

**SEMIOTIC STUDY IN SOME DISASTER CARICATURE IN THE  
JAKARTA POST NEWSPAPER**

**A Thesis**

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## ABSTRAK

Tesis yang berjudul *semiotic study of some disaster caricature in The Jakarta Post* ini menganalisis kombinasi *linguistic sign* dan *nonlinguistic sign* sehingga menghasilkan makna pesan yang dibuat oleh pembuat karikatur. Data penelitian ini diperoleh dari koran harian nasional *The Jakarta Post* dari edisi Februari 2006 sampai Februari 2007. Jenis karikatur yang diteliti adalah karikatur bencana. Analisis karikatur ini terdiri atas analisis gambar dan tulisan, oleh sebab itu pendekatan Semiotic digunakan. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori tanda yang dikemukakan oleh Peirce yaitu Ikon, Index, dan Simbol. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan pesan makna yang terkandung dalam karikatur bencana. Dari hasil penelitian diperoleh kesimpulan bahwa makna karikatur bencana tidak semuanya bertujuan mengkritik, menyindir dan mencemooh, melainkan juga bertujuan sebagai hiburan sebagai bentuk dari kreativitas, kesenangan, atau luapan hati dari pembuat karikatur.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

The development of mass media influences caricature development. Caricature is not odd in our mind anymore. Even in most of daily and weekly newspaper, publisher has presented caricature in each publishing. Caricature has its special column in mass media that is not only written language but also pictorial language in mass media. Caricature has the same function as written language in spite of containing humorous picture. Both function as a medium of communication or, in other word, an alternative way of communication. Through picture, caricaturists express their ideas or opinions as response to the phenomena happening in society.

The form of communication can be divided into two kinds, verbal and non verbal communication. Verbal communication deals with words and their grammatical arrangement. In other words, non verbal communication deals with language as embedded process of human competence to convey idea, emotion, desire, critical, etc without using human voice. Talking about non verbal communication means talk about gesture and picture of caricature as well.

Caricature has been known for long time ago in Europe. The meaning of caricature referring to The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1990) was "comically distorted drawing or likeness, done with the purpose of satirizing or ridiculing its subject, whether it be a person, type, or action" (p. 867).



Actually, understanding caricature is quite difficult. A reader must be critical with the signs and able to correlate the signs to a phenomenon which happens at that time, in order to know the purpose of caricature commonly implied. In identifying the meaning of a caricature, we need specific knowledges; knowledge about signs and the event presented or context. According to Peirce (1931), sign is divided into three types. They are icon, symbol and index (cited in Hawkes, 2003, p. 105). These knowledges are important to avoid the occurrence of misinterpretation.

Readers of caricature have different educational and sociocultural backgrounds. These differences can influence their interpretation. Consequently, caricature will be interpreted differently.

Although caricature has its special place in mass media, common people will have difficulty in interpreting the meaning without linguistic sign in caricature. Linguistic sign can help a reader to catch the meaning of a caricature. Relating both linguistic and non linguistic signs with the context, a reader can predict the message and catch the purpose of caricaturist in describing the natural phenomena. Disaster caricatures are chosen as the data because it is interesting to see the local perspective about the continuity of disaster happening in Indonesia through caricature.

Almost all caricatures contain sense of humor. As the result, a reader forgets to analyze the message on them. Humorous value becomes the key of caricaturist to guide the reader. Sometimes, the message of signs in caricature can not be interpreted slightly, as seen bellow:

## CONCLUSION

Caricature which is known as an amusing picture can not be considered as additional tool of communication. There are many social phenomena that have been described into caricature. A caricature may carry more than one message depend on reader's interpretation. Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, caricature can not be identified if it is separated from the context. A caricature is drawn based on an phenomenon which happens at that time. Usually, the distorted drawing contains of moral value that reflect caricaturist's opinion about the current issue in social life. The continuity of disasters is a current issue in Indonesia that is reflected in some caricatures in Indonesian Mass Media.

Stating a meaning of each caricature is by analyzing each sign on the caricature. All of signs are identified into the Peirce's theory about sign. They are *icon* that can be defined as physical resemblance between the represented thing and its picture. *Symbol*, we can call it as conventional relationship between the thing and its reference. The third is *index*. It is a sign in which the relationship is a causal kind. The identified meaning in caricature can be explored by combining each signs with context situation.

Finding the messages of disaster caricatures is quite difficult, because the object of caricature is a kind of disaster. In other word, by including public figure in disaster caricature reader can be helped to find the message. Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that caricatures which are completed with

public figure convey criticizing and satirizing message. In contrast, caricatures which are not included by public figure are purely aimed as entertaining caricature. From this statement, it can be said that the disasters which happen in Indonesian are contributed by human.

It is a good strategy to use disaster caricature as a tool to influence the people's attention about global warming. By appearing an analysis of caricature in mass media, the people's critical ability can be stimulated in considering some cases. It is expected to the caricaturists to make any progress in describing disasters into caricature.

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