



The Meaning of Religious Value Symbols in the Novel *Api Tauhid* by Habiburahman El Shirazy: Charles Sanders Pierce's Semiotic Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe how to analyze the meaning of religious value symbols that existed in the main character (Fahmi) in Novel *Api Tauhid* by Habiburahman El Shirazy. The method used in this research was a qualitative narrative with Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic approach. The data of this research was the result of studying the meaning of religious value symbols in the novel with Pierce's semiotic approach and the data source was Novel *Api Tauhid* by Habiburahman El Shirazy. The data collection technique used in this study was document analysis. The validity of the data used was theoretical triangulation. The results of this research described the study of the meaning of religious values symbols in Novel *Api Tauhid* with Pierce's semiotic approach.

Keywords: *Novels; Religious Character; Semiotic*

Introduction

The semiotic approach is an approach that focuses on a sign and meaning that can be seen and written in a novel. Semiotic is always associated with all things that are considered as signs. This research was conducted to determine the meaning of symbols contained in the novel. In addition, this research was also expected to provide an overview of the meaning of symbols in a novel.

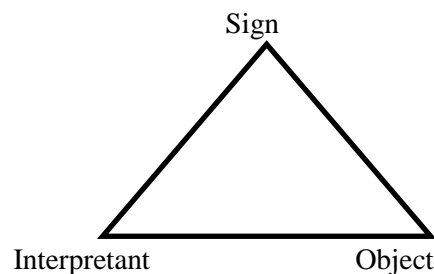
Previous research related to semiotics has been carried out by previous researchers, including Handoko (2019) with the object of his research was Indomie advertising research, Wibowo (2017) the object of his research was the novel *Anomie*, Syahriandi (2014) the object of his research was the novel *Teuntra Atom*, & Parini (2014) the object of his research was the snake tamer mantra novel. In addition, previous research related to religious values were carried out by Maharani, Zulela, & Nadiroh (2019), Susilawati (2017), Wahyu, Prasojowati, & Setya (2019).

This research was different from previous research because this study examined religious values in literature using Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic approach. The literary work that was the subject of

this research was *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. This novel was chosen because this novel was very thick with religious values, besides that this novel had never been used in research of religious values with a semiotic approach, especially Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic.

According to Teew (1984: 6) semiotic is a sign as an act of communication and then refined into a literary model which accounts for all the essential factors and aspects for understanding literary phenomena as a unique means of communication in any society. Meanwhile, Sebeok (1994) explains that semiotics is a study used to understand signs of all types (including simple physiological signaling which reveals a very complex symbolic structure). Eco (in Sobur, 2006: 95) states that semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects, events, and entire cultures as signs. From the explanation above, it can be synthesized that semiotic is a science that studies and understands the meaning or meaning of the sign itself.

Peirce said there are three components, which usually apply to a sign in everyday speech called a representamen. This representamen is done to differentiate between the other two components of the sign. Representamen is something that has a relationship with the object, which is the second component of the sign. The third component is the interpretant, which has a relationship to mediate between the representamen and the sign object (Cobley, 2001). Peirce also suggests a triadic or triangle of meaning which consists of three main elements, namely sign, object, and interpretant (Emzir & Rohman, 2015: 49).



Triadic image or triangle of meaning

Source: Sobur, A. (2006). *Semiotics of Communication*. Bandung: Youth Rodaskarya, p. 69.

This study analyzed the symbols contained in *Novel Api Tauhid* which refers to the main character based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. And this research was expected to add insight and description of Charles Sanders' semiotics in analyzing the religious values contained in the novel.

Method

This research was a qualitative narrative research with a semiotic approach. This study described the religious value symbols found in the main character in *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy by referring to the triadic concept or triangle of meaning put forward by Charles Sanders Peirce. The primary data source in this study was *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy, while the secondary data sources were books, relevant journals in accordance with what was needed in the theoretical study. The data in the study were in the form of a document review of *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach and in accordance with the research problem presented. Data collection techniques in this study used document (content) analysis. The validity data of this research used theoretical triangulation.

Result and Discussion

The result of this study was the meaning of religious value symbols that existed in the main character in *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. This religious value is divided into three parts, namely, aqidah, sharia, and akhlak (morals).

1. Aqidah

Aqidah is a relationship based on human belief or faith in God. This is in line with Nata (2005: 15) explaining that aqidah is a belief in the heart about Allah as God who must be worshiped, oral speech in the form of two sentences of creed and actions with righteous deeds.

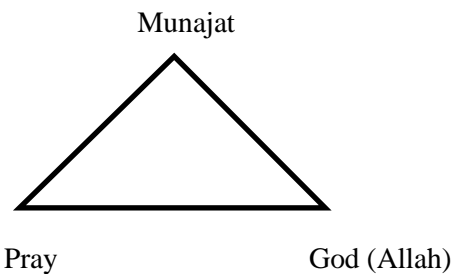
The main character in *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy was a religious young man named Fahmi. Fahmi was also a young man who was continuing his education in Mecca. He constantly got very painful trials for ordinary humans. However, not with Fahmi, he constantly faced trials with continually being grateful and worshiping the god (Allah).

The meaning of the aqidah symbol in the main character would be analyzed as follows:

- Meaning of Munajat Symbol

“Siang malam ia mematri diri, larut dalam munajat dan taqarrub kepada ilahi.” (El Shirazy, 2018:1)

“Day and night he brazed self, dissolves in munajat and taqarrub to the divine.”

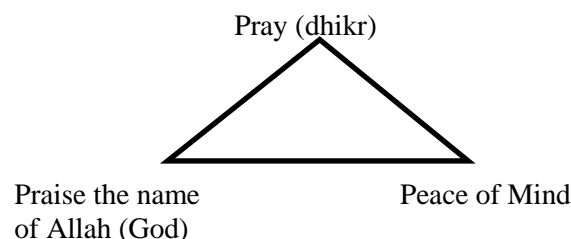


The triadic or triangle of meaning above explained that munajat was placed as a sign, praying as an interpretant (an explanation of the meaning contained in an existing sign), and God (Allah) as an object (the object of the sign).

- Meaning of Dhikr Symbols

“Usai shalat ia akan larut dalam dzikir, shalat sunnah, lalu kembali lirik melantukan ayat-ayat suci Al-Qur’an.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 1)

“After the prayer he will dissolve in pray (dhikr), sunnah prayer, and then return softly to recite the holy verses of the Al-Qur’an”

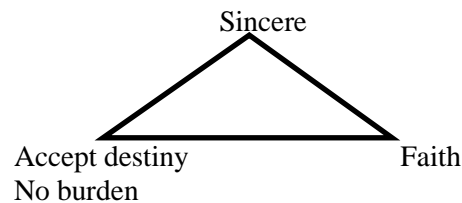


The triadic above explained how the sign from the above quote was pray (dhikr), the interpretation was to praise the name Allah (God), and the Object was Allah (God).

- Meaning of Sincerity Symbol

“Aku yang akan mengalami saja ikhlas mati sekarang, kenapa kau tidak mengikhhlaskan, Li?” (El Shirazy, 2018: 20)

“I will feel sincerely to die now, why are not sincere, Li?”

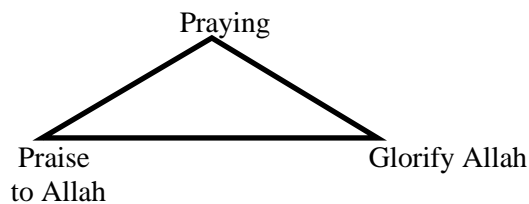


The triadic or triangle of meaning above explained that the sincere sign had an interpretant of accepting destiny without a burden (tolerant), and the object was faith where if our faith is good it will be easy for us to give up a destiny.

- Meaning of the Praise to Allah Symbol

“Kutarik nafas, kuhirup dalam-dalam sambil bertasbih, subhanallah wabihamdihi, kutahan dalam dada, kunikmati kesegarannya, lalu kuembuskan sambil bertasbih, subhanallahil azhim.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 29)

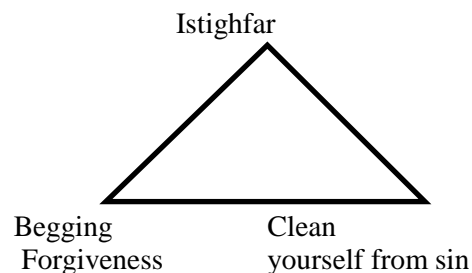
“I took a breath, I inhaled deeply while praying, subhanallah wabihamdihi, held it on my chest, enjoyed the freshness, then exhaled while praying, subhanallahil azhim.”



The triadic or triangle of meaning above illustrated that tasbih as a sign had an interpretant to praise Allah, and its object was Allah (the creator).

- Meaning of the Istighfar Symbol

“Fahmi banyak membaca istighfar.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 107)
“Fahmi reads a lot of istighfar.”

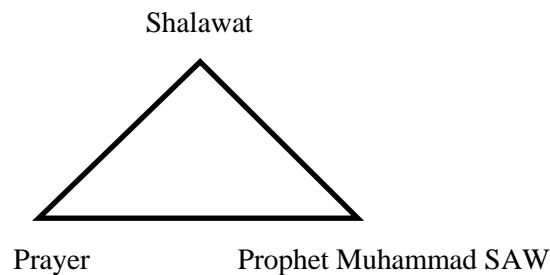


The triangle of meaning above described Istighfar as a sign, asking for forgiveness as an interpretant where to get forgiveness from God (Allah), human must have istighfar. And of course the object was God (Allah).

- Meaning of the Shalawat Symbol

“Fahmi sendiri, selain tiada henti-hentinya membaca Al-Qur’an, juga memperbanyak membaca shalawat yang biasa dibaca Al ‘Allamah Badiuzzaman Said Nursi.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 573)

“Fahmi himself, apart from constantly reading the Koran, also reads more shalawat, which Al ‘Allamah Badiuzzaman Said Nursi reads.”



The triadic or meaningful triangle above provided an explanation that the sign was shalawat, the interpretant was prayer (which was aimed to the prophet Muhammad), and the object was the Prophet Muhammad.

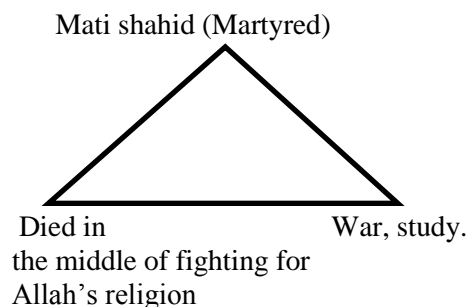
2. Shari’at

Shari’at is a rule regarding obedience to Allah (God). This is in accordance with what Ahmadidan & Salimi (1994: 2370) said that worship is a way of regulating the behavior of human life to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT. Fahmi was a young man who was obedient to Allah SWT, even though he never leaves his worship even though his wife commits betrayal. The following explained the meaning of symbols of religious values that existed in the main character (Fahmi) using triadic:

- Meaning of the Death Symbol of a Martyr

“Tapi saat ini saat aku sakit, aku berharap sakitku ini menjadi sebab mati syahidku di Tanah Haram, Madinah ini.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 19)

“But now when I am sick, I hope that my illness will be the cause of my martyrdom in this Haram Land, Medina.”

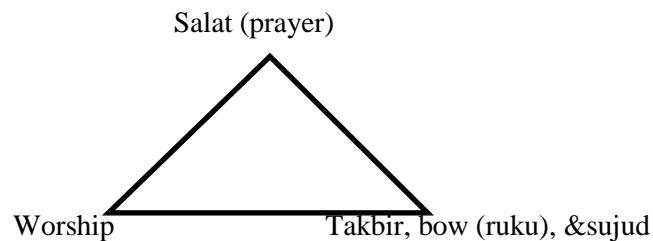


Triadic or the triangle of meaning above could be explained that Mati Shahid (martyred) as a sign, died in the middle of fighting for Allah's interpretant religion, and Allah's object because people who chose to be martyred were people who want to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT.

- Meaning of Salat (Prayer) Symbols

"Aku menghadap cermin yang cukup besar. Nuzula tampak di belakangku dengan kepala menunduk. Aku takbiratul irham lalu shalat. Nuzula." (El Shirazy, 2018: 56)

"I'm facing a mirror that is big enough. Nuzula appeared behind me with her head down. I was doing takbiratul irham then praying."

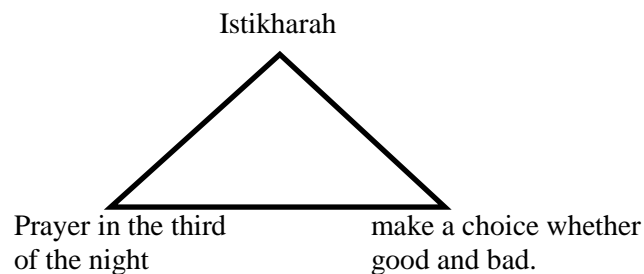


The triadic or triangle of meaning above depicted prayer (salat) was as a sign, while the interpretant of prayer was worship and its object was all movements in prayer (takbir, rukud, sujud, etc.).

- Meaning of the Istikharah Symbol

"Fahmi istikharah dulu ya, bu." (El Shirazy, 2018: 39)

"Fahmi istikharah first, ma'am."

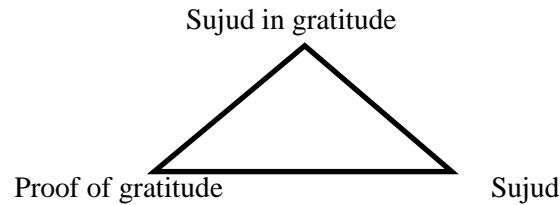


The triadic or triangle of meaning above explained that istikharah as a sign had an interpretant of worship which was carried out in the third of the night, and its object was to get a good or bad indication of the decision or choice made.

- The meaning of the symbol of gratitude

"Fahmi seperti menyaksikan langsung bagaimana Sultan Muhammad Al Fatih sujud syukur. Seketika itu juga Fahmi menghadap kiblat dan sujud syukur." (El Shirazy, 2018:101).

"Fahmi seemed to witness Sultan Muhammad Al Fatih doing sujud in gratitude. Immediately Fahmi faced the Qibla and did sujud in gratitude."

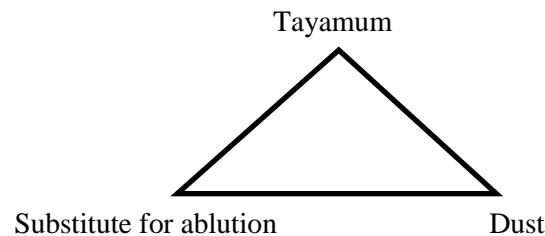


From the triadic or triangle of meaning above, it could be concluded that the sujud in gratitude is a sign, and the interpretant was the application (evidence) of a servant's gratitude for the gift of God, and the object was the prostration that the servant makes in expressing his gratitude.

- The Meaning of the Tayamum Symbol

“Sesaat setelah maghrib Fahmi bangun. Ia langsung menanyakan jam berapa? Hamza menjawab sudah maghrib. Ia lalu tayamum dan shalat dipembaringannya.” (El Shirazy, 2018: 559)

“Shortly after maghrib, Fahmi woke up. He immediately asked the time. Hamza replied that it was maghrib. Then he did tayamum and prayed in his bed.”



The triadic above explained that tayamum was a sign, its interpretant was a substitute for ablution when a person could not be exposed to water or was sick, while the object was dust.

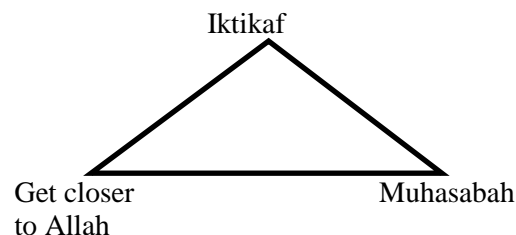
3. Akhlaq (Morals)

Akhlaq (Morals) are behavior or good manners in a person. In line with Mustofa (1997: 11) says that akhlaq (morals) come from the Arabic language *akhlaq jama'* from the word *huluq* which means character, temperament, behavior or *tabi'at*. Fahmi was in distress and pain that he felt he always behaved well in responding to everything. The following was an illustration of the meaning of religious value symbols that existed in the main character (Fahmi):

- Meaning of Iktikaf Symbols

“Tapi tolong, Li, bawa aku kembali ke masjid. Aku mau selesaikan iktikaf-ku.” (El Shirazy, 2018:18)

“But please, Li, take me back to the mosque I want to finish my iktikaf.”

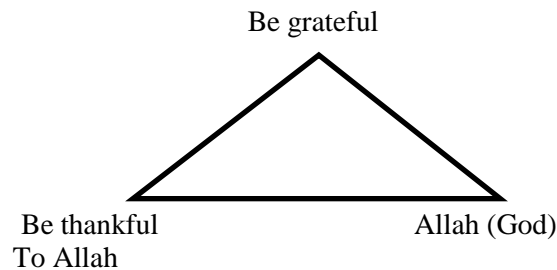


The triadic or triangle of meaning above depicted Iktikaf as a sign, and the interpretant was looking for the pleasure of Allah SWT or getting closer to Allah SWT. The object was *muhasabah*, and *iktikaf* was merely to introspect oneself from bad actions to good actions.

- The Meaning of the Grateful Symbol

“Ada setetes penawar, dalam luka jiwa yang belum sembuh. Ciuman tujuh menit itu masih sering membayang. Aku bersyukur bahwa itu adalah ciuman yang halal, bukan ciuman yang haram.” (El Shirazy, 2018:69)

“There is a drop of antidote, in the wound of the soul that has not healed. The seven-minute kiss still looms large. I am grateful that it was a permitted kiss, not a prohibited kiss.”

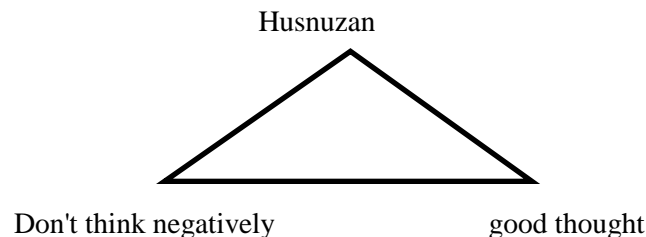


The triadic or triangle of meaning above explained gratitude as a sign, the interpretant was gratitude or thanks to Allah for whatever Allah has destined, and its object was Allah as the Almighty creator of the earth and everything in it.

- Meaning of the Husnuzan (think positively) Symbol

“Bagaimana aku harus memaafkanmu, sementara aku tidak tahu apa yang sesungguhnya terjadi? Apa kesalahanmu? Dan apa kesalahanku sampai aku seolah dihukum oleh abahmu, dan aku tidak berani mendongakkan kepala sebab aku harus husnuzhan dengan beliau.” (El Shirazy, 2018:563)

“How should I forgive you, meanwhile I don't know what really happened? What was your fault? And what was my mistake until I was punished by your father, and I did not dare to raise my head because I have to husnuzan with him.”



From the triadic above, it could be concluded that the explanation of the sign was husnuzan, the interpretant was not thinking oddly or negatively towards other people. And the object was how good people think it is to us.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis described in the discussion, it can be synthesized that the values of life cannot only be seen in real life. However, we can also find these values and feel in a literary work, especially *Novel Api Tauhid* by Habiburahman El Shirazy where the character (Fahmi) is closely related to religious values. In addition, we can analyze the values contained in a novel using a triadic (Pierce's semiotic approach), so that we can distinguish what is called a sign, interpretant, and object in a value. All components in the triadic are single units that are interconnected with one another.

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