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## Beyond the Surface: Investigating Concealed Meanings in Drug Posters through Semiotic Analysis

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**Abstract-**Drug posters are intricate communicative artifacts that carry hidden connotations, myths, and ideologies. This article employs semiotic analysis to explore the layers of symbolism in these posters. By examining both verbal and visual signs, this study aims to uncover the connotative meanings embedded in drug posters and reveal the underlying myths and ideologies. Using Saussure's semiotic theory and Barthes' theory of meaning as frameworks, various drug posters were analyzed qualitatively. The findings highlight the complex interplay between verbal and visual signs, uncovering connotations, myths, and ideologies. This research enhances our understanding of the persuasive strategies in drug posters, offering insights into their socio-cultural impact. Verbal signs often conveyed warnings about the negative impacts of drug use, while visual signs reinforced these messages with additional layers of meaning.

**Keywords:** Semiotic Analysis, Drug Posters, Connotative Meanings, Ideological Symbols.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Drug posters, which utilize a blend of visual and textual elements, serve as powerful tools in conveying messages about substance use (Pedwell, Hardy, & Rowland, 2017). Their impact goes beyond mere aesthetic appeal; these posters frequently embed hidden meanings, myths, and ideologies that can subtly shape public perceptions and influence individual behavior. To fully grasp the underlying connotative meanings within these posters and to decode the complex network of myths and ideologies they propagate, a thorough analysis through the lens of semiotics is essential.

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, provides a powerful framework for decoding the complex layers of meaning in visual and verbal

communication (Iskanderova, 2024). By analyzing the signifiers (the visual and verbal elements) and the signifieds (the meanings associated with them), semiotic analysis uncovers the implicit messages and cultural implications hidden within drug posters.

This study aims to go beyond the surface of drug posters and delve into the realm of connotative meaning, myths, and ideologies conveyed through these visual and textual artifacts. By employing semiotic analysis, the research seeks to decipher the symbolic language used in drug posters, understand the underlying myths and narratives they construct, and identify the prevailing ideologies they promote.

Drawing upon the theories of renowned semioticians such as Saussure and Barthes, this

study examines the interplay between verbal and visual signs in drug posters to uncover their connotative meanings. Additionally, the analysis explores the subtle ways in which these posters shape societal perceptions and attitudes towards substance use.

There are some previous studies related to this current study. The study conducted by Bella Prabasari, Weddha Savitri, & Shanti Sari Dewi (2018) entitled “Verbal and Non-verbal Signs in the First Episode of Webtoon Orange Marmalade” aimed to analyze the signifiers and the signified verbal and non-verbal signs using Saussure's Theory of Signifier and Signified. The data for the study was derived from the first episode of the webtoon Orange Marmalade and was analyzed qualitatively. The study utilized McCloud's theory of relationship in comics to explore the creation of events within the webtoon. The findings of the study were presented descriptively through tables and diagrams, focusing on the analysis of the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal signs and their relationship within the webtoon. This research contributes to the understanding of how signifiers and signifieds operate within a webtoon context, offering insights into the semiotic aspects of visual and textual communication in this medium.

Modok, Santika, & Pratiwi (2021) conducted a study titled “An Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs Found on Grave of the Fireflies Posters” with the aim of analyzing the meaning of verbal and visual signs in the posters of Grave of the Fireflies. The data for their research was collected from the internet, and a descriptive qualitative method was employed for analysis. The study utilized Saussure's semiotic theory to examine the verbal and visual signs, while (Barthes, 1957) theory of meaning was applied to interpret the meaning conveyed by these signs. The findings of their study shed light on the intricate relationship between verbal and visual signs in the posters and contribute to a deeper understanding of the semiotic elements at play in this specific context.

Jayanti, Santika, & Pratiwi (2021) conducted a study entitled “An Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in Nivea Nourishing Body Lotion Advertisements” with the aim of analyzing the meaning conveyed by verbal and non-verbal signs in nivea nourishing body lotion advertisements. The study employed Saussure's semiotic theory to evaluate the verbal

and non-verbal signs, while Barthes' theory of meaning was used to examine the significance of these signs in body lotion advertising. The research adopted a qualitative data collection approach, with the data sourced from YouTube Nivea Body advertisements for the nivea nourishing body lotion. Through their analysis, the study aimed to shed light on the nuanced meanings embedded within the verbal and non-verbal signs found in these advertisements, providing insights into the semiotic elements utilized in the realm of body lotion marketing.

Based on the information provided, the research gap between the current study and the review of related literature can be identified. While the current study focuses on the analysis of verbal and visual signs in drug posters, the reviewed studies examine different contexts, such as the first episode of a webtoon as conducted by Bella Prabasari et al. (2018), movie poster as conducted by Modok et al. (2021), and advertisements for body lotion as conducted by Jayanti et al. (2021). Therefore, the research gap lies in the specific context of drug posters and the exploration of concealed meanings within these posters using semiotic analysis. The current study aims to fill this research gap by delving into the verbal and non-verbal signs in drug posters and investigating their connotative meanings, myths, and underlying ideologies.

In this research, we use semiotic analysis to reveal the complex communication aspects of drug posters, which are frequently disregarded as simple visual representations. The study has two main goals: first, it will examine the verbal cues in these posters, analyzing language and textual content to uncover subtle messages and cautions about the negative effects of drug use on people's lives; second, it will examine the visual cues, such as symbols, metaphors, and color schemes, and look into how these elements support the main plot and convey messages.

Through illuminating the obscure aspects of drug posters, this study advances our comprehension of the persuasive strategies used in this medium of communication. It also provides insights into the messaging's larger sociocultural influence and how public health, legislation, and awareness efforts may be affected by them.

## II. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative methodology that facilitates a comprehensive

examination and interpretation of the non-verbal and verbal cues found in drug posters. Qualitative research method is an approach used to understand human or social phenomena in a more in-depth way (Creswell, 2018). This study's data source is four carefully chosen medication posters. These posters are the main source material for the analysis and offer insightful information on the communication techniques and subliminal messages they include.

Each poster was chosen based on its relevance to the research topic, ensuring a focused exploration of communicative artifacts directly related to substance use. Additionally, the posters were selected to represent a diverse range of substances, acknowledging the importance of capturing varied perspectives within the study. This diversity in substance depiction aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different drugs are visually and verbally communicated. Furthermore, the selection criteria considered the representativeness of distinct communication strategies employed in drug posters, allowing for a nuanced analysis of varied approaches to convey messages about substance use. By meticulously justifying the selection of these posters, the study strives to enrich its analytical depth and contribute to a broader understanding of the intricate semiotic dimensions within drug-related communication.

To collect the data, an observation method is employed. The observation method is a data collection technique carried out by observing and recording systematically (Farid, 2022). In qualitative research, observation plays an important role in exploring information about behavior, events, or certain phenomena (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). The observation process for data collection involved a meticulous and collaborative examination of the selected drug posters. Researchers conducted individual assessments, scrutinizing textual elements for language choices and messaging clarity, evaluating imagery to decode visual messages, and analyzing symbols, colors, and overall design to uncover nuanced meanings. This process was documented through detailed notes and descriptions. The researchers did not use specific tools or software; standard office tools were employed for analysis.

Regarding data analysis, a qualitative method is used for this study. The coding and analysis process involved a meticulous application of Saussure's semiotic theory and

Barthes' theory of meaning to categorize and interpret both verbal and non-verbal signs within the selected drug posters. Verbal elements were coded based on Saussure's framework, distinguishing between signifiers and signified, and Barthes' theory guided the interpretation of connotations within the textual content. Non-verbal signs, including imagery, symbols, and colors, were analyzed using Saussure's semiotic theory to uncover relationships between visual signifiers and meanings, with Barthes' theory aiding in decoding layered meanings within visual elements. The analysis was iterative, incorporating multiple rounds of coding and interpretation to ensure rigor. Researchers revisited data iteratively, refining codes and cross-checking interpretations, contributing to a nuanced exploration of the intricate interplay between verbal and non-verbal signs, thus enhancing the depth and validity of the study's conclusions. Through systematic application and iteration, this study aimed to unveil the complex semiotic dimensions within drug posters, providing a comprehensive understanding of the communicated messages.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis of the study's data, focusing on the verbal and non-verbal signs in drug posters and their connotative meanings, myths, and underlying ideologies. The results provide insights into the communication strategies employed in these posters and shed light on the implicit messages conveyed through the combination of images and text. Additionally, the discussion delves into the theoretical framework of Semiotics, drawing upon Saussure's semiotic theory and Barthes' theory of meaning to interpret and contextualize the findings. By exploring the rich tapestry of meanings embedded within the signs, this section aims to deepen our understanding of how drug posters communicate messages and evoke certain perceptions and emotions in their audience. The implications of these findings for the field of visual communication and the broader social and cultural context are also discussed.

## Data 1

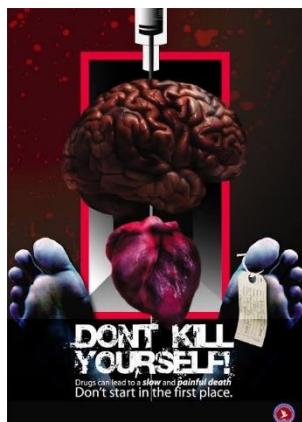


Figure 1. "Don't kill yourself" poster

### The analysis of verbal signs:

The verbal signs on the poster, "Don't Kill Yourself. Drugs can lead to a slow and painful death. Don't start in the first place," can be analyzed using Semiotics to uncover their connotative meaning, myth, and ideology.

The use of phrases like "Don't Kill Yourself," "slow and painful death," and "Don't start in the first place" suggests a strong negative connotation associated with drugs. The message implies that drugs have severe consequences, leading to harm, suffering, and even death. The connotative meaning here is to deter individuals from engaging in drug use by highlighting the potentially devastating outcomes.

The verbal signs construct a myth that connects drug use with self-destruction and a grim fate. By emphasizing the notion of killing oneself and a slow, painful death, the poster reinforces the myth that drug use inevitably leads to a tragic and miserable existence. This myth aims to discourage potential drug users by instilling fear and dread surrounding drug-related outcomes.

The ideology conveyed through these verbal signs is that drug use is inherently negative, dangerous, and should be avoided altogether. The language used positions drugs as a destructive force that can ruin lives. The message implies a moral standpoint, promoting abstinence and implying that starting drug use is a choice that should be avoided entirely. This ideology aligns with a broader societal narrative that perceives drug use as a threat to personal well-being and social stability.

By analyzing the verbal signs on the poster using Semiotics, we can discern their connotative meaning, the myth constructed, and the underlying ideology promoted. These elements

work together to create a persuasive message that aims to dissuade individuals from engaging in drug use by invoking fear, emphasizing negative consequences, and positioning drug use as a perilous path to avoid.

The implication of this finding is that fear-based messaging can be an effective strategy in raising awareness about the potential dangers of drug use. The strong negative connotations associated with drugs, such as the portrayal of a slow and painful death, can serve as a powerful deterrent for individuals considering or already engaged in drug use. Public health campaigns can leverage this insight by crafting messages that highlight the detrimental consequences of drug use to deter individuals from initiating or continuing drug use. The insights derived from the semiotic analysis of drug posters carry significant practical implications for informing real-world applications, particularly in the design of more effective anti-drug campaigns and the endeavor to raise awareness about substance use.

### The analysis of visual signs:

Visually, the poster dominantly uses black and red colors. The dominant use of black and red colors in the poster carries specific connotative meanings, contributes to the construction of a particular myth, and conveys a distinct ideology. In the context of color psychology, black is often associated with seriousness, fear, and danger, while red is linked to urgency, passion, and alarm. The connotative meaning of these colors, when combined, intensifies the gravity of the message. The use of black emphasizes the severity and seriousness of the issue at hand—drug use and its potential consequences—while red adds a sense of urgency, evoking alarm and emphasizing the immediacy of the threat. The combination of these colors constructs a myth that associates drug use with imminent and severe danger, reinforcing the urgency and gravity of the depicted consequences. This myth contributes to the overall narrative that drug use leads to a perilous and potentially life-altering outcome. In terms of ideology, the color palette aligns with a broader societal perspective that perceives drug use as a serious threat demanding immediate attention and action. The deliberate use of black and red colors in the poster, therefore, serves to enhance the overall impact of the message, positioning drug use as a critical issue that requires urgent avoidance and intervention.

The visual sign of a needle being injected

into the brain and heart in the poster can be analyzed using Semiotics to uncover its connotative meaning, myth, and ideology. The inclusion of a needle being injected into the brain and heart carries a strong connotative meaning of invasion, harm, and vulnerability. It symbolizes the invasive nature of drug use and implies the potential damage it can inflict on both the mind and the physical well-being of individuals. The visual element aims to evoke a sense of shock, discomfort, and the severity of the consequences associated with drug use.

The visual sign contributes to the construction of a myth surrounding drug use and its impact on the brain and heart. By depicting the needle penetrating these vital organs, the poster reinforces the myth that drug use can have direct and harmful effects on both mental and physical health. This myth serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the potential dangers and risks associated with engaging in drug use. The ideology conveyed through the visual sign is one that strongly opposes drug use and positions it as a direct threat to the brain and heart, two crucial aspects of human well-being. The inclusion of the needle imagery reinforces the ideology that drug use is not only damaging but can have immediate and profound consequences on both cognitive functioning and cardiovascular health. It aligns with a broader societal narrative that portrays drug use as a danger to individual health and highlights the importance of protecting these vital organs.

The implications of this finding highlight the visual impact and persuasive power of the depicted imagery in conveying the potential risks associated with drug use. The visual sign, with its connotative meaning of invasion and harm, aims to evoke a visceral response and communicate the gravity of the potential consequences. It serves as a strong deterrent by highlighting the potential damage to vital organs and the overall well-being of individuals.

The visual sign of the feet of a dead body in the poster can be analyzed using Semiotics to uncover its connotative meaning, myth, and ideology. The inclusion of the feet of a dead body in the visual sign carries a strong connotative meaning of mortality, finality, and the end of life. It symbolizes the grim outcome associated with drug use, suggesting that it can lead to death or a metaphorical "dead end." The use of this visual element aims to evoke a sense of fear, shock, and the gravity of the potential consequences of drug use.

The visual sign contributes to the construction of a myth surrounding drug use and its ultimate outcome. By featuring the feet of a dead body, the poster reinforces the myth that drug use can lead to a literal or metaphorical death. This myth serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the potential dire consequences of engaging in drug use. The ideology conveyed through the visual sign is one that strongly opposes drug use and positions it as a pathway to destruction and loss of life. The inclusion of the feet of a dead body reinforces the ideology that drug use is not only harmful but can ultimately lead to tragic outcomes. It aligns with a broader societal narrative that portrays drug use as a threat to individual well-being, social stability, and the preservation of life.

The implications of this finding are significant in terms of creating visual impact and conveying the potential risks associated with drug use. The visual sign, with its connotative meaning of death, supports the overall message of the poster by visually reinforcing the consequences of drug use. It aims to evoke an emotional response and promote a sense of urgency in deterring individuals from engaging in drug use.

## Data 2

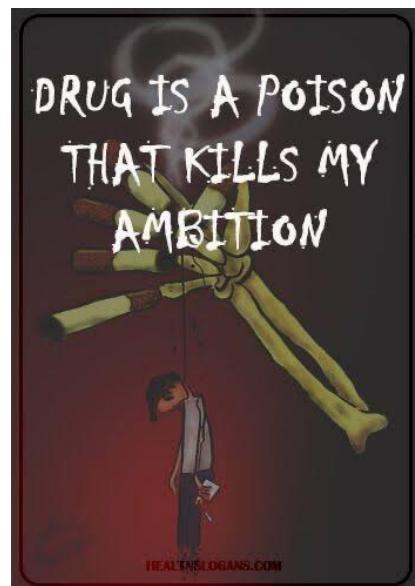


Figure 2. "Drug is a poison that kills my ambition" poster

### The analysis of verbal signs:

The verbal sign "Drug is a poison that kills my ambition" carries a connotative meaning that associates drug use with poison and the destruction of ambition. It implies that engaging

in drug use has detrimental effects on one's drive, motivation, and aspirations. The use of the word "poison" emphasizes the toxic nature of drugs and suggests a direct correlation between drug use and the suppression or elimination of personal ambitions.

The verbal sign contributes to the construction of a myth surrounding drug use and its impact on personal goals and aspirations. By equating drugs with poison and linking them to the demise of ambition, the sign reinforces the myth that drug use leads to the downfall of one's potential and hinders personal growth. This myth serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the perceived dangers and negative consequences associated with engaging in drug use.

The ideology conveyed through the verbal sign is one that strongly opposes drug use and positions it as a hindrance to personal development and achievement. The statement reinforces the belief that drugs are detrimental to one's ambitions and aligns with a broader societal narrative that portrays drug use as a threat to individual success, productivity, and fulfillment. It promotes the idea that avoiding drugs is crucial for maintaining and pursuing one's aspirations.

The implications of this analysis highlight the persuasive power of the verbal sign in conveying the potential risks and negative outcomes associated with drug use. The connotative meaning of "poison" and the reference to ambition being killed communicate the serious consequences of drug involvement. It aims to evoke a sense of fear, deterrence, and caution in individuals who may be considering or currently involved in drug use.

In summary, the verbal sign "Drug is a poison that kills my ambition" carries a connotative meaning of toxicity, contributes to the construction of a myth surrounding drug use and its impact on personal aspirations, and promotes an ideology that opposes drug use by highlighting its potential hindrance to individual ambitions. Understanding these connotations, myths, and ideologies can inform the development of prevention strategies, educational campaigns, and interventions aimed at discouraging drug use and promoting the pursuit of positive goals and aspirations.

#### **The analysis of visual signs:**

The visual signs consist of a hanging dead body with his neck tied on a rope held by a skeleton hand, where the fingers of the skeleton

are formed of cigarettes, accompanied by cigarette smoke. The visual signs evoke a strong connotative meaning of death, mortality, and the destructive nature of smoking. The depiction of a hanging dead body signifies the fatal consequences of smoking, emphasizing the potential harm and life-threatening risks associated with tobacco use. The cigarette-formed fingers of the skeleton hand reinforce the connection between smoking and death, symbolizing the gripping power of addiction and its control over individuals' lives.

The visual signs contribute to the construction of a myth surrounding smoking and its impact on health and mortality. By portraying a hanging dead body and the cigarette-formed fingers of the skeleton hand, the signs reinforce the myth that smoking leads to premature death and is a significant contributor to fatal health conditions. This myth serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the perceived dangers and negative outcomes associated with smoking.

The ideology conveyed through the visual signs strongly opposes smoking and positions it as a self-destructive behavior with severe consequences. The imagery of a hanging dead body and the skeleton hand formed of cigarettes promotes the belief that smoking is a deadly habit that can lead to irreversible harm, illness, and ultimately, death. It aligns with a broader societal narrative that portrays smoking as a negative and undesirable behavior, advocating for smoking cessation and the avoidance of tobacco products.

The implications of this analysis highlight the powerful visual impact and persuasive nature of the depicted imagery in conveying the potential risks and consequences of smoking. The visual signs aim to evoke a sense of shock, fear, and urgency, serving as a deterrent against tobacco use. They emphasize the gravity of the health hazards associated with smoking and the importance of making informed choices for personal well-being. In summary, the visual signs of a hanging dead body, a skeleton hand formed of cigarettes, and cigarette smoke carry a connotative meaning of death, contribute to the construction of a myth surrounding smoking and its impact on health, and promote an ideology that opposes smoking by highlighting its potential life-threatening consequences. Understanding these connotations, myths, and ideologies can inform public health campaigns, smoking cessation initiatives, and educational efforts aimed at discouraging smoking and raising awareness.

about the associated risks to individual health and well-being.

### Data 3

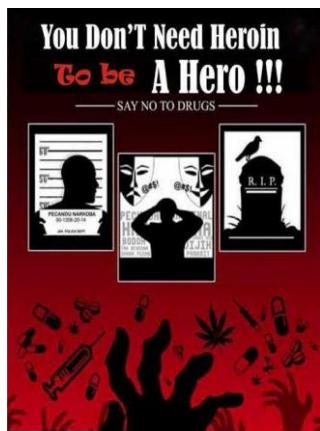


Figure 3. "You don't need heroin to be a hero" poster

#### The analysis of verbal signs:

The first verbal sign is "You don't need heroin to be hero". The verbal sign carries a connotative meaning that challenges the notion that drug use is associated with heroism or strength. It implies that true heroism can be achieved without resorting to heroin or any other drugs. The statement suggests that drugs are unnecessary and potentially harmful substances that do not contribute to genuine heroism or positive qualities.

The verbal sign contributes to the construction of a myth that associates drug use with heroism. By negating the need for heroin to be a hero, the sign challenges the myth that drug use enhances or enables heroic acts. It undermines the glorification of drug use and highlights alternative paths to heroism that do not involve substance abuse. The ideology conveyed through this verbal sign opposes drug use and promotes the idea that true heroism comes from personal qualities, actions, and values rather than reliance on drugs. It aligns with a broader societal narrative that discourages drug use and emphasizes the importance of making positive choices, maintaining personal integrity, and embodying heroic qualities through non-destructive means.

The second verbal sign is "Say no to drugs". The verbal sign carries a connotative meaning that advocates for refusing or rejecting drugs. It emphasizes the importance of making a clear and unequivocal stand against drug use. The statement promotes a negative stance towards drugs,

suggesting that saying "no" is the appropriate and responsible choice.

The verbal sign contributes to the construction of a myth that portrays drug use as inherently negative and harmful. By urging individuals to say no to drugs, the sign reinforces the myth that drugs are universally detrimental and should be avoided. It aligns with the prevalent social narrative that depicts drug use as a dangerous and destructive behavior.

The ideology conveyed through this verbal sign supports a drug-free lifestyle and encourages individuals to make informed and healthy choices. It promotes the belief that abstaining from drugs is the preferable path, highlighting the potential risks and negative consequences associated with drug use. The sign aligns with public health initiatives and anti-drug campaigns that aim to prevent substance abuse and promote well-being.

The implications of this analysis highlight the persuasive nature of these verbal signs in conveying messages against drug use. They aim to challenge the associations between drug use and heroism, and advocate for making positive choices and rejecting drugs. By encouraging individuals to say no to drugs, the signs reinforce the ideology of a drug-free society and promote the belief in personal agency and responsibility in making informed decisions.

In summary, the verbal signs "You don't need heroin to be hero" and "Say no to drugs" carry connotative meanings that challenge the association between drugs and heroism, advocate for refusing drugs, and promote a drug-free lifestyle. They contribute to the construction of myths that debunk the notion of drug-induced heroism and reinforce the negative perception of drug use. These signs align with an ideology that opposes drug use and emphasizes the importance of personal agency and informed choices in maintaining a healthy and drug-free life.

#### The analysis of visual signs:

The visual signs consist of three main pictures: (a) picture of a drug addict who became a criminal or convict; (b) picture of a man who holds his head using both of his hands, there are two masks above him like talking to him and make him headache, confused and crazy; and (c) picture of tombstone with letters RIP and a black bird on it.

The visual sign of a drug addict portrayed as a criminal or convict conveys a connotative

meaning that associates drug addiction with criminal behavior or a life of crime. It implies that drug addiction can lead individuals down a destructive path, resulting in criminal activities and subsequent imprisonment. The image suggests a negative and stigmatizing view of drug addicts, linking their substance abuse with deviant and unlawful behavior.

The visual sign contributes to the construction of a myth that depicts drug addicts as inherently criminal or inclined towards criminal activities. By presenting a drug addict in the context of a convict or criminal, the sign reinforces the myth that drug addiction is causally linked to criminal behavior. This myth perpetuates societal stereotypes and assumptions about drug addicts, promoting a narrative that overlooks the complexity of addiction and the underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior. The ideology conveyed through this visual sign aligns with a punitive approach to drug addiction and criminal justice. It reinforces the belief that drug addicts are responsible for their actions and should be treated as criminals. The image supports the ideology that drug addiction is a moral failing or a choice rather than a complex health issue requiring compassion, understanding, and treatment. It may reflect societal biases and stigmatization towards individuals struggling with addiction.

The implications of this visual sign highlight the potential for stigma and negative stereotyping of drug addicts. It reinforces the association between drug addiction and criminality, perpetuating a one-dimensional view of individuals with substance abuse issues. This can further marginalize and alienate individuals seeking help and support for their addiction, hindering their access to appropriate treatment and rehabilitation.

The second visual sign is a picture of a man holding his head while two masks hover above him as if talking to him. The visual sign conveys connotative meanings of mental anguish, confusion, and psychological turmoil. The person gripping their head symbolizes distress, frustration, or a sense of being overwhelmed. The presence of the two masks indicates conflicting voices or influences, representing internal struggles and the battle of conflicting thoughts and emotions. This visual sign contributes to the construction of a myth that associates drug use with psychological instability and inner chaos.

The image suggests that drug use can

exacerbate mental distress, leading to confusion and a feeling of being trapped in a tumultuous state. It implies that drugs can amplify existing psychological conflicts and contribute to a disoriented mental state. The ideology conveyed through this visual sign connects drug use with negative mental health outcomes. It suggests that drug use can worsen psychological well-being and perpetuate a cycle of confusion and internal struggle. The image portrays the potential dangers and negative consequences associated with drug use, highlighting the importance of avoiding substances that can further destabilize one's mental state.

The implications of this visual sign emphasize the need for awareness and caution regarding the effects of drugs on mental health. It underlines the importance of promoting substance abuse prevention, education, and support for individuals struggling with addiction or facing mental health challenges. The visual sign serves as a reminder of the potential risks and negative consequences associated with drug use, advocating for informed choices and prioritizing mental well-being.

The third visual sign is a picture of tombstone with letters RIP and a black bird on it. The visual sign of the tombstone signifies the potential outcome of drug abuse, emphasizing the grave consequences that can result from substance addiction. It symbolizes the loss of life and the tragic end that may befall individuals who engage in drug use. The black bird perched on the tombstone adds a sense of foreboding, suggesting the destructive nature of drug addiction. The visual sign contributes to the creation of a myth surrounding drug use and its impact on individuals and society. It evokes narratives and beliefs that link drug abuse to a downward spiral, leading to physical and psychological deterioration.

The tombstone and black bird symbolize the mythical consequences associated with substance addiction, reinforcing the notion of a destructive path. The ideology conveyed through this visual sign reflects a societal perspective on the dangers of drug use and the importance of addressing substance abuse issues. It aligns with the ideology of promoting healthy and drug-free lifestyles, discouraging individuals from engaging in harmful behaviors that can lead to addiction and premature death. The image reinforces the societal belief in the need for prevention, intervention, and support systems to

combat the negative consequences of drug abuse.

The visual sign above carries significant implications in relation to drug use. It serves as a poignant reminder of the potential consequences of substance addiction, emphasizing the gravity of the situation and the risks involved. The tombstone symbolizes loss and tragedy, while the presence of the black bird adds an element of foreboding and mortality. The visual sign aims to raise awareness about the potential fatal outcomes of drug abuse, cautioning individuals and society about the devastating impact it can have. It serves as a call to action, urging prevention, education, and support to address the challenges posed by drug addiction and promote healthier lifestyles.

#### Data 4

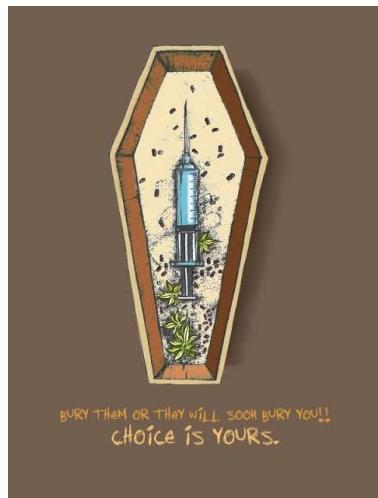


Figure 4. “Bury them or will soon burry you” poster

#### The analysis of verbal signs:

The phrase “Burry them or they will soon burry you!” carries a connotation of urgency and self-preservation. It suggests that if one does not take action to address the issue of drugs, they will be consumed or overwhelmed by the consequences. The phrase implies that individuals must confront and eliminate drugs from their lives before they become victims of their destructive effects.

“The choice is yours” implies personal responsibility and agency in decision-making. It suggests that individuals have the power to choose whether or not to engage in drug use. The phrase emphasizes the importance of personal choices and implies that one's actions and decisions have significant consequences.

These verbal signs contribute to the creation of a myth surrounding drug use. They reinforce

the narrative that drugs are dangerous and have the potential to consume individuals if not dealt with decisively. The myth revolves around the notion that individuals must take control of their lives and actively choose to distance themselves from drugs to avoid negative outcomes. The ideology conveyed through these verbal signs aligns with a perspective that promotes individual autonomy and self-determination. It emphasizes the importance of making informed choices and taking responsibility for one's actions. The phrases convey a sense of empowerment, suggesting that individuals have the ability to shape their own futures by choosing to avoid drugs and their associated risks.

These verbal signs serve as motivational messages, urging individuals to take decisive action and make positive choices regarding drug use. They reinforce the belief in personal agency and the potential for individuals to overcome the challenges posed by drugs. The connotative meanings, myths, and ideologies embedded in these phrases highlight the importance of personal responsibility and the power of choice in navigating the complex landscape of drug use.

#### The analysis of visual signs:

The visual signs of a needle, drugs, and cannabis inside an open coffin, placed on the ground, present a thought-provoking connotation and emphasize the myth and ideology surrounding drug use. The open coffin, symbolizing death and finality, becomes a powerful visual metaphor that confronts the viewer with a choice: either take action to bury these destructive elements or face the impending consequences.

The presence of the needle, drugs, and cannabis within the coffin further enhances the message. The needle signifies the act of drug consumption, suggesting the invasive and potentially dangerous nature of substance abuse. The depiction of drugs and cannabis emphasizes their association with addiction, altered states of mind, and negative health effects.

The visual composition provides a stark contrast between the open coffin and the surrounding ground. It creates a sense of urgency, as if urging the viewers to make a decision before they too become buried under the weight of drug-related harm. This conveys the implicit message that individuals have agency in determining their fate and the power to reject the destructive allure of drugs. The visual signs engage the viewers on

an emotional and intellectual level, prompting reflection on the consequences of drug use. By presenting the choice to bury these elements, the visual composition encourages individuals to consider the potential impact of their decisions and make a conscious choice to distance themselves from the dangers associated with drugs.

Overall, the visual signs of the needle, drugs, and cannabis inside an open coffin positioned on the ground create a powerful image that conveys the urgent need to address the issue of drug use. They compel viewers to confront the potential consequences and make a conscious decision to reject the destructive path and embrace a healthier and safer lifestyle.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the semiotic analysis of both verbal and visual signs in drug-related posters reveals profound insights into the connotative meanings, myths, and ideologies surrounding drug use. Verbal signs, such as phrases emphasizing the destructive nature of drugs, highlight the severe personal and societal consequences of substance abuse. For instance, statements like "Drug is a poison that kills my ambition" and "Bury them or they will soon bury you!" underscore the detrimental impact on individual potential and life choices, urging individuals to make informed decisions to avoid drug use.

Visual signs further reinforce these messages, adding layers of meaning through powerful imagery. Symbols like needles and coffins evoke a sense of danger and mortality, while images of individuals in distress illustrate the psychological turmoil associated with drug use. These visual elements work in tandem with verbal messages to dismantle the glamorization of drugs, instead promoting a narrative of empowerment and healthy decision-making.

The implications of these findings extend beyond immediate audience impact. For public health, understanding the semiotic mechanisms in these posters can inform the creation of more effective campaigns. By leveraging the identified connotative meanings and ideologies, future initiatives can craft targeted messages that resonate with diverse audiences and challenge prevailing myths about drug use. Additionally, policymakers can utilize these insights to develop comprehensive interventions that address the psychological and cultural dimensions of

substance abuse.

This study underscores the importance of integrating semiotic analysis into the evaluation of public health messages. Future research could explore the application of these findings across different media and cultural contexts to further refine strategies for combating drug abuse. By acknowledging the limitations of the current study, such as the selection scope and interpretive nature of semiotic analysis, and proposing targeted areas for further investigation, this research contributes to a more nuanced and impactful approach to drug prevention and education.

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