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«ФОРРЕСТ ГАМП» ТАСМАСЫНДАГЫ БЕЛГИЛЕР МЕНЕН СИМВОЛДОРДУН ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯСЫ»

ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ЗНАКОВ И СИМВОЛОВ В ФИЛЬМЕ «ФОРРЕСТ ГАМП»

INTERPRETATION OF SIGNS AND SYMBOLS IN THE MOVIE «FORREST GUMP»

Аннотациясы: Бул макалада «ФоррестГамп» тасмасындагы белгилер менен символдорун интерпретациясы каралып, анализ жүргүзүлөт. Тасмада белгилер менен символдор ар кандай маанини берип турушу ыктымал жана ар бир көрүүчү андай белгилерди өз алдынча чечмелеп алышы мүмкүн. «Форрест Гамп» тасмасындагы белгилер жана символдор аркылуу, көрүүчү бул тасманын терең философиясын түшүнө алат.

Негизги создор: белгилер, символдор, тасма, интерпретация.

Аннотация: Статья рассматривает интерпретацию знаков и символов в фильме «Форрест Гамп». Знаки и символы в художественном фильме могут нести разные значения, и каждый зритель может воспринимать эти значения по-разному. Через интерпретацию знаков и символов в художественном фильме «Форрест Гамп» зритель глубоко постигает философию фильма.

Ключевые слова: знаки, символы, художественный фильм, интерпретация.

Abstract: The article deals with interpretation of signs and symbols in the movie “Forrest Gump”. Signs and symbols in a movie can convey different messages and a viewer can interpret them in own way. Through the interpretation of signs and symbols in the movie “Forrest Gump” the viewer can deeply understand the philosophy of the movie.

Key words: signs, symbols, movie, interpretation.

Movie is an important scientific tool that has opened up new areas of knowledge. Signs, codes and conventions in a movie can tell you a lot about the messages that the creators are trying to convey. The study of these signs, codes and conventions in movie is called semiotics, or semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis is a way to explain how an audience makes meaning from codes. All meaning is encoded in that which creates the meaning. No object or word is without

meaning – one cannot read or see something without associating it to a certain idea, the meaning. Semiotics in movie is always an important and perplexing element in any picture [1]. It is the signification and communication of signs and symbols to develop a plot and define certain events that happen within the plot. Roland Barthes gives us five systems of meaning or ‘codes’ that are as follows:

Cultural code

The cultural code encompasses the text’s references to things already known. It depends on certain shared assumptions of cultural behavior, morality and politics. Culture not only constitutes the self but also constrains the self. These films raise questions about the codes of conduct in a particular social order. These are the most basic of signs in film. Indexical signs indirectly point to a certain meaning – they act as cues to existing knowledge. For example, smoke means fire, panting means exercise, a ringing bell means end of class. This type of signs is constantly used in (all types of) media and are very common.

Symbolic Code.

Symbolic codes often denote something they have nothing to do with at first glance, but only because the code exists and because we use them society-wide. For instance, the red heart symbolizes love, the white dove symbolizes peace, the color green symbolizes jealousy. The symbolic code refers to the way an audience receives texts by organizing all experiences into a binary patters: good/bad; master/slave; hero/villain; true/false [2]. This helps in our understanding of what the filmic text means.

Iconic Signs and Code.

These are the literal signs and codes: a cop means a cop. They are meant to appear like the thing itself. However, they always represent *more* than just the thing itself. When we see a cop, we also associate this with our cultural ideas of “justice” or “the law”, or even masculinity or toughness. These codes also reinforce the ideas we have about these concepts in our culture, it reinforces the ideological meaning of those concepts.

Enigma Code.

The enigma code Films set puzzles, poses problems, and hint at secrets. They make us ask the following questions: 1. What is this going to be about? 2. What’s going to happen next? 3. Who did it? 4. What happens at the end? The enigma code is the principal structuring device that demands audience’s attention.

This is often used in trailers of movies as well as posters. They make people wonder. For example, “who murdered the protagonist”, or “how will they survive the apocalypse”. They pique curiosity and intrigue the viewers, with the intention of making them go see the movie. The Enigma code refers to the signs belonging to a pattern of action. For example, a poster with a romantic pair tells us that the film is a love story. However, the picture of a hero with a gun or a bruised body suggests that the film is an action story.

The connotative code.

The code is about the signs that imbue characters and settings with meaning, these signs include speech, clothing, movement, and gestures. The code creates illusion of real people having real experiences in a real world. The idea of this code is that meaning is the result of the interaction between the film and the audience. Consider the title sequence of Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), where seven men of varying ages, identically dressed in black suits and white shirts, walk in slow motion to the soundtrack of “Little green bag” by George Baker. The music, cars, streets, fashion, style- all these elements bring important sub-codes to the film [3].

Filmmakers show and we understand visual signs such as smiles, scars, guns, badges and hairstyle. At this point, an important term you should be familiar with is synecdoche, that is, relationship of a part to a whole (the crown represents the king or the queen, the Oval office stands for the President, the badge symbolizes law and order). It is the little things that fill our everyday lives with meaning, and the same holds true for films. Film images are signs, look at any film poster and you will notice how posters and publicity materials send signals that tell you

about the genre of the film. A key field of study in semiotics relates to the text (literature, film, or even a piece of music). Films construct meaning through signs.

“Forrest Gump” is a movie which combines drama with comedy. The movie was released in 1994 and was directed by Robert Zemeckis. It is about a man facing the challenges in his life. The action takes place in different locations of America and Vietnam in a story span from 1951-1984.

There are a lot of life lessons in “Forrest Gump” that can serve as equipment of living, but the most powerful is the theme of finding and pursuing your destiny without making any excuses. The movie promotes the achievement of people's destiny by presenting Forrest Gump as the perfect example of a humble man who doesn't use his lack of book intelligence as an excuse for achieving success in his life. There is a great philosophy behind this movie. Forrest is not the smartest guy; he is slow when it comes to figuring things out or understanding academic topics. People who surround him treat him as a man on the edge of mental retardation [4]. He is a loving and kind person who tries to protect people he loves, and he never judges a person.

The movie “Forrest Gump” combines very well signs and symbols in order to portray the picture of a young man fulfilling destiny and to show the deep philosophical idea of the movie.

The moving picture begins and ends with a **feather** floating through the wind. In this case the feather symbolized the human experience in reaching his destiny. In the opening, the feather comes to rest in Forrest's suitcase. At the end, it flies back up into the air, helping to symbolize the cycle that has now been completed—specifically, the cycle of life and death, and one of new beginnings. After all, the movie ends with Forrest's son going off to his first day of school just like Forrest did at the beginning of the movie.

That dancing feather has no clear destiny, no point where it's supposed to end up. It just *is*. In other words, it symbolizes Forrest's view of life rather than Lt. Dan's; there's no big destiny end game we're all trying to achieve, there's just a random series of events knocking us about. As Mrs. Gump would say, "Life is like a floating feather. You never know where it's going to end up." We don't even have to dig very deep to come up with this since Forrest says it straight out: "I don't know if we each have a destiny, or if we're all just floating around accidental-like on a breeze." The feather serves as a textual wink in order for the viewer to dig deeper into the symbolism of the movie.

Another symbol and textual link is **leg braces**. In his younger years, Forrest needs to wear leg braces because, in his doctor's words, "his back's as crooked as a politician." At first, these leg braces are an outward symbol of Forrest's profound difference, even though his momma tries to convince him otherwise: "If God wanted everybody to be the same," she says, "he'd have given us all braces on our legs". Forrest's leg braces represent the restrictions we place upon ourselves when we want to take control of our destiny. The purpose of them was to make Forrest's back grow straight so that he would grow up like everyone else, but all they did was make him vulnerable and crippled.

Eventually, though, the braces switch from a cage symbolizing Forrest's limitations to an almost magical symbol of his ability to triumph. When Forrest is running away from bullies one day, his braces break away from his legs. As Forrest remembers, "I can run like the wind blows."

Forrest overcomes a weakness and turns it into strength, just like he does with his intelligence. Unlike the movie's more unfortunate characters Jenny and Bubba, Forrest can break through any disadvantages he might have been born with. It symbolizes Forrest break out restrictions and overcome challenges in his life with the help of love, patience, compassion and faith.

The phrase “**Life is like a box of chocolates**” is another sign and it is Forrest's guiding philosophy. It is Forrest's favorite phrase: "My momma always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get." You can buy it on a t-shirt, on a mug, or

with a whole variety of hilarious variations, such as "Life is like a box of chocolates full of nuts"; "Life is like a box of chocolates ... and I just ate all of them" [5].

This phrase makes Forrest much more resilient than the people around him. Whenever another friend dies or Jenny again rejects him, Forrest can whip out his favorite saying and keep on going.

In one way, the phrase helps us see how simple Forrest really is. He is not one for complex meditations on life and chance and fate. Concrete, folksy analogies suitable for cross-stitching onto a pillow work much better than ancient philosophy when it comes to navigating through his life.

Scratching a little below the surface, this phrase also gives us a little more evidence that the movie might be coming down on the side of chance rather than destiny. After all, Mrs. Gump doesn't tell Forrest, "Life is like a Netflix genre description. You always know what you're going to get." Instead, she says that we never know what is coming for us; we never know whether the feather is going to land; and we never know whether we'll end up dying as millionaires or destitute.

Another semiotics and textual work is **running**. Forrest runs away from racist bullies, Jenny runs away from her father, Forrest runs toward Jenny, away from battle, across the United States, and through the football field. Jenny is constantly trying to "run away" from her abusive past. During the Vietnam War Forrest runs through the forest and carries people out. This noble act show that he has a kind heart and he is a brave person despite everybody considers him a person with limitations.

It seems safe to say that running is a recurrent image in *Forrest Gump*. Even Jenny's last name—Curran—reminds us of the Latin word *currere*, which means "to run."

For Forrest and Jenny, running is a way to overcome their limitations, but it gets more complex than that. Each time Forrest runs during the film signifies a transformational moment for his character. It is a literal symbol of his ability to triumph, as he bursts out of his braces and flies down the road, just like the bird Jenny wants to be and can never become. Running is so primal and universal; it is easily relatable to a widespread audience. Whether you are a habitual runner or can count the number of times you have broke into a run on one hand- everyone has done it and knows of it. It is the single most defining skill of all athletics. Therefore this identifiable aspect helps the audience understand that running represents the symbol of transformation surrounding the character of Forrest. Moreover running brings the mind to a heightened sense of consciousness which allows it to conquer the inevitable challenges of life.

The imagery of running reminds us that symbols aren't necessarily a code that you can use to unlock a movie or a book. They can be complex sets of images that can be triumphant—or despairing.

Forrest knew the value of friendship. The friendship of Bubba and Forrest illustrates real trust, empathy, and understanding between them. **Shrimp business** symbolizes Forrest's friendship with Bubba. They talked a lot about starting out their own Shrimp business within the movie and after the death of Bubba, his friend realized their dream. Forrest met a lot of difficulties and challenges at the beginning. Every time he launched out for shrimping, he could find few shrimps and what he got out of the water were rubbishes. However, Gump did not feel discouraged and he still launched out with Lieutenant Dan even in the rainstorm. Luckily enough, their ship was the only one that survived in the rainstorm and their career of shrimping became easy. They got lots of shrimps every time they launched out and in the last they opened their shrimping company Bubba Gump and became cent millionaire. Gump's character of being optimistic makes him relaxed when meet difficulties and troubles and gives him happiness despite the cruelty of life.

Starting up a shrimp farming business despite the death of Bubba and providing support to Bubba's family demonstrates the high moral values and intelligence of Forrest Gump.

There is no doubt that Gump had achieved great success no matter on the football competition field, on Ping Pong or shrimp business.

Ping Pong symbolizes Forrest's determination. He continuously practiced while he was at the hospital in the war and became so skilled at ping pong he was asked to join the All-American ping pong team to travel to China.

'We were the first Americans to have been there in like a million years.' – Forrest Gump on his trip to China. He achieved success in playing Ping Pong because he didn't plan, he didn't set any goals, he didn't think about winners and losers. He just played because and carried on his action which he believed was right and did his best [6].

Symbolism of birds in the movie conveys the message to the viewer about freedom and destiny. The part when Jane prays the God to turn her into a bird so she can fly away and escape her abusing father. At the end of the movie when Forrest is by her grave, as he walks away birds fly overhead. The textual wink shows us that Jenny is now free, away from her pain that she suffered while being on Earth.

To sum up, signs and symbols in Forrest Gump convey a lot of messages to a viewer and every viewer interpret them in own way. There is no one right definition for interpretation of each sign and symbol within the movie. The essential thing is that with the help of these semiotic codes the viewer can deeply understand the deep philosophy of the movie Forrest Gump. Forrest Gump was just like a piece of white feather which had never been polluted by the complexity of society and the ungainliness of humanity. He just did things without taking into consideration the condemnation, rules and critical remarks of society. In Gump's inner world, there was no shadow of the society and just lived in the pure world of his own. Therefore the quote of the outstanding Russian writer F.M. Dostoevsky "The cleverest of all, in my opinion, is the man who calls himself a fool at least once a month" shows that despite Forrest Gump has an IQ score of 75 according the conviction of the certain people, the only man who can carry the proud name "a truly great man" among that society is Forrest Gump.

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