaborating two and more modalities. Therefore, the process of making a meaning is created by the synchronization of one text and another (Walsh, 2005). An example which is related to this research is film, film is the combination of more than one mode (Visual, language and audio), and in this case, modes refers to any modalities such as language, visual, audio and gesture whereas text refers to the product such as film, advertisement, book, brochure and more. During this Reading Image phase, the researcher will do the purposive sampling based on the focus discourse that would like to be analyze further.

### *2.4. Social Semiotics*

The keyterm in Social semiotic is the social resource according to Leeuwen on his book 'Introduction to Social Semiotics'. The semiotic itself as a theory focus on the social and the cultural meaning of signs and code, which signs are involving the images, words and actions to specific type of objects and it all depends on how the signifier (image and words), signified (meanings) and referent (what images are refer to?) (Scholes, 1982). For Leeuwen (2005), Social Semiotics is not an absolute theory which stands with itself but it will became itself

when it is being incorporated with another disciplines towards the discussion of a certain case. Social Semiotics has its root from Halliday's work which goes against the idea that the grammar of language is a range of methods or certain regulations in order to produce the correct meaning. Instead it is more on how it could create meanings towards a semiotic resources as social semiotic itself might preferred (Leeuwen, 2005). Of course, when it comes to Social semiotic, the semiotic itself refers to the signs and signs according to a swiss linguist, Ferdinand De Saussure (1983) it is not about the connection between a thing and its label but tend to be more about the concept and its sounds pattern or what is well-known with Signified and Signifier. Then a question will arise "Is sounds pattern is the sound as a music?" in fact it is the impression inside our minds of a certain object. To assist the image analysis, the researcher will use the metafunctional approach by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) as cited from the photojournalism book by Caple (2013). There are 3 points to analyze the images, in terms of its content information or representational, about its contact, distance, influence which identified as Interaction, and what being classified as a composition is the framing, salience, the value of the information (Caple, 2013).

### 3. Methodology

Qualitative research according to Shank (2002) is "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning", which defined as an inquiry based on the phenomenon among the society in order to create meaning. The descriptive qualitative approach chosen to do this research as the object of this research is going to be a movie and will be focusing on analyzing its scene, camera angle and script or dialogues. Thus it is necessary to have an in-depth analysis on people's experience, behaviors, perspectives and histories toward a certain circumstance (McMichael, 2011), to obtain the results as projected through this approach.

#### 3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Moreover, Fairclough adds that to find the meaning of those dimensions, each dimension requires certain analysis which are Text Analysis (description), Processing Analysis (intepretation) and Social Analysis as its justification (Janks, 1997). The first dimension namely "the object of analysis" which discuss the verbal , visual or verbal and visual text (Janks, 1997; Hoepfner, 2002). Furthermore, the second dimension will emphasize on the visualization of the text's concept by a human being though writing, speech, listening, viewing. It discusses the power relations among the visual product's component, distance and the attitude, both first and second dimensions are also analysing its framing, information value and salience. The third dimension will analysed on the relationship between visual and the verbal texts.

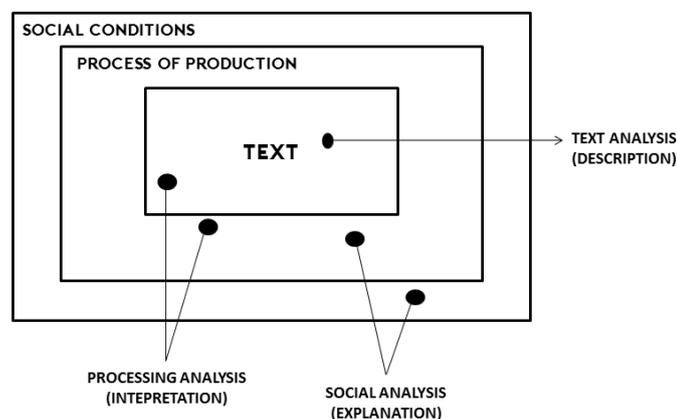


Figure 4. Illustration of critical discourse analysis by Fairclough (1989)

### 4. Result and discussions

The main finding of this research is the way the producer of this film tried to portray the life of people with schizophrenia by well-orchestrating the elements of the film as well as the script. Both modes worked together in presenting the life of people with schizophrenia, mainly the hallucinations and delusions which known as Schizophrenia's main symptoms. Since this is an abridged version of the full paper, the result and discussion is only displayed in Tables.

4.1. Positive symptoms (Visual Analysis)

**Table 1. The difference between one situation and another and reflect the positive symptoms of a schizophrenic patient**

Figure	Representational	Interpersonal	Compositional
<b>Figure 5.a</b>	A clean and fresh severed head inside Jerry's refrigerator. It is a reaction process of Jerry seeing Fiona's severed head (out of frame).	Fiona's severed head while talking with Jerry demand (direct eye contact) to consume his medication. It shows extreme close-up to emphasize on Fiona's line as well as to focus on its participant involvement in relates to its frontal camera angle which directed to Fiona. It shows power relations as it shoots higher than Fiona's head and as well as she is gazing higher when she is talking to Jerry.	This scene shows how the vision of the schizophrenia patient in their hallucination and delusion phase as part of the positive symptoms (pre-medication). It shows maximum salience if it relates to the comparison with the post-medication vision. The lighting is brighter and it is clean.
<b>Figure 5.b</b>	Disgusting pale severed head in refrigerator with bloods all over it. It represents transactional meaning as it shows a goal, which is to presents Jerry's view during post medication with his sight towards Fiona's head as the vector and to emphasize on its difference between reality and delusion.	Jerry's view after consuming his medication shot with a medium length to present wider the situation inside the fridge. It involves the viewers' attention and the shot is taken at a higher angle to emphasize the viewers' power or Jerry's power because Fiona is the victim.	The scene shows the real situation of the schizophrenic patient's real vision of their post-medication. It shows maximum salience with the color of the blood around Fiona's severed head as well as the lighting which more dim compared to the vision in pre-medication. It highlights the difference between the post-medication and pre-medication vision. The main object is centered and has a maximum connections in terms of framing, consider as the frame is slightly shows Jerry and the camera is more focused on the Fiona's severed head and the other attributes to support the scene's goal.
<b>Figure 6.a</b>	Fiona looks beautiful with wings and shining face with a seducing smile. Its goal is to emphasize on Jerry's adoration on Fiona to the point where he sees her in his visual hallucination just like an angel.	Jerry's hallucination when he sees Fiona sitting on his car. Her eyes are gazing seducingly to the camera within the social distance.	A schizophrenia patient tends to hallucinate an object differently. It could be a positive or negative, here we see the positive one. It shows maximum salience as the color within Fiona's area is brighter compare to others.
<b>Figure 6.b</b>	Fiona in relation to the previous figure, shows its real condition, wet and messy, no goal can be identified.	She gazes to Jerry who is out of frame, shot within personal distance.	The real situation of Fiona.
<b>Figure 7.a</b>	Mr Whiskers sitting on the kitchen station with clean environment within the kitchen station, it shows	It shows the room kitchen station is clean and Mr Whisker is sitting in the	The situation seen by the patient when they are having hallucinations and delusion. Mr

	no goal.	middle of the kitchen station shows demand contact as he talks to Jerry.	Whiskers is in his frontal angle and in the center of the frame.
<b>Figure 7.b</b>	Mr whiskers sitting in the middle of the drawer with dirty environment where blood is everywhere as well as the lunchboxes filled with parts of human body. It is transactive screen as it shows the audience of the entire situation in the kitchen.	Mr Whiskers sitting in the middle of the kitchen. Shows an intense demand contact from frontal angle and social distance to highlight on its frame.	The scene is shoot within the impersonal distance to show the whole frame. With Mr Whiskers being in the middle of the scene with bloods and stacks of lunchboxes. It has a maximum salience due to the bloods that spreaded around and for that reason it resulted in maximum connection between all the settings to create a meanings. Mr Whiskers (negative influence) caused all the impulsive acts.
<b>Figure 8.a</b>	In this scene, Bosco and Mr Whiskers are gazing to Jerry (out of frame) mutilates Fiona on his kitchen station, yet it can define the goals.	Bosco and Mr Whiskers shows no contact and shoot within social distance.	In related to the clip on figure 8.b, the lighting is the one which could be highlighted as it is lighter.
<b>Figure 8.b</b>	The real situation of Bosco and Mr Whiskers in the kitchen, just laying on the floor. It has no goal being identified.	Bosco and Mr Whiskers are just laying side to side, no direct contact (offer contact), shoot within the social distance.	To highlight the salience aspect, as seen on the figure 8.b the lighting is darker and both Bosco and Mr Whiskers are not attached to each other.
<b>Figure 9.a</b>	Sherrif Weinbacher on the tv news giving his report to the reporter. Shows transactive action between him and the female reporter.	There are no direct contact (offer contact) and shoot within the social distances.	It has no clear information unless it is just Sherrif Weinbacher and a female reporter are giving information.
<b>Figure 9.b</b>	Sherrif Weinbacher is confonting Jerry from the TV news.	It shows a strong direct contact (demand contact) shoot within the extreme personal distance.	Eye level angle is being utilize to attract the audience to interact.

The range of figures above have show the difference between one situation and another and reflect the positive symtoms of a schizophrenic patient. The figures represent 2 sides of situation inside the mind of people with Schizophrenia, the conditions when they experience hallucinations and delusions (no medication) as well as the reality condition (with medication). The salient points are the lightings and *mise en scene*, as clearly seen in both sides, the situation where the lighting in hallucinations and delusions are lighter and due to that all objects are clearly seen.

#### 4.2 Script Analysis

The chosen lines are based on the purposive sampling which have been carefully selected due to its strong representational components of the symtoms.

*“Don't take those pills, Jerry, unless you want to say good-bye to your old friends.”*

Mr Whiskers warned Jerry to not consume the medicine, the word “Don't” represents the behavioral process and “the medicine” is related to the first order of the sentence. Mr Whiskers added a presupposition after the first sentence as the effect of the medicine consumption with the sentence “unless you wanna say good bye to your old friends”. This assume that if Jerry consumes the medicine he will be able to reduce his hallucinations and delusions but he will not be able to communicate with his pets.

*“Take those drugs and you will enter a bleak and lonely world, Jerry.”*

Mr Whiskers insisted that Jerry should not consume the medicine, “a bleak and lonely word” as a metalinguistic verb is the sentence to reiterate the effect of medicine consumption to reassure Jerry not to take the medicine. This is mostly what caused people with Schizophrenia avoid consuming medicine as they do not want to be alone.

*“Jerry kill me, I wanna die, take the knife and cut my throat”*

In Jerry’s hallucinations and delusions, The deer which hit by Jerry on his way to the restaurant asked to be killed “Kill me” as a behavioral process and the deer as well instruct Jerry to kill him by saying “Take the knife and cut my throat”. As Jerry think it is true, he take the knife and did kill the deer by cutting its throat in front of Fiona.

*“Take the meds, you useless wanker!”*

Fiona asked Jerry to consume the medication after Jerry mutilated her to pieces. “Useless wanker” is the phrase that Fiona used to call Jerry at that time, it represents an identity or roughly a label that Fiona gave to Jerry after what he did. “Wanker” itself is a common slang language among the british to address someone who is unpleasant.

*“You smell like a baby shampoo”*

This statement above represents material process and Jerry’s Olfactory halucination towards Fiona’s severed head which smells like baby shampoo. This to inform that the hallucinations of a schizophrenic not only about their audio visual but could be happened as well to their another senses.

*“You are a killer! A serial killer! You are a stone-cold murdering maniac!”*

This is the scene where there is a tv news about a murder case in the area whom Sherrif Weinbacher was the the one being interviewed. Suddenly he direct his gaze to the camera, shows demand in a personal distance and shouted “You are a killer!” as a representational of identity and action towards Jerry who was watching it at that time.

Most of the halucinations and delusions consisted of negative thoughts that le to Jerry’s impulsive acts. The main sources of his negative thoughts are from Mr Whiskers, who continue to suggest that Jerry do more impulsive acts, including mutilating Fiona’s body to avoid the police from finding the body. At the same time, the negative thoughts also came from Fiona when she already became a severed head on the fridge. She constantly asked for a friend, or meaning to say, another person to be killed. Those thoughts came from his own mind which as a schizophrenic patient, he cannot do much unless to react on it as he believes that the “voices” are true and real as part of their very well known main symptoms.

#### 4.2 Negative symptomps

One of the negative symptomps which will be highlighted here is the withdrawal that the patient often experience in their life. In this movie, what caused Jerry to withdraw from his society is that his awareness to his mental condition.

*“I don’t want to scare her away...”*

As Jerry became aware of his mental condition, he also became aware of the fact that people might be concerned of being around him for what people possibly had heard about people with schizophrenia. In this line, Jerry was asking Dr Warren about his admiration to Fiona and his concern that he could make Fiona afraid of his condition.

## 5. Summary and suggestion

Film speaks to its audience about diverse life phenomenons while create a meaning at the same time. It represents life in an orchastrated story based on its writer interest to adjust to its audience’s preference. Film somehow guides its audience to understand the life through the process of framing the story as well, involving the film techniques to create a better meaning making process, adding some effects to bring the deeper emotions to its audience.

*“How does the Voices as a movie try to represent the life of a schizophrenic person?”*

The Voices movie, on the other hand, strives to represent the story of a person with schizophrenia by creating a story from the perspective of its patient, from implementing the stereotypes of its patient to people's reaction of their existence. This movie creates meaning of how it feels like to live as an individual with mental illness situation as the film gave the unusual situation given by a mental issue theme's film. The detail of the film are being well-adjusted to the certain story line to develop a better making meaning process. The dialogues are casual, yet full of stories and unfold messages about the life situation around people with this mental illness. Moreover, The voices itself have its own theme that collaborate a thriller genre and fantasy, it brings confusion for those who have not read the synopsis in prior briefly because the scene does not seem to make sense and the story seems unclear at the beginning, however, if the audience could see it clearly and critically, the story of this movie, along with its component of film languages, the reason behind Reynolds as the voices behind Bosco and Mr Whisker, aimed at letting the audience to visualize and transport them to inside the life of a schizophrenic person.

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