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Representation of Social Critique: The Satirical Flower Wreath from the Student Executive Board of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University, to Prabowo and Gibran

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji penggunaan karangan bunga sebagai alat untuk menyampaikan kritik sosial dan politik oleh Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM) Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Airlangga. Dalam konteks ini, karangan bunga yang biasanya diasosiasikan dengan penghormatan, kasih sayang, atau belasungkawa, diubah menjadi media sindiran dengan pesan-pesan satir yang menargetkan Prabowo Subianto dan Gibran Rakabuming Raka. BEM memanfaatkan simbolisme dalam bunga untuk mengungkapkan ketidakpuasan terhadap kebijakan dan tindakan politik kedua tokoh tersebut. Melalui teori semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce, penelitian ini menganalisis elemen-elemen visual dalam karangan bunga, seperti teks, warna, dan desain, yang dipadukan dengan sindiran humoris. Pesan-pesan ini disebarluaskan melalui media sosial, sehingga mampu menjangkau khalayak yang lebih luas dan memicu diskusi publik. Strategi tersebut mencerminkan kreativitas generasi muda dalam menggunakan elemen estetika sebagai alat komunikasi untuk mengkritik isu-isu sosial yang penting. Pendekatan ini menunjukkan bahwa karangan bunga tidak lagi sekadar benda dekoratif, melainkan medium kaya makna yang menyampaikan kritik tajam secara simbolis. Transformasi fungsi karangan bunga ini menjadi bukti bahwa seni dan kreativitas dapat digunakan untuk menarik perhatian masyarakat terhadap isu-isu politik secara efektif. Selain itu, karangan bunga satir ini menjadi alat yang mendorong masyarakat untuk berpikir kritis dan terlibat dalam percakapan tentang keadilan sosial dan demokrasi.
Kata kunci: Analisis Semiotika, Komunikasi, Karangan Bunga, Kritik Sosial, Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Airlangga.

ABSTRACT

This article examines how the Student Executive Board (SEB) of Airlangga University's Faculty of Social and Political Sciences utilized flower arrangements as a medium for social and political criticism. Traditionally associated with respect, affection, or condolences, these flowers were transformed into satirical tools, carrying messages aimed at critiquing Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. The SEB leveraged the symbolism of flowers to express dissatisfaction with the policies and actions of these political figures. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, the study delves into the visual elements of the arrangements, such as text, colors, and designs, blended with satirical humor. These messages were further amplified through social media, allowing them to reach a broader audience and spark public discourse. This strategy showcases the younger generation's creativity in utilizing aesthetic elements to communicate their critiques of pressing social issues. This approach highlights how flowers have evolved from mere decorative items into meaningful tools for conveying sharp criticism symbolically. By transforming flower arrangements in this way, the study demonstrates how art and creativity can be effectively used to draw public attention to political issues, fostering critical thinking and encouraging dialogue about social justice and democracy.

Keywords: *Analysis Semiotic, Communication, Wreath, Social Criticism, Student Executive Board Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Airlangga University.*

Introduction

The Student Executive Board of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Airlangga University (BEM FISIP Unair) utilized social media to convey criticism toward Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka through a "Satirical Flower Wreath" uploaded to their official account. Flower wreaths, which typically symbolize respect, were transformed into a medium of sharp, humorous satire to voice dissatisfaction with the policies or political actions of the two figures. Social media played a crucial role in disseminating this critique, enabling their message to quickly reach a broad audience, including the general public and mass media. Posts on platforms such as Twitter (X) and Instagram managed to garner thousands of views, comments, and shares, amplifying the impact of the critique while creating a space for dialogue between the critics and the criticized, which could spark further discussion. Satire was used as a creative way to make the criticism more accessible, while its inherent humor and sarcasm allowed the message to spread rapidly and invite deep discussion regarding social issues or political policies.

Flower wreaths carry a profound meaning as an artistic medium capable of conveying social messages, including critiques of specific policies or actions (Siti Fatimah, 2020). Originally known as expressions of affection, honor, or condolences, the function of flower wreaths has evolved into a medium for voicing social and political dissatisfaction, reflecting the public's creativity in communicating regarding existing issues. The younger generation increasingly utilizes flower wreaths in protest actions as a symbol of creative resistance that effectively attracts public and media attention (Andriani and Rahman, 2021). Symbolism within flower wreaths such as the choice of types, colors, and floral arrangements can construct a narrative that supports social critique, making it more than just a communication tool, but also a medium rich in meaning and interpretation. In a complex world, the use of aesthetic elements in flower wreaths helps people convey relevant messages, generate broader dialogue, and draw attention to important issues. This evolution shows that art and creativity function not only as individual expression, but also as tools to drive social change, build constructive dialogue, and raise awareness of society's needs and aspirations. With their aesthetic appeal and symbolism, flower wreaths represent an important step toward creating a more democratic and responsive society.

Satire is a form of critique that uses humor, irony, or sarcasm to sharply yet indirectly highlight social, political,and cultural flaws, errors, or anomalies. By exposing ironies or paradoxes in policies or actions, satire encourages society to reflect critically on social issues without engaging in direct confrontation. In Indonesia, satire appears in various forms, such as memes, street art, and creative actions like the satirical flower wreath by the Student Executive Board of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University, criticizing Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Historically, satire has been used since Ancient Greece through the Enlightenment to oppose unfair policies or power structures. In the modern era, satire remains relevant through various digital media and stage arts, despite often facing challenges such as the risk of misinterpretation or controversy due to touching on sensitive issues. Nevertheless, satire remains a powerful tool to strengthen democracy, exercise social control, and create a broad space for discussion by combining humor and critical messaging to draw attention to vital issues.

In Mamat Alkatiri's stand-up comedy roasting study (Dimas, P. S., Didik, H., 2024), it highlights how Mamat Alkatiri uses stand-up comedy with satirical elements to convey social critique. Through

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, the message delivered is understood through signs, objects, and interpretations,using a straightforward comedic approach and sharp analogies. Similarly, in the study on dark jokes and satire by Coki Pardede on social media (Amir, A. K., Lailiyah, F., & Ningsih, M., 2021), it shows how controversial humor can open spaces for discussion on social issues via digital platforms. Meanwhile, regarding the role of social media in educating the public during the Covid-19 pandemic (Dwi Susanti, Lintang Muliawanti, 2022),content analysis was used to discuss themes such as health protocols, social impacts, and the economy. In contrast, the "Satirical Flower Wreath by BEM Airlangga University" takes a unique approach. It highlights how a flower wreath, usually used as a symbol of respect, is transformed into a medium of social critique. By employing Peirce's semiotic theory, the flower wreath is analyzed through visual elements such as text, color,and design to reveal the satirical message. Unlike the verbal humor in stand-up comedy or dark jokes, the use of a flower wreath merges visual symbolism with irony to craft an effective critique. This approach delivers both an emotional and intellectual impact to the audience, making it a creative way to convey social messages.

METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, employing content analysis techniques. This study focuses on a descriptive approach aimed at depicting various aspects or characteristics of a message or text (Rumata,2017). Qualitative content analysis centers its attention on the aspects, context, and characteristics of the flower wreath that have been identified and categorized based on keywords by the researcher. Qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to understand the text by analyzing language style usage, particularly words or phrases containing satirical meaning, thereby generating a more structured model or conceptual system (Martono, 2010).

This study is grounded in Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, which is also utilized as the technique for analyzing data. According to Peirce, semiotic analysis involves three interconnected main aspects that yield the interpretation or meaning of a sign. These three aspects are frequently referred to as the triangle of meaning (Luthfi, 2020).

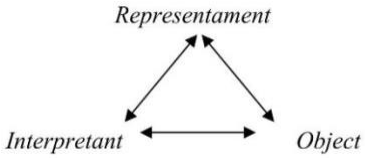


Figure 1

The representamen or sign is the primary concept that serves as the object of analysis, wherein the sign contains meaning as an expression of the interpretation of the message intended to be conveyed. Simply put,a sign usually takes the form of a visual or physical shape that can be perceived through human senses. The object or referent of the sign refers to the social context that forms the basis of meaning or reference for the sign in its application. The interpretant or sign usage refers to the thought process of an individual who understands the sign and connects it to a specific meaning, namely the comprehension or interpretation in someone's mind regarding the object referenced by the sign.

The relationship between the representamen and the representamen itself includes several categories. A *qualisign* refers to a representamen that is related to a specific quality or attribute, such

as color or other physical characteristics. A *sin sign* is a representamen related to an actual fact or real-world event that directly depicts something based on the occurring situation. Meanwhile, a *legisign* involves a representamen linked to a rule or regulation, where the sign represents a norm or convention that governs the understanding of a specific object or situation.

The relationship between the object and the type of representamen can be categorized into three main forms based on their characteristics (Toyada, 2017). First, an *icon* is a relationship where the representamen bears a structural similarity or descriptive resemblance to the referenced object, facilitating identification through similar visual or physical traits. Second, an *index* describes a causal relationship between the object and the representamen, where the existence of the sign is directly tied to cause and effect originating from its object. Third, a *symbol* reflects a relationship established through a specific agreement or convention, making the understanding of the sign dependent on mutually agreed-upon rules or provisions.

The relationship between the interpretant and the representamen involves several categories reflecting different levels of certainty and meaning. A *rheme* is a representamen that still holds various possibilities of interpretation, providing broad leeway for the interpreter to decipher its meaning. A *dicent* or *decisign* refers to a representamen that already points to a real fact with a more definitive meaning, rendering the interpretation relatively clearer. Meanwhile, an *argument* is a representamen connected to a specific rule or proposition, where its meaning depends on applicable rules or principles that provide a more structured and valid interpretation.

The object of this research is a flower wreath created by the Student Executive Board of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University, for the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia for 2024, Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, on October 22, 2024. As a form of expression of dissatisfaction by the Student Executive Board of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University, toward the policies or stances demonstrated by Prabowo and Gibran, the flower wreath contained satirical sentences or phrases written in a satirical language style. This flower wreath which traditionally appears as a gesture of honor was filled with satirical messages criticizing both political figures.



Figure 2

This study utilizes secondary data sources, including academic journals and online news reports. The initial stage of the analysis involves identifying the signs present in the post, subsequently categorizing them as objects, and constructing interpretations in accordance with the representamen observed in the post.

FINDINGS

These findings are grounded in the three core components of Peirce's semiotic theory: Representamen,Object, and Interpretant. These three core components are interconnected in forming the meaning of a sign.The representamen refers to the visible sign or physical element that can be observed, such as images, text,and symbols present in visual media. The object represents the referent of the sign, such as the context or event intended to be conveyed or critiqued by the creator of the sign. The interpretant is the meaning or message generated from the interaction between the representamen and the object, which is then interpreted by the audience based on their background and experience. These three components work simultaneously to create a message that not only conveys information but also constructs a specific interpretation in the mind of the audience.

Peirce's Semiotic Theory	Findings	Analysis
Representament		The phrase "congratulations" can be interpreted as a form of communication aimed at acknowledging someone's presence before others, demonstrating attention toward that individual, or reflecting the social relationship or status between interacting individuals or groups (Kim et al., 2018). However, the word "congratulations" in this context, which is followed by the phrase "on the inauguration of a ruthless human rights-abusing general and a 2.3 GPA professor as president and vice president of the Republic of Indonesia born from an illegitimate constitutional womb," contains a message that conveys disappointment. This message is delivered in the form of satirical irony expressing sharp critique.

		The elements of fire and skull symbolize threats, destruction, or something bad. These elements emphasize that the inauguration event is regarded as a disaster or a threat to democracy. Meanwhile, the cobweb element is often associated with something frightening and full of traps, conveying a critique of political manipulation.
		The photos of Prabowo and Gibran placed within gold frames and decorated with flowers indicate that the flower wreath was addressed to both figures. Typically, gold frames and flowers symbolize respect; however, in this context, these elements are used ironically to convey satire aimed at Prabowo and Gibran.
Object	The inauguration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka as President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia	The inauguration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka as President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia represents the object of this sign, referring to the political event of their inauguration.The text and symbols used in this sign do not merely convey information, but also embed sharp critique against both the legitimacy and morality of the inauguration process. Phrases such as "Illegitimate Constitutional Womb" explicitly express dissatisfaction and question the validity of the ongoing political process. Through provocative choice of words, the creator of the sign attempts to emphasize that this inauguration is viewed as a violation of constitutional principles or justice. Supporting symbols such as fire,skulls, and dark backgrounds further reinforce this critical message by creating an impression of threat or destruction, reflecting a negative perspective toward the political event in question. This demonstrates that the sign functions not only as a communication medium, but also as a tool to convey protest rich in symbolic meaning.

Interpretant	Satire aimed at political processes and criticism of democracy	the interpretant conveys the meaning that the flower wreath serves as a form of political protest. The visual and textual elements create a negative and sarcastic impression of the depicted figures, while indicating the viewpoint that the inauguration process is considered illegitimate or detrimental to democratic principles.

DISCUSSION

Satire in the context of social critique functions as a reflection for society so that they can honestly and critically evaluate themselves. The primary function of satire is to expose weaknesses within both systems and individual behavior, while potentially serving as an effective tool for social control and strengthening democracy. Through an approach that combines humor with sharp critique, satire possesses the capability to encourage society to think deeply about various social issues. By delivering messages that are entertaining yet striking, satire frequently succeeds in highlighting important issues that might otherwise be overlooked in daily routine. Beyond entertainment, satire creates opportunities for society to realize the complexity of the social problems they face and invites them into constructive dialogue regarding possible solutions. Thus, satire plays a crucial role in opening society's eyes to new, more critical, and comprehensive perspectives regarding their social environment (Amir et al., 2021).

Floral arrangements have long been known as symbols of affection, respect, or grief. However, over time and with increasing social awareness, floral arrangements have evolved into a means of voicing dissatisfaction with social and political situations. This demonstrates that art, even in its simplest form, can serve as an effective medium to convey societal aspirations and voices. The use of floral arrangements as social critique reflects a shift in how society communicates and interacts with existing issues. In this context, floral arrangements are no longer viewed merely as decorations, but as symbols of society's feelings and hopes waiting to be conveyed. Society is now more creative in expressing dissatisfaction, and floral arrangements have become an effective way to deliver complex and critical messages. By utilizing floral arrangements, the public can create space to draw attention to and discuss issues relevant to their lives (Bayu et al., 2022).

The choice of flower types, colors, and layouts can produce a narrative that strengthens the intended critique.For instance, specific flower colors can reflect distinct emotions or messages, while the shape and arrangement of flowers can highlight the condition or situation being exposed. As such, floral arrangements are no longer just communication tools; they become media rich in meaning and varied interpretations. This enables the public to convey deeper and more nuanced messages. The development of using floral arrangements as a communication tool in social critique indicates that society is now more creative in voicing opinions. In an increasingly complex world where social and political issues are often difficult to digest, floral arrangements offer a simple yet effective way to express key messages. By leveraging aesthetic elements, the public can capture attention and initiate broader dialogue regarding the challenges faced, underscoring that art and creativity can act as engines of social change (Furqon, 2024).

In the semiotic analysis of the satirical flower wreath installed by the Student Executive Board (BEM) of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Airlangga University, the frame/box design

of the flower wreath can be interpreted through Charles Sanders Peirce's "triangle of meaning" theory. This theory explains the relationship between sign, object, and interpretant in the process of meaning-making. The frame design of the flower wreath functions as a symbol in this context; while square shapes are often associated with stability, strength, and solidity in visual culture symbolizing structure and orderthis contrasts sharply with the core message intended by the bouquet. By utilizing a box design, BEM FISIP Airlangga University aims to emphasize that their social critique is not merely a chaotic outburst of emotion, but structured and serious. The interpretant of this box design may vary among viewers: for some, the square form signifies firmness and courage to critique, yet for others, this format may give the impression that the critique operates within specific boundaries, potentially hinting at constraints on freedom of expression. Consequently, the box design not only delivers a clear message but also opens room for broader discussion and interpretation regarding the nature of social critique.

The object referred to here is the social and political background framing the placement of the flower wreath. The case concerns the inauguration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, alongside related issues such as Human Rights (HAM) violations and nepotism. The box design can be interpreted as an organized expression of dissatisfaction toward the existing political situation. By choosing a structured format,BEM FISIP Airlangga University demonstrates that their critique is not a mere emotional reaction, but the outcome of deliberate and premeditated thought.

In this context, resentment refers to an emotional reaction arising in response to existing social and political conditions. The box design reflects an effort to organize resentment, wherein students feel the need to express their dissatisfaction in a clear and structured manner. This shows that they do not merely feel anger or disappointment, but also possess the desire to convey their critique through a more formal and planned approach. Furthermore, the term "internal" refers to the intrinsic aspect of the conveyed message. In this case, the box design reflects careful thought and thorough planning by BEM FISIP Airlangga University, indicating that they carefully considered the best way to deliver their critique and selected a design capable of attracting attention and sparking societal discussion. This internal aspect also encompasses the underlying values and beliefs driving their action, such as a commitment to social justice and human rights.

The text written on the flower wreath read: "Congratulations on the inauguration of a ruthless human rights-abusing general and a 2.5 GPA professor as President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia born from an illegitimate constitutional regime. From Mulyono (The bast*rd destroyer of democracy)." The phrase "bast*rd destroyer of democracy" carries profound meaning. The term "bast*rd" carries a derogatory negative connotation, and in this context, its usage reflects deep dissatisfaction toward the figures in question, namely Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. This message contains sharp criticism regarding Prabowo's track record viewed as a human rights violator and Gibran's questioned competence. By stating that their administration stems from an "illegitimate constitutional regime," BEM FISIP questions the legitimacy and integrity of the electoral process that brought them to power. The use of terms like "Admin Fufufafa" as a satirical nod to Gibran highlights allegations of nepotism and a lack of political experience.

This creates the impression that the authors feel anger and offer no respect toward them. Furthermore, the word "destroyer" indicates a destructive act. Within the framework of social critique, this signifies the authors' belief that the steps or policies taken by these political figures could disrupt democratic values. Lastly, the term "democracy" refers to a system of governance based on principles of public participation, freedom, and justice. By invoking "democracy," the authors emphasize the vital importance of these values and signal that actions deemed harmful by the authors represent a threat to that system.

CONCLUSION

This article discusses how the satirical flower wreath used by the Student Executive Board (BEM) of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University, represents a creative and effective form of social and political critique. This flower wreath is not merely a symbol of respect, but has been transformed into a communication medium full of satire. The satirical messages conveyed through visual elements such as text,color, and design reflect dissatisfaction with the political policies and actions of specific figures in this case,Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka.

Through Peirce's semiotic analysis, this study reveals how the elements within the flower wreath create powerful symbolic meaning. Symbolism in the form of flowers, gold frames, and additional elements such as fire and skulls reinforces the critique of political legitimacy and morality. This post delivers a clear message and sparks public discussion through social media dissemination, confirming that art and creativity can serve as potent communication tools in conveying social critique.

Furthermore, the use of satire through visual media like flower wreaths delivers both an emotional and intellectual impact to the audience. This approach allows critical messages to be digested more easily without provoking direct conflict, while remaining effective in expressing public dissatisfaction regarding social and political issues. The key conclusion of this study is that art and creativity play a strategic role in building public dialogue, strengthening democracy, and effectively voicing societal aspirations.

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