

Gesture Signs Representing Emotions in the Animated Movie *Inside Out 2*: A Semiotic Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how *Inside Out 2* (2024) employs gesture signs to convey emotional meaning through its animated characters. Guided by Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework; icon, index, and symbol. The analysis focuses on how body movements, posture, and facial expressions reveal the psychological conditions of each emotion. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research identifies and examines selected scenes that prominently display meaningful gestures, including moments where nonverbal cues take precedence over spoken dialogue. The findings show that each emotion consistently uses specific gesture patterns to communicate internal states: icons reflect natural human reactions, indexes point to immediate bodily or psychological responses, and symbols rely on culturally shared knowledge to express more abstract emotional ideas. These gestures not only enrich the visual appeal of the movie but also function as deliberate semiotic tools that guide the audience's interpretation of shifting emotional dynamics. The study further highlights that gesture meaning becomes more powerful when multiple sign types appear simultaneously, for instance, when facial tension, hand movements, and bodily stance work together to signal complex or layered feelings. Overall, the research demonstrates that animated gestures in *Inside Out 2* serve as essential elements in multimodal storytelling, offering insight into how nonverbal signs help viewers understand emotional processes and engage more deeply with character development.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is closely connected to society because people use it to communicate, interact, and create meaning in everyday life. In sociolinguistics, language is understood not only as spoken or written words, but also as all forms of communication that people use in social situations. Meaning can be communicated through voice, movement, visual signs, and even silence. Saussure (2011) explains that a sign is something that represents an idea, and this representation can appear in many forms, not only linguistic ones. Therefore, communication in society involves a wide range of signs, such as gestures, images, colors, and sounds.

Signs can be found everywhere in daily life because people constantly use them to guide

actions, send messages, or express emotions. In the community, we see road signs that warn drivers, logos that identify brands, colors that represent meanings (such as red for danger), and gestures such as waving or nodding that show friendliness or agreement. These signs carry meaning even without spoken words. For example, a red traffic light means “stop,” and a thumbs-up gesture means “approval.” Chandler (2017) states that signs work because communities share the same understanding about what each sign represents. This linguistics study can also be applied in the scope of movies, since movies also deliver the message through signs and actions.

Movie is a series of moving pictures, usually shown in a cinema or television and often telling a story that is produced by recording camera using animation techniques or visual effects (Royani, 2014, as cited in Wildani et al., 2024). There are three primary types of movies: documentaries, animated movies, and feature movies. Among these, animated movies have become rich semiotic environments where visual signs, including gestures, are intentionally constructed to communicate emotional meaning (Cobley, 2009). Gestures in animation are not arbitrary, but they are deliberately designed to help the audience perceive the characters’ internal states and social attitudes. The body is closely tied to the processing of social and emotional information, where gestures function as expressive cues that reflect affective experiences and attitudes (Vicario & Newman, 2013). In *Inside Out 2* (2024), the characters’ bodily gestures are intentionally stylized to represent complex emotions, making the movie a compelling object for semiotic investigation.

Given the central role of gesture in conveying emotion, research on gesture signs in animated movies is essential, not only for expanding semiotic analysis in film studies but also for deepening our understanding of nonverbal communication within visual media. The study of gestures in animation can offer insights into how audiences interpret emotional cues, how visual storytelling operates, and how multimodal signs work together to build meaning (Yunus & Aswar 2024).

To analyze the animated movie *Inside Out 2* (2024), this study adopts Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, which classifies signs into icons, indices, and symbols as a framework for interpreting the hidden meanings reflected in the characters’ gestures. Peirce’s classification provides a systematic approach for understanding how visual signs function in constructing emotional meaning within animated narratives (Atkin, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the gesture signs that represent emotions in *Inside Out 2* (2024) through Peirce’s semiotic framework. By examining how the movie employs icons, indices, and symbols to construct emotional meaning, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the role of gesture in animated storytelling and contribute to the broader field of semiotic and multimodal studies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Semiotics provides an important foundation for understanding how visual signs create meaning in movie. As mentioned earlier, meaning does not only appear through spoken or written language but also through gestures, movement, posture, color, and facial expression. These nonverbal forms act as signs that help convey emotion and narrative, especially in animated movies. Saussure’s distinction between the signifier and the signified has become one of the basic principles that explain how signs operate, while Charles Sanders Peirce offers a more detailed classification of signs that is highly relevant for visual analysis.

Peirce identifies three main types of signs based on how they relate to their objects. The first type is the icon, which communicates meaning through resemblance. An icon visually imitates or mirrors what it represents. In animated movies, exaggerated facial expressions, body shapes, or gestures often function as icons because the visuals closely resemble real human emotions or actions.

The second type is the index, which is understood through cause-and-effect connections. An index does not look like what it represents, but it signals or points to something related. For

instance, trembling hands can indicate fear, flushed cheeks may show embarrassment, and smoke or fire can suggest increasing anger. These signs appear frequently in movies to guide viewers toward the emotional state of a character without needing verbal explanation.

The third type is the symbol, which relies on convention or cultural agreement. A symbol is understood because people share similar interpretations, for example, colors associated with emotions, specific gestures that carry social meaning, or objects representing certain ideas. Animated movies often rely on symbols to build emotional identities for each character, making them easier for audiences to recognize.

Previous studies have explored how these types of signs operate in various forms of visual media. Surya and Junaedi (2025) analyzed body gestures in *Larva: Big Family* and found that gestures function as both denotative and connotative signs that support character emotion. Akpan and Ikuelogbon (2023) also applied Peirce's framework in their study of Hollywood and Nollywood movies, showing that icons, indexes, and symbols work together to reveal cultural values and narrative messages. Emelia (2018) likewise demonstrated that gestures in *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* reveal layers of emotional and symbolic meaning by examining movement and posture.

Research on animated emotion characters has also highlighted the importance of color as a symbolic sign. Safitri and Swasono (2024) examined *Inside Out* (2015) and found that each emotion is assigned a specific color that symbolizes its psychological quality, such as yellow for Joy and red for Anger. Their findings show that moviemakers rely heavily on symbolic visuals to strengthen emotional interpretation.

Although these studies contribute valuable knowledge about gestures, color symbolism, and visual meaning, none of them specifically explore how *Inside Out 2* constructs emotional expression through gestures of the emotion characters. Previous research focuses mainly on other movies or the first *Inside Out*, leaving a gap in understanding how the sequel develops new emotional meaning through iconic, indexical, and symbolic gestures. This study fills that gap by analyzing how the gestures of emotion characters in *Inside Out 2* function as Peircean signs and how these gestures visually construct the emotional processes shown in the movie.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, which aims to describe and interpret a phenomenon based on the data collected from observation and analysis. In this research, the phenomenon being explored is how gestures function as semiotic signs that express emotions in the animated movie *Inside Out 2* (2024) directed by Kelsey Mann and produced by Pixar Animation Studios. The movie was selected because it vividly represents emotions through characters' body movements, particularly gestures. The data in this research consist of scenes showing gestures that convey emotional meaning.

The population of this study refers to all visual scenes throughout *Inside Out 2* (2024). In research terminology, population represents the entire set of data that has the potential to be analyzed. Because the movie consists of scenes depicting various forms of physical expression, each scene is considered part of the population. From this, the study applies purposive sampling to determine the sample. Purposive sampling is a technique that intentionally selects data that are most relevant to the researchers' focus. In this study, the sample consists of scenes that clearly display hand or arm gestures functioning as emotional indicators. These scenes are selected because they provide the richest insights for analyzing gestures as semiotic signs.

The instrument of this study is the researchers, supported by documentation tools such as screenshots and observation. In qualitative research, the researchers function as the primary instrument because the process of selecting, interpreting, and analyzing data relies heavily on the researchers' ability to observe, classify, and interpret visual information.

The data collection technique used in this study is documentation. The researcher watched *Inside Out 2* several times to identify scenes where gestures are used to show emotions. These

scenes were captured in the form of screenshots and short descriptions to document how gestures appear and function.

The data analysis procedure follows a qualitative semiotic approach. Each selected gesture is analyzed by applying concepts from Peirce's triadic model (icon, index, symbol). The analysis aims to identify the denotative and connotative meanings of each gesture and to interpret how these gestures function in expressing emotions within the movie. Through this analytical process, the study seeks to uncover deeper layers of meaning behind the characters' physical expressions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Gestures Representing Emotion Characters in *Inside Out 2*

The results of this study show that each emotion character in *Inside Out 2* uses distinctive gestures to construct emotional meaning throughout the movie. Gestures serve not only as animated movements but as semiotic signs that help externalize psychological states. Through Peirce's theory of icon, index, and symbol, these gestures can be interpreted as meaningful indicators of how each emotion communicates, reacts, and interacts in Riley's mind. The following sections describe how each emotion expresses itself through gesture patterns that visually represent emotional processes in the narrative.

Table 1. Table of Gesture Sign

Type of Sign	Frequency
Icon	30
Index	32
Symbol	24

Anger

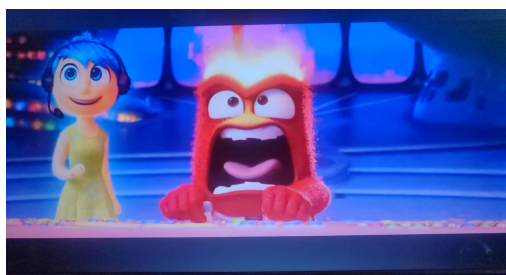


Figure 1. Anger (timestamp 02.13)

Anger is a character who is short, red and has a box-shaped body. He is the emotion that controls the anger of Riley's body. He appears with his clenched fists and his office suit. The character visualized with his big round eyes and his furrowed eyebrow. He smiles with his arrogant smile that describes his authority in Riley's body. Whenever he shows his anger, a flame appears on his head. He is a loud character that easily explodes. His job is to make sure everything is right and fair for Riley. When things make Riley upset or frustrated, Anger will take control of her mind.

Anger appears with his small and box-shaped body (Hendarsyah, 2020). In cartoons, a box-shaped character is usually described as a solid and firm character, which makes him strong and bold. He wears an office shirt which makes him look like a boss. This outfit fits with his characteristics that are bossy and often gets frustrated. His clenched fists show his firm character as if he tries to control his anger, but when his anger is unbearable, a flame will burst out of his head, showing his explosive anger.

The picture shows a scene where Anger is controlling Riley's mind. He is glaring at his eyes with his eyebrows going up. He screams on the top of his lungs and grabs the lever tightly. His eyes and eyebrows showed his explosive anger. His pupils are getting smaller as his adrenaline

goes up. His tight grip shows his uncontrollable madness that makes him grip it in full power. His scream and the flame that comes from his head describes the peak of his anger.

Joy



Figure 2. Joy (timestamp 55.59)

Joy is the emotion that represents happiness, hope, excitement, and positive energy inside Riley's mind. She is cheerful, bright, and usually takes the lead when Riley needs encouragement or motivation. In this scene, Joy is raising her arm high with a wide smile on her face. Her eyes are large and bright, and her body leans slightly forward. Throughout the movie, Joy is shown as the most optimistic emotion. She always tries to make every situation positive, even when the new emotions come and cause chaos. She acts like a leader, pushing the team to stay cheerful and focused.

Through this scene, Joy's wide smile acts as the icon signs because they look like how real humans behave when they feel strong happiness and excitement. It is a clear sign that she feels positive about what is happening around her, shows that she wants to encourage other emotions and keep the situation cheerful. Her big round eyes and bright expression also imitate natural human happiness, making them iconic representations of positive emotion. The glow on her skin further strengthens the icon, since light is commonly used to represent warmth or brightness in real life, and Joy's body literally looks like a shining light.

The scene also contains several index signs, meaning signs that directly point to her emotional state. Her forward-leaning posture indexes eagerness and involvement, as if she is ready to push forward or motivate the others. Her open mouth, formed into a wide smile, indexes immediate joy and excitement. These physical cues point directly to her inner emotion. She is clearly happy, energetic, and full of motivation.

At the same time, Joy is surrounded by several symbolic signs that carry culturally understood meanings. The gesture of raised fist functions as a symbol. This gesture is globally and conventionally understood to signify strength, solidarity, defiance, victory, or revolutionary spirit. In many cultures, and especially in social-movement studies, the raised fist is known as a symbol of strength, unity, victory, and resistance. It is widely used in political movements to represent power and collective courage (Kellner, 2004). Therefore, the raised fist is a powerful visual symbol.

Sadness

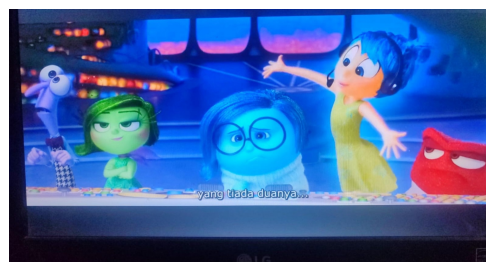


Figure 3. Sadness (timestamp 02.55)

Sadness represents Riley's feeling of sorrow, empathy, and emotional depth. She is gentle,

slow, and usually unsure of herself. Her actions often contrast with the other emotions, making her appear quieter and more withdrawn. In this scene, Sadness is positioned at the center, and her posture immediately pulls the viewer's attention. Sadness shows a downward posture, with her head leaning forward and her shoulders relaxed in a soft slump. Her facial expression is blank but heavy, with her mouth slightly curved downwards. Throughout the movie, Sadness is shown as slow-moving, thoughtful, and often misunderstood by the other emotions.

In the picture, Sadness expresses her emotion through the icon signs, which imitate how real humans look when they feel discouraged or unhappy. Her slouched posture, lowered head, and rounded shoulders mirror the natural body language of someone carrying a heavy emotional burden. Her blank, slightly downward gaze is also shown as an icon, since it visually resembles the facial expression commonly associated with sadness and emotional fatigue.

Sadness' body language also contains strong indexical signs that point directly to her emotional state. Her stillness and lack of movement index a lack of energy, as the absence of movement is a direct effect of her demotivated and unexcited inner state. The slight downward pull of her mouth indexes worry or discomfort; this physical action of her facial muscles is caused by the internal feeling of sadness. Her arms resting quietly in front of her index hesitation and insecurity, as her physical posture is a direct outward manifestation of her inward state of withdrawal. These physical cues do not just resemble sadness; they indicate it through an immediate, physical relationship to her emotional condition.

Sadness also communicates meaning through symbolic signs. Sadness's main symbolic gesture is her slumped body and the way she holds her arms. Her body bends inward, which shows she has little energy and wants to pull away from her surroundings. This kind of posture is commonly understood to symbolize feeling down, weak, or emotionally tired. Similarly, her hands stay close to her chest or lap, which symbolically shows a defensive or passive attitude, as if she feels overwhelmed or unable to participate. Her oversized sweater symbolizes comfort, protection, and emotional softness, suggesting that she is a character who carries vulnerability. The thick glasses symbolically represent caution, careful observation, and emotional depth, highlighting that Sadness often sees things differently from the other emotions. Altogether, her whole body language becomes a strong symbol of sadness itself, based on the shared idea that a heavy, inward, and collapsed posture represents negative and quiet emotions.

Anxiety

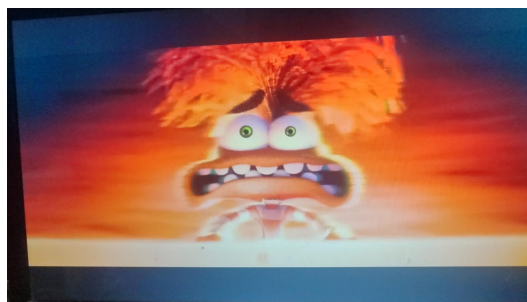


Figure 4. Anxiety (timestamp 01.16.20)

Anxiety represents Riley's worries, fears about the future, and her constant need to control possible dangers. This emotion appears hyperactive, intense, and easily overwhelmed. Anxiety often imagines worst case scenarios and tries to prevent them, even when the situation is not truly dangerous. As a new emotion, Anxiety quickly takes over because it believes it must protect Riley by preparing for every possible risk. In this picture, Anxiety shows an extremely exaggerated gesture. Its eyes are wide open, almost bulging, the mouth is stretched wide, showing clenched teeth and an open lower jaw. The character's hair is spread upward. The body appears stiff and lifted. From the movie, Anxiety is portrayed as restless, overthinking, and

constantly expecting something bad to happen. It often talks fast, moves fast, and reacts strongly to small problems. Anxiety tries to plan everything for Riley's future, but its extreme reactions sometimes create more chaos instead of helping (Nöth, 1995).

Based on the picture, Anxiety's gesture of wide-open eyes shows the icon sign, resembling the natural human reaction to sudden fear or shock, where the eyelids lift to take in more information. The stretched, open mouth with tightly clenched teeth imitates the expression of someone who is extremely stressed or about to scream. These gestures mirror realistic panic responses, making the character's emotional state recognizable immediately.

Anxiety's body language also contains strong index signs that directly point to its internal emotional state. The lifted shoulders and tense posture index physical tension, showing that the character is not relaxed but in a state of high alarm. The extreme widening of the eyes indexes hypervigilance being overly alert and scanning for danger. Even the upward spread of its hair can be read as an index of heightened stress levels, pointing to an emotional explosion. These gestures do not merely resemble fear; they actively indicate that the character is overwhelmed, pressured, and unable to calm down. The gestures of Anxiety also work symbolically because they rely on shared cultural meanings of what panic looks like. The exaggerated trembling energy symbolically represents overthinking and mental chaos, an accepted cultural idea of anxiety as something fast, uncontrollable, and overwhelming. Even the dramatic flaring of the mouth can symbolically represent the idea of freaking out, a concept that comes from cultural interpretation rather than direct physical similarity. These symbols help the audience understand Anxiety not only as fear, but as a more complex emotional pattern related to worry, pressure, and future concerns.

Envy



Figure 5. Envy (timestamp 23.09)

Envy is the emotion that represents jealousy, admiration, and the desire to have what others have inside Riley's mind. She often feels small, insecure, and easily impressed by things that seem better or more special than what she has. Even though she is tiny, Envy plays an important role in showing Riley's wish to fit in and be like others. In this scene, Envy is standing with her big sparkling eyes wide open and her small hands slightly raised. Her mouth is slightly open, the posture is open and leaning forward a bit. Her large eyes are the most dominant gesture with the upward-tilted head and soft smile. Throughout the movie, Envy is portrayed as curious, easily impressed, and always wishing for things she does not have. Envy's gestures are typically soft and expressive, showing her longing, admiration, and desire to belong. Her emotions contribute to Riley's wish to be accepted, to fit in, and to have qualities she sees in other people (Mujani et al., 2024).

Envy's gestures in this scene clearly use iconic signs because they imitate real human expressions of admiration and longing. Her wide, sparkling eyes look very similar to how a person looks when they see something they really like or want. The slight upward tilt of her head and her small open mouth also resemble the natural expression of someone who is impressed or amazed. Her tiny raised hand closely imitates the common gesture of reaching out toward something desirable. These gestures work iconically because they visually represent real-life emotions through physical resemblance.

Envy's body language also contains indexical signs that directly point to her emotional state. The way she leans forward indexes strong interest, her body naturally moves closer to something she wants. Her large eyes looking upward index admiration, as if she is focused on something better or more special than what she has. The slight lift of her hand indexes eagerness, showing that she is drawn toward whatever she desires.

Envy's gestures and appearance also carry symbolic meaning that depends on cultural understanding. Her small size symbolizes insecurity and feelings of inferiority, traits commonly associated with envy. Psychological theories of social perception also show that smaller figures are interpreted as less powerful or more insecure (Fiske, 2010). Her outward reach with the slightly raised hand combined with her forward-leaning posture relies on cultural convention to symbolize the abstract emotional concepts of longing, coveting, and reaching for what is desired but out of reach. Her huge eyes symbolically represent how envy makes someone overly focused on what others have, almost to the point of exaggeration. These symbolic signs help the audience understand her deeper emotional role inside Riley's mind.

Embarrassment



Figure 6. Embarrassment (timestamp 51.40)

Embarrassment is the emotion that represents shame, shyness, and pudency. He is depicted with his huge physical form with his big round nose. He is always embarrassed whenever Riley does something awkward in front of people and he will pull his hoodie strap to hide his face. Although he rarely contributes in the control panel, he is still an important emotion to show Riley that people might feel awkward if she does something embarrassing. Embarrassment moves rashly which made his attempt to hide or run away is more noticeable.

Embarrassment showing his gesture in this scene by pulling his hoodie strap to hide his big face and showing his shy eyebrow. Based on this scene, his outer brow raise shows the index of embarrassment or shyness. His gaze also describes his feeling of shyness and afraid of people's judgement of his act. His gestures which always put his hands in the pockets or holding his hoodie strap showing his characteristics which he wants to hide himself.

Based on his body shape, his huge and tall body describes an embarrassing feeling which feels like something really big and matters for people's perception. However he tries to hide his shame by pulling his hoodie strap, he will never be able to cover all of it because his nose will not be covered and it will be the only thing that shows from his face. His enormous nose is an icon of something he could never hide from anyone.

This scene is the scene when Embarrassment found Sadness was hiding in the back of book stacks. He immediately pulled his hoodie strap to show his shyness when Sadness asked him to not tell anyone else. Even though he was shy, he still tried to help Sadness by giving her more book stacks to hide her. This scene shows that he is a helpful character but his role as embarrassment makes him too shy to help people or express himself.

Ennui



Figure 7. Ennui (timestamp 20.42)

Ennui is Riley's emotion that represents her boredom, listlessness, and laziness. Ennui is defined as a character who refuses to physically participate in life. She will make her interaction more simple so she does not need to move a lot. She controls Riley's emotion lazily by lying on a couch and controls Riley's emotion through her cell phone so she does not have to go to the control panel. Her long and black hair with her straight yet messy style shows her carelessness of her appearance. Her knitted sweater and shocks emphasize her laziness as if she is in a comfort place like home. Her half-lidded eyes and limp body gesture indicate her laziness to even lift her own spine or open her eyes.

This scene is the introduction scene of every new emotion in Riley's mind. Ennui's gesture in this scene shows her characteristics as a listless character. Ennui was introduced while laying on a couch with her limp body while playing with her phone. Her pose shows that she lacked energy to interact with the others while she was comfortable with her laying position. Her awkward position while she was playing with her phone, describes her carelessness and ignorance of her surroundings. Her half-lidded eyes show her discouragement of introducing herself to the others. Her long pointy nose shows a contrast between her limp body as the symbol of boredom and her long pointy nose that shows her underestimate of her surroundings.

Disgust



Figure 8. Disgust (timestamp 02.40)

Disgust is Riley's emotion who protects Riley's physical and social well-being. She is a character with a function to spot anything gross or unacceptable. She is depicted with her short hair, curly eyelashes and fashionable dress. She is an important emotion to help Riley spot something unacceptable or gross both literally and figuratively. The most noticeable characteristic of Disgust as a character is her expression. She wears a permanent look of skeptical disdain and revulsion, with a slightly upturned nose and narrowed eyes.

In this scene, Riley was playing a hockey game and Fear makes her put her mouth guard to prevent the unwanted damage, but suddenly Disgust showed up and made Riley spit the mouth guard out because it is not hers. She will make a quick reflex to avoid Riley from something

disgusting whenever she sees something. Not only for something gross, Disgust is also useful to spot something strange. In another scene, Disgust may also detect something strange from Riley's friends' behaviour. She knew that Riley's friends tried to hide something from her. From these scenes, Disgust helps Riley to decide which choices are good for her physically and socially. She's in control of the need to repel, discard, and keep things clean and believes with absolute conviction that if it's not perfect, it is simply not worth touching.

From the picture, Disgust's hand gesture represents her revulsion of something she saw. Her hand movement shows the rejection as if she wants to put it away from her. Her closed eyes indicate that she does not even want to see the disgusting thing. Her mouth wide open and her tongue sticking out while her nose was wrinkling, describing her icon of the ultimate revulsion as if it is awful food that makes her want to vomit. According to Wiggins and Keevallik (2023), disgust can be shown through facial expression, sound, and even gesture. Facial expressions like wrinkling nose and sticking tongue out are parts of interactions that represent disgust. Disgust also often says "ew" and "yuck" whenever she feels disgusted. Those words are part of the disgust sound according to Wiggins and Keevallik (2023). Her other hand is on either her chest or her stomach like she sees something that makes her nauseous.

Fear

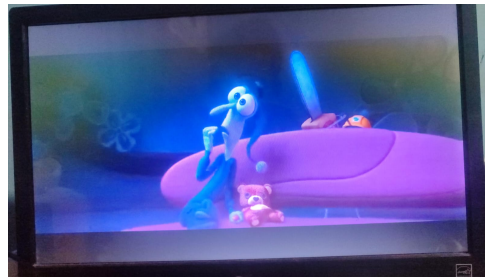


Figure 9. Fear (timestamp 13.01)

Fear is Riley's emotion who is described as a weak and nervous figure. He looks like a slender and skinny person with his old-fashioned outfit. His main job is to be concerned with what Riley can see. He is stretched taut and is almost always seen standing on his tiptoes, ready to jump or flee at any moment. He has large and round eyes that look around rapidly as his way to alert for danger. His hands are raised up and quivering, showing he is always alarmed and nervous.

The usual outfit he wears is a sweater vest with check and a bow tie. His way of dress is neat and old-fashioned. His neat outfit shows a contrast of his formal outfit that represents a well structured and smart person in cartoons, with his behaviour that is always nervous and aware of his surroundings which can make him scared. His big round eyes that often move around quickly represent his awareness of his surroundings. His big round eyes describe as if he can look around broadly to spot any danger.

The picture shows a scene where the headquarters got some renovation in the middle of the night due to the new emotions that were coming. The picture indicates that Fear was sitting on a couch with wide open eyes and one hand was holding his teddy bear, while the other one was in front of his mouth. His sitting pose indicates his awareness of what happened in that time. His uncomfortable sitting pose shows that he is ready to jump or run if something scares him. His eyes represent his shock of the sudden renovation occurring at the headquarters. His one hand in front of his mouth is an icon of anxiety and fear which is nail biting. According to Williams et al. (2007), the behaviour of nail biting can help some people to get a calming sensation when they feel stress or anxiety. His other hand that was holding his teddy bear shows that he tried to find something that can make him feel safe and comforted. Based on a research by Harlow in 1958, a baby monkey preferred to spend time with a soft cloth artificial mother figure that does not give

any food than with a hard wire artificial mother figure that offered milk. This research shows that both humans and animals (especially monkeys) tend to choose something soft and familiar to a mother figure like a teddy bear or a blanket to give the feeling of safety and comfort.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings show that each emotion character in *Inside Out 2* communicates meaning through a purposeful combination of iconic, indexical, and symbolic gestures, where movements like clenched fists, lowered shoulders, widened eyes, trembling actions, or small hand lifts function as visual signs of their inner emotional states. Iconic gestures resemble natural human expressions, allowing viewers to immediately recognize what each emotion is experiencing, while indexical gestures directly signal reactions such as stress, fear, excitement, or insecurity by illustrating the body's physical response. Symbolic gestures rely on shared cultural interpretations to make abstract ideas like bravery, sadness, caution, admiration, or disgust more visually accessible. Working together with posture and facial expression, these gestures construct a vivid representation of Riley's emotional landscape. Overall, the study demonstrates that animated movies intentionally craft gestures not only to support storytelling but also to enhance emotional communication, and through Peirce's semiotic framework, this research reveals how *Inside Out 2* achieves emotional depth and narrative clarity while contributing to broader discussions on visual semiotics and multimodal meaning-making.

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