

**AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLS IN BARACK OBAMA CARICATURES**

**A Thesis**

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## ABSTRAK

Dalam skripsi ini, penulis membahas simbol-simbol yang terdapat pada karikatur-karikatur Barack Obama. Karikatur-karikatur tersebut di ambil dari tiga koran yang terbit di Amerika yaitu *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, dan *The Chicago Tribune*. Secara khusus penulis menganalisis makna konotasi dari simbol-simbol pada karikatur-karikatur Barack Obama. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini berupa *content analysis* dimana penulis mengambil karikatur tersebut sebagai data analisis.

Pembahasan ini termasuk dalam ruang lingkup Semiotik yang merujuk kepada dua teori, yakni: Charles S. Peirce's *Symbol*, and Roland Barthes' *Order of Significations*. Adapun tujuan dari penulisan skripsi ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi makna konotasi yang terdapat dalam karikatur Barack Obama yang disampaikan melalui *linguistic sign* dan *non-linguistic sign*.

Hasil analisis memperlihatkan bahwa karikatur Barack Obama menciptakan pelbagai makna konotasi terhadap image Barack Obama itu sendiri sebagai Presiden Amerika ke-44. Makna-makna konotasi yang terungkap adaah dengan cara mengaitkannya dengan konteks berdasarkan latar belakang sejarah, kepribadian Barack Obama, politik, atau latar dari karikatur, sehingga menciptakan kesan negatif atau positif Barack Obama. Kesan tersebut bergantung pada persepsi pembaca. Jadi, konteks berperan penting dalam menentukan makna-makna konotasi yang terkandung dalam karikatur-karikatur Barack Obama.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. Background of the Study

Language, as a tool for communication, helps people to say everything that exist in their mind through several ways especially in some symbol. Ferdinand de Saussure says that language is a system of signs that express ideas (Ajid Che Kob, 1993: 19).

In the expansion of science, the pictorial information is more interested to express our idea than the written information. Comparing with verbal medium, picture is a speedy medium to make an understanding. The picture stand by itself, has a comprehend subject, and has arbitrary and conventional symbol. The making of communication picture aims to encourage a message. There are three kinds of communication picture form; they are illustration, institutional symbol, and caricature.

Caricature is a medium of delivery message which has simple picture with anatomy error. Although caricature has a simple picture, but we must to study carefully and has an enough humorous concepts. So, it is not easy to make a caricature in order to have the best message and mission. Actually, the real meaning of caricature is a "loaded portrait" that its movement space and its humorous focus on visual form. Caricature creation in newspaper, commonly, explains a certain public figure face, that play role in an event or problem. Nevertheless, caricature itself is only element to clarify a message in it.

Below here, I give one example of interested caricature. This caricature is taken from "Kompas" newspaper at July of fourth, 2008. Denotatively, that caricature explains about some students take away by force to go to the balloon. In the other hand, actually, the creator tries to express the situation and condition that is happened in that time. The writer can say this caricature aims to criticising the government to reduce the education fee.

**Picture 1.** The Condition of Education Fee in Indonesia



*(Source: KOMPAS, edition on Friday 4 July 2008)*

The phenomenon of caricature can be also found in American Presidential candidates especially in Barack Obama's figure. Barack Obama becomes the President of America in period of 2009 until 2014. He is the first black-skin person who becomes the 44th president of America. He makes a new phenomenon toward president of America. This phenomenon gives some controversial for the people in the world especially American.

Many caricatures which are related to him are created and published in many famous American magazines and newspapers. Those caricatures must contain certain purpose and meaning which is delivered through the symbol.

So in this research, the writer interests to analyze the symbol. Symbol is the

sign that the form does not resemble its meaning. Therefore, the writer needs to learn the relationship between the form and meaning of the symbol first to get the interpretation of it. Not only the denotative meaning, but also the connotative meaning which occurs in that symbol. In this research, the writer is going to focus on the symbol as found on the caricature of Barack Obama. The writer chooses Barack Obama, the 44th President of America, as the data of analysis. The data are taken from in Internet.

### **1. 2. Identification of Problems**

Based on the background above, this writing attempts to study about semiotics elements that occur in Barack Obama caricature. However, it is still too general to analyze so that the writer will concern it with two main problems, and they are:

- 1) What are the symbols that occur in Barack Obama caricatures in internet?
- 2) What is the connotative meaning of the each symbols?

### **1. 3. Objective of the Study**

Generally, caricature is one of object using by someone to say their opinion about something. In this research, the writer first wants to know what symbols are used to create their aims. Then, the writes wants to know what connotative meaning occurs in the symbol. Finally, the writer wants to know how someone evaluates Barack Obama.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

As the pictorial information, caricature use and manipulate sign which point to the story of an event or a famous person. The usage of it purposes to make a simple way in deliver a message. These facts are also found in the Barack Obama caricatures in three newspapers of America such as The New York Times, The Washington Times, and The Chicago Tribune.

Having analyzed the previous data, the writer concludes that there are some signs, especially for symbols, found in Barack Obama caricature. There are 78 symbols in 14 data of Barack Obama caricatures. The writer also finds the same symbols in the different caricatures of Barack Obama such as Muslim costume, American flag, the smiling face, the fist, a costume of hero man, the presidential tribune, the endorsers, a beard, the word of "GITMO", and the great-coat.

The symbols have its connotative meaning which is derived from its denotative meaning and some influenced factors like history, personality, politic, setting, etc. From these caricatures, the writer finds 21 connotative meanings (26,92%) which is influenced by history background, 16 connotative meanings (20,51%) by personality, 28 connotative meanings (35,90%) by politic, and 13 connotative meanings (16,67%) by setting. Besides, it is possible that a sign or a symbol has many connotative meanings because of its arbitrariness. The symbols are used to interpret the image of Barack Obama as the President of America with a new phenomenon by fasten upon the meaning of symbols depend on its context.

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