

Semiotic Analysis of The Short Story (*A Mother Whose Child Is Kidnapped*) by Seno Gumira Ajidarma with Charles Sanders Peirce's Theory

**Diana Romdhoningsih^{1*}, Mahpudoh^{2*}, Lutfiyah³, Irma Nurmala Dewi⁴,
Sri Sukmawati⁵**

^{1,2,3,4,5} Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Faculty of
Teacher Training and Education, English Language Education

^{1,2,4,5} Universitas Bina Bangsa,
³Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta

e-mail : nhadiana51@gmail.com¹, udohmahfudoh751@gmail.com²,
irmanurmaladewi5@gmail.com⁴

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis cerpen "Ibu yang Anaknya Diculik" karya Seno Gumira menggunakan pendekatan semiotika, khususnya dalam kerangka teori Charles Sanders Peirce. Cerpen ini dipilih karena mengeksplorasi tema yang kompleks dan menarik perhatian pembaca melalui penggunaan tanda-tanda dan makna dalam cerita. Dalam cerpen ini, penulis menggunakan berbagai tanda untuk menyampaikan cerita dan menggambarkan konflik yang dihadapi oleh ibu yang anaknya diculik. Tanda-tanda indeks digunakan untuk menyampaikan jejak-jejak keberadaan anak yang hilang, seperti pakaian yang ditinggalkan atau surat ancaman yang diterima oleh ibu. Tanda simbol digunakan untuk mewakili perasaan kehilangan, harapan, atau ketakutan yang dialami oleh ibu. Tanda ikon digunakan untuk menggambarkan citra visual dan menghadirkan adegan yang menggugah emosi dalam pikiran pembaca.

Kata Kunci: Semiotika, Charles Sanders Peirce, analisis, cerpen, ibu, anak diculik, Seno Gumira.

Abstract

This study aims to apply a semiotic approach to the reading and interpreting of the short story "A Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" by Seno Gumira, specifically within the theoretical framework established by Charles Sanders Peirce. This short story was selected because it delves into intricate topics and captures the reader's attention through the creative use of ambiguous symbols and allusions throughout the narrative. The author of this short story uses various symbols to convey the story and describe the struggle the mother goes through after her child is taken from her. Index marks are used to convey any traces of the whereabouts of a missing child, such as clothing left behind or threatening letters that the mother received. Various symbols can be used to represent the mother's emotions, including those of loss, hope, and fear. The use of icons allows for the representation of visual images and presentation of scenes that aim to elicit a particular feeling in the reader's mind.

Keywords: Semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce, analysis, short stories, mothers, kidnapped children, Seno Gumira.

INTRODUCTION

In literary studies, semiotic analysis is a method that seeks to comprehend and decipher

the meanings of the signs present in a piece of literary art. Charles Sanders Peirce's theory is among the most influential semiotic hypotheses. Signs and how these signs relate to the interpretation of meaning are the subject of Peirce's theory. A literary work can be analyzed through semiotic studies. Semiotics is the study of literature that studies signs or meanings of objects, events, culture, and language. According to Sobur (2003:15), semiotics is a science or analytical method for studying signs. In line with this, Zoest (in Piliang 1999: 12) states that semiotics is the study of signs and the production of meaning. Zoest considers that a sign can be observed or made observable, which can be called a sign.

Pierce's semiotic theory identifies three main elements in a sign, namely the object (object), representamen (representamen), and interpretant (interpretant). The object refers to something represented by the sign, the representamen is the sign used to represent the object, and the interpretant is the understanding or interpretation that arises in the mind of the message recipient.

Pierce further disclosed that the various signs include icons, indexes, and symbols in their construction. An icon can be defined as a sign that is comparable to the thing that is being marked. Second, the index is a sign connected to something being pointed out or mentioned. The general index can be a substance or material object, natural phenomena, physical phenomena, sounds or voices, and scratches. Next, the third is the symbol. It is a conventional sign without any direct connection with the representamen or object (Budiman, 2005: 56-59).

Short stories are a subgenre of literature consisting of brief pieces of narrative prose and are simply short stories. Typically, a short story has only one primary plot, focusing on one or a small group of primary characters. Additionally, the setting is constrained, and the events take place over a brief time. It is common for a short story to communicate a message or thought or describe an interesting event or situation.

According to Zurrahmah, Rahayu & Pratiwi (2022), short stories are fictional prose stories that describe the author's thoughts, imagination, and feelings in a fictitious and relatively short manner. In general, short stories have a straightforward format that begins with presenting the characters and the contexts in which they operate, continues with creating the challenges or obstacles the characters face, and concludes with a solution or an ending. There are numerous categories that short stories can fall into, including drama, romance, mystery, science fiction, fantasy, or even a combination of these categories.

The ability to convey much information in a small space is an essential quality of short stories. When writing short stories, authors need to be able to effectively communicate concepts and narratives using only a small number of words. Authors frequently employ complex linguistic styles when writing short stories and rely heavily on concise dialogue, descriptive passages, and narrative elements to create an atmosphere and develop characters.

The short story "A Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" is a short narrative that describes a mother who faces the tragedy of losing her child due to kidnapping. In this context, semiotic analysis can help to understand the various signs contained in the story, including signs related to sadness, loss, and hope. In the context of this short story, the object is the loss of a kidnapped child. The representation can be a physical description of a sad mother, a narrative about a desperate search, or a dialogue between the mother and the people around her. The interpretation is the feeling of sadness, loss, or hope that arises in the reader's mind when reading the short story. You can find examples of these three types of signs in the short story. For example, a physical description of a sad mother can become an icon because it visually reflects feelings of sadness. Narratives about desperate searches can serve as index marks because they link searching to the loss of a child. Meanwhile, the dialogue between the mother and the people around her can be a symbolic sign because it relies on words and conventions of verbal communication.

By using Peirce's semiotic theory, this research can conduct an in-depth analysis of the short story "The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" and reveal its hidden meanings. This semiotic analysis can help to understand the various signs contained in the story.

METHOD

This investigation uses a qualitative descriptive method, presenting the data as written phrases, words, and sentences rather than numerical values. The method of semiotics based on Charles Sanders Peirce's theory was utilized in this research. The data source from this study is the short story *Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The data used in this study are signs based on Peirce's semiotics contained in the short story *Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma.

Semiotic analysis research, especially in the context of the short story "A Mother whose Child Was Kidnapped," can use Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Peirce developed a sign system known as the semiotic triad, which consists of an object, a representant, and an interpretant. In this short story semiotics research, we can analyze the various semiotic elements in the story using Peirce's approach. The general steps that can be followed in applying the method of semiotic analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory are: 1). Identify and classify signs, 2). Define object 3). Interpretant analysis 4). Associate it with category Peirce 5)—analysis of context and meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The identification and semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce use three stages of trichotomy in the short story *The Mother whose Child was Abducted* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, namely:

Representaments

The American logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce is credited with developing the theory of semiotics, also known as Peircean semiotics. Within this theory, the term "representamen" is utilized. In a sign system, "representamen" refers to the components that stand in for or in place of something else. In Peirce's semiotic theory, representamen has a complex relationship with objects and interpretants. Not only are representations similar in appearance to what they stand for, but they also can generate interpretations that shift and change based on the circumstances and the level of comprehension of the individual beholder.

The short story *Mother Whose Child Was Abducted* which is included a representative, is the word "Civilians." Civilians, in their true meaning, relate to residents or people who are not members of the armed forces or the military. In a different context, the term "civilian" can be understood to refer to a citizen or an average citizen and denote the position of those who are powerless to take any action because they lack authority. In addition, when this power is lacking, it is not uncommon for individuals to mysteriously vanish because they have been kidnapped or murdered. After all, the presence of these individuals is regarded as a threat to the leaders or authorities.

Icons, Indexes, and Symbols

1. Icon

Icons are symbols that have a natural connection to one another and mark a situation to explain or reveal an object. One of the following passages from Seno Gumira Ajidarma's short story "The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" contains the object of time that serves as the story's icon. These passages are listed below.

Quote 1

"Mother slumped in the chair like a dead person. Doors, windows, television, telephones, furniture, books, teacups. They were still as they were before, but ten years had passed. Mother is now living in the living room, still drooping like ten years ago. Her hair, face, and clothes seemed to indicate the existence of time. "Time" is described as a long enough distance for Mother to go through her loneliness. Even though a significant amount of time has passed, Mother has not changed. Time is a sign that the mother and the things around her show that nothing has changed since before, and this is a sign that time has passed. Aside from that, the quotation mentioned above also explains the Mother icon. Another connotation associated with the icon of the mother is that of a person who

sits patiently at home awaiting the return of her loved ones. The following is yet another quotation that illustrates the Mother icon.

Quote 2

"... But which mother who has lost a child without explanation can be calm and happy with just her mind, without bringing her feelings into it? How can my feelings make me sure if Satria does disappear one day? Yes, just like that... Even dead people can still see their corpses!" The quote above shows that a mother, who loves her child with all her heart, is worried about her child's condition and hopes her child can return home soon. The presence of a mother figure in this setting is a reminder that we have a family back at home eagerly awaiting our return there. The anxiety a mother feels when she doesn't know where or how her child is depicted perfectly by the word "loss of a child."

2. Index

An index is a sign related to a thing marked or a reference. The general index can be a substance or material object, natural phenomena, physical phenomena, sounds or voices, and scratches. A deep longing marks the index in the story *Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped*. The quotation showing the index in the short story "The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" by Seno Gumira Ajidarma is as follows:

Quote 3

"Humph! You! How can humans be brothers with monkeys? What's more, if it's not threatening, right? "Monkeys" denote people whose behavior is bad, immoral, and uncivilized. A negative emotional cause is indicated when the name of an animal is mentioned, and it is demeaning to refer to someone or something as being similar to a particular animal. In addition, the following quote provides an additional indicator that can be gleaned from a mother's yearning.

Quote 4

"Sometimes I dream about the two of you, but when I wake up, I still have the memory of you both, so vividly as if you had never died. I can't separate dreams, memories, everyday reality anymore". The mother character's dream shows a longing for the people she cares about, specifically her children and her husband, as shown by the quote. The fact that you are experiencing longing is the root cause of the fact that you have difficulty differentiating between reality and things that are merely dreams.

3. Symbol

Symbols are conventional signs without any direct connection with the representamen or object. In the short story "The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, there are symbols like those in the following quotation.

Quote 5

"Sir, sometimes I see him in that chair, reading the newspaper, watching television, commenting on the country's situation. It was as if he was always sitting there, father, wearing a T-shirt and sarong, sipping hot tea, eating fried bananas provided by Si Mbok, then talking about the world." The quote above is a symbol that describes activities and habits that are often carried out by the community, especially among gentlemen. When relaxing, being active can be demonstrated by doing things like reading newspapers and watching television, as well as having conversations with friends about the current state of affairs in the nation. It has become a routine activity carried out in daily life. There are also additional symbols, such as those in the following quotation.

Quote 6

"The killers now want to be president!" The symbols in these quotes are leaders, symbolized by the words president and killers, usually related to politics or revenge. This symbol illustrates that leaders or rulers do everything they can to become a leader of the country.

Interpret

Interpretation is the understanding or interpretation that arises in the mind of the recipient of the message. Based on the description that has been explained, it shows that the short story

The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped by Seno Gumira Ajidarma leads to injustice. The signs described illustrate how a mother misses her child and feels injustice towards her missing child until ten years have passed and their fate is unknown. This short story discusses socio-political criticism. How can a mother file a lawsuit for injustice due to her child's kidnapping? The short story *The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped by Seno Gumira Ajidarma* criticizes the many injustices experienced by society due to the political interests of leaders. It tells vividly the picture of the New Order era, which committed acts of violence. If someone whose existence becomes a threat to the rulers, it will be eliminated by kidnapping and even killing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the meaning contained in the short story "The Mother Whose Child Was Kidnapped" by Seno Gumira Ajidarma leads to injustice. The meaning can be seen from signs based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic concept, which consists of representant, object, and interpretant. As a result, civil society is currently in a position where it cannot take any action because it lacks the power to do so. The authorities robbed a mother of her child, who then took the child away—revealing the details of his legal action regarding the unjust treatment of his son, who had no idea where or how he had ended up. They were condemned as evil, immoral, and uncivilized, the behavior of those who kidnap people and hold them for ransom or another gain. It demonstrates that those who aspire to rule a country do everything in their power to remove any obstacles in their path to the top of the political food chain.

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