

CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF SATIRICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE
MAJOR CHARACTER IN *THE UGLY TRUTH* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the connotative meanings of satirical representation in comedy movie. This research focuses on the dialogues of Mike Chadway as the major character in The Ugly Truth movie directed by Robert Luketic. The writer uses a descriptive qualitative method to collect and to analyze data. The results of the connotative meanings are three classifications, which are an impressive looks, a monotonous person, and an ugly creature. Each satirical representation that expressed through connotative meanings has different techniques and functions. There are three satirical techniques, which are hyperbole, simile, and metaphor. There are three functions of satire, which are criticizing, entertaining, and educating. The major character uses of some hyperboles and metaphorical expressions to criticize the targets and to present the entertainment to the other characters. Using simile, the major character wants to educate or to give the target an advice.

Keywords: *connotative, satirical representation, major character*

I. INTRODUCTION

Humor in its diverse manifestations is the main attraction in the society. Lately, humor is presented in a different form, namely stand up comedy. It attracts the public attention through satirical form. It contains innuendo jokes and conditions that are happening in the story.

One of types of humor is satire. Satire is correlation between humor and intelligence. It is an ability to package an argument with unusual ways. In general, the usage of satire are used by the people of high intelligence because satire is expressed in caricature, sarcasm, irony, invective, reduction, and parody.

According to Twark (2007:2), "the multiple functions of satire and humor to attack, criticize, educate, conciliate, and or entertain also provide important clues as to why these modes have been employed so frequently." It is clear that satire is not bad humor because it has positive functions to make humanity or institutions may be improved through blending a critical attitude with humor or wit. Satire becomes a culture product which influences social, politic, and economic aspects.

Satire is a manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor to

improve mankind and human institutions. A satirist may inserts serious statements of value or desired behavior, but most often the satirist relies on implicit messages. Here is an example of satire that are humorous, but still get their meaning across. *Marriage is the chief cause of divorce*. The expression told the listener/reader that the main cause of divorce is marriage. A marriage is assumed happiness of a couple, living together, and arising of many conflicts. A couple who is able to solve their conflict will live together. A couple who failed of solves their conflict, they will face divorce.

The best way to analyze satire is semiotics approach. It is true because semiotic examines signs as the vehicle which allow human beings to represent their world, to present information, or to influence. A broad spectrum of sign and sign system in communication has been studied, whether the subject of that study is verbal, visual or some composite blend of both. Semiotic analysis can be use in speech, drama, novel, mime, comedy, painting, myth, comic, and advertisement.

According to Barthes (1977:33), these messages are composed in two ways: through denotation, the literal meaning and connotation, the meanings that are implicated. In his theory, Barthes develops semiotics into

two significations (denotation and connotation).

In semiotics, denotation and connotation are terms describing the relationship between the signifier and its signified, and an analytic distinction is made between two types of signified: a denotative signified and a connotative signified. Signifier is a mediator to handle the words, images, and objects in the sign equation. The word 'tree' for example. Signified is the mental representation of a thing or what the signifier refers to. There are two types of signifieds, denotative and connotative. An example provided by Barthes is 'tree': luxuriant, green, shady, etcetera.

It is important to analyze satirical representation through connotative meaning because there are several meanings. The writer chooses the major character in *The Ugly Truth* movie as an object. *The Ugly Truth* is the movie that was released in North America on July, 24th 2009 and was placed in Box Office until early October 2009. At first glance, this movie generally is seen as a romantic comedy, the meeting of man and woman who initially hate each other and eventually fall in love. But after watching it, *The Ugly Truth* is more than that. A good balance of perspective between men and women in view love or a relationship is maintained stable in this movie. because of that, satirical humor properly flows and is believed to be able provoke laughter. Based on the reasons above, the writer decides **"CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF SATIRICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE MAJOR CHARACTER IN THE UGLY TRUTH MOVIE BASED ON SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS"** as the title of this research.

Statement of Problems

Through this research, the writer analyzes to find out the answer of some problems that appear in *The Ugly Truth* movie. There are number of the problems in the following questions:

1. What are the connotative meanings of satirical representation used by the major character in *The Ugly Truth* movie?
2. How are the techniques of satire used by the major character?
3. How are the functions the major character by using the satirical representation?

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

1. Semiotics

Semiotics is defined by Ferdinand de Saussure in *Course in General Linguistics*, it published posthumously in 1915. As cited in Berger (2010:5), Saussure offered an important insight into the roles of signs in society in his *Course in General Linguistics* when he wrote (1966:16):

"Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of these systems. A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology* (from Greek *sēmeion* "sign"). Semiology would show what constitutes a sign, what laws govern them."

According to O'Neill (2008:67), "Semiotics takes the view that signs can be organized within various media, to form text that can convey meaning." O'Neill concluded that semiotics is about signs that can be applied in various media to refer meaning by text or word formation.

In general, semiotics or semiology is the study of signs, symbols, and signification. It is made up by the signifier and signified. Semiotics is the study of how meaning is created. Semiotics is also concerned to representation in many forms, perhaps the most obvious in the form of text and media. Roland Barthes develops two staggered systems, which allows to resulting multilevel meanings, namely denotation and connotation.

2. Denotation

Denotation is a design to refer an object of word through literal meaning that exist in dictionary. Taken from O'Neill (2008:74), "The term denotation in general refers to a signifier or signified relationship that is instantly understandable no ambiguity." O'Neill suggested the term denotation should be easy to understand by people and there is no ambiguity.

Denotative meaning normally is known by people in the world. The word 'ocean' for an example. In literally, ocean means the largest of seas which is divided into the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic, and Antarctic.

3. Connotation

Based on Barthes (1957:13) as cited in Hoed (2011:5), *Konotasi adalah pengembangan segi petanda (makna atau isi suatu tanda) oleh pemakai tanda sesuai dengan sudut pandangnya*. Connotation is term of sign expansion (meaning or significance) through signifier based on point of view. Connotation is related to the personal experiences or representation of sign.
Secondary sign: Connotation

Primary sign: Denotation

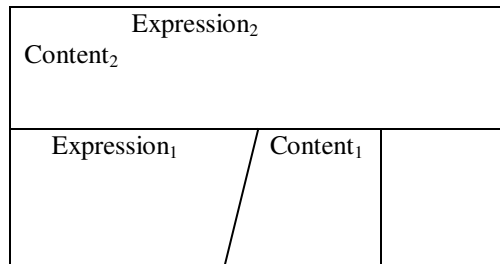


Figure II.1. Barthes's model of connotation as the semantic extension of a denotative sign

Barthes defined a sign as a system consisting of E, an expression or signifier, in relation (R) to C, a content or signified. Such a primary sign system can become an element of a more comprehensive sign system. If the extension is one of content, the primary sign (E₁ R₁ C₁) becomes the expression of a secondary sign system: E₂ (=E₁ R₁ C₁) R₂ C₂. In this case, the primary sign is one of denotative while the secondary sign is one of connotative semiotics.

The writer determines that connotation arises when the denotative relationship between a signifier and its signified. A secondary level of meaning is termed connotative. It is related to the personal feelings, emotions, point of view, and ideology. It must be known in order to determine the reference of an expression. The word 'rose' for an example. In literally, rose means flower that has thorns. An example of connotative meaning is 'rose': expression of a couple who fall in love, romantic person, beautiful woman, et cetera.

A. Understanding of Satire

Satire is one of the type humor that is used in social interaction to practice of making fun of a human weakness or character flaw. Berger explained that, "satire is making a fool of or poking fun at well-known thing, situations, or public figures." (as cited in

Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2004:154). In other meaning satire creates something funniness, pokes fun of famous things or figure in society.

According to Twark (2007:2), "the multiple functions of satire and humor to attract, criticize, educate, conciliate, and or entertain also provide important clues as to why these modes have been employed so frequently." In other meaning, satire is included into humor that has been used to attract, criticize, educate, conciliate, and entertain people by clues.

In general, satire is a manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor in an effort to improve mankind and human institutions. The writer determines the use of satire in social interaction is often inclusive of correcting or bettering the character.

B. Satirical Techniques

Satirical techniques is used to make a comment or criticism about a particular subject or character. The following techniques to make a comment or criticism about a particular subject or character. Based on Hodgart (2010:115), "The basic technique of the satirist is reduction: the degradation or devaluation of the victim by reducing his stature and dignity. This may be done on the level of plot and will almost always be continued to the level of style and language." The general idea of satire is to reduce everything to simple terms: the appeal is always to common sense, plain reason, simple logic.

Alkodimi and Omar (2010:62), "Hyperbole is another useful literary technique used to create 'ironic or comic effect.'" Hyperbole is one of satirical technique that is used to exaggerate an expression. Hyperbole is also known as overstatement which saying more than is meant. It is often to produce humor.

It is concluded that irony is a systematic that use of double meaning or meaning of words is opposite of the literal or expected meaning. Irony means language that has two levels of meaning; the first is superficial or literal; the second is critical and often the opposite of the superficial meaning. Irony is achieved through such techniques as hyperbole and understatement. Hyperbole is used to enlarge, increase, or represent something beyond normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and its faults can be seen. Technically simile means the comparison of two object with same similarities. Metaphor is an implied analogy which imaginatively

identifies one thing with another. Burlesque is ridiculous exaggeration achieved through a variety of ways. For example, the sublime may be absurd, honest emotions may be turned to sentimentality. Style is the essential quality in burlesque. A style ordinarily dignified may be used for nonsensical matters. Oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines apparently contradictory or incongruous ideas. Parody is a mocking imitation of a known person, literary work, movie, or event. For parody to be successful, the reader must know the original text that is being ridiculed.

III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

a. Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2001:64) indicated that descriptive qualitative method concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible.

b. Data Source

This research studies a *The Ugly Truth* movie and analyze it by using the semiotic analysis.

c. Data Collection

The writer collects the necessary data by studying comprehensively varieties of resources, such as books, electronic books, dictionaries, journals, and other references from internet to support the validity of data.

d. Data Analysis

The data analysis is the process of identifying and classifying the data. As mentioned earlier, the main objective of this research is to analyze the connotative meaning in satirical representation by the major character of the movie.

For these reasons, there are several steps taken in analyzing the movie. First is to analyze the object to be found in the statement of problems. Then, the writer gives the data that combine with theories. Connotative meaning based on Barthes (1967), satirical, and its strategy are according to Twark (2007).

IV. DISCUSSION

This paper focuses on analysis on the data that are already collected. The data analyzed in this research are all found in the movie, *The Ugly Truth*.

1. Connotative Meanings

a. An Impressive Looks

Data 1

Mike : "You wanna be a lonely hag, then that's fine keep

reading these stupid books. But you want a relationship, then here's how get one: It's called a Stairmaster. Get on it and get skinny and get some trashy lingerie while you're at it because at the end of the day, all we're interested in is looks. And no one falls love with your personality at first sight."

Stairmaster is a United States company specializing in the design and production of fitness equipment for commercial, light commercial, and home use. A stairmaster has connotative meanings, there are someone who uses it usually assumed as high class person, healthy person, has a good looking or performance, and has a perfect body.

Data 2

Mike : "Yes, you may. We need cocktail dresses, tight jeans, and some bras that'll make my friend's breasts sit up and say hello."

A *cocktail dress* or *cocktail gown* literally is a woman's dress worn at cocktail parties or semi-formal. A cocktail dress for women, which usually means short dress. A cocktail dress shows an adorable looks for women who wear it. Sometimes, women look more stunning, glamour, and off course sexy when wear it.

Tight jeans or slim-fit pants (made of denim) have a snug fit through the legs and end in a small leg. Tight jeans relates to simple or casual clothes. Tight jeans is casual clothes even though it represents sexuality to whom on it. Sometimes, women who wear it look smart, mature, and easy going.

b. A Monotonous Person

Data 1

Mike : "Now, listen up. Ladies, because I'm only gonna say this once and it is just three little words: men are simple."

Simple literally means 'consisting of few parts or elements'. Connotative meanings of simple are a monotonous person, open minded, and everyone can imitate or make easier, and low-maintenance.

c. An Ugly Creature

Data 1

Mike : "Okay. Now, let's take the first caller."

Caller : *"How dare you burn those books. They've helped my personal life more than I can say."*

Mike : *"What's your boyfriend's name, princess?"*

Caller : *"Well, I'm not seeing anyone right now."*

Mike : *"My point exactly, Shrek. Next caller."*

The name *Shrek* is derived from the German and Yiddish word *Schreck* or *Shreck*, literally meaning is 'fear' or 'terror'. *Shrek* means ugly ogre and a grouch. *Shrek* has a little problem socializing due to the fact that people think he is different with other.

2. Satirical Techniques

The satirist usually uses some techniques of satire to make the audience able to know the satire is used or showed. There are some ways of satire which had been used by the major character. The following techniques to make a comment or criticism about a particular subject or character. The first technique is hyperboles, the second technique is simile, and the last is metaphors.

a. Hyperbole

Data 1

Clerk Woman : *"Hello. May I be of assistance?"*

Mike : *"Yes, you may. We need cocktail dresses, tight jeans, and some bras that'll make my friend's breasts sit up and say hello."*

It is clearly that Mike Chadway wants some clothes that show the beauty of Abby's body. Because Mike Chadway thinks that Abby is too simple and casual with her fashion and the writer agrees with his mean. Abby could be looked more prettier and sexy by a good visual to attract the men.

b. Simile

Data 1

Mike : *"Come on. You just like being a big fish in a little pond."*

The figurative language above indicates simile because there is *like* word between two unlike things. The word *like* means that Mike

compares Abby to a big fish in a little pond. Mike thought that Abby is bridled by the place of her work. It may relevant with a big fish and Sacramento is relevant with a little pond.

c. Metaphor

Mike : *"We can not be trained. All this, "men are from Venus" crap is a waste of your time and money."*

Men are from Venus is a metaphor because men are compared to Venus. Men are the underlying idea or the subject. Venus is the object whose attributes are borrowed by men. Mike compares men with Venus because it has feminine character and it opposites between the reality.

3. Functions of Satire

The writer focuses on one theory of the purposes of satire. Based on the theory about satire, Twark said that the multiple functions of satire and humor to attract, criticize, educate, conciliate, and or entertain also provide important clues as to why these modes have been employed so frequently. The writer will classify the function of satire humor based on the theory above. The first function is providing the amusement and the second function is bettering the other character.

a. Criticizing

The true satirist is able to criticize someone or institutions with his or her capability of combining the critical statement and humor. In *The Ugly Truth* movie, The writer assumes that Mike Chadway had showed the true satire successfully. There are some pictures and dialogues to prove the right statement of the writer.

Mike : *"Then, lo and behold, she became more popular than you. Ended up with twice your salary."*

Larry : *"Hold on, pal. I am very proud of my wife's success."*

Mike : *"Baloney, you are. You hate her success. You feel emasculated by her. And that screws with your head. Which, in turn, screws with your manhood."*

The writer assumes what the point of Mike Chadway is. Mike Chadway confronted Larry to admit that he is confined by his wife who is more successful than him. The purpose

of Mike Chadway uses the hyperbole words is to return the roles of Larry as a husband and to push of Larry's confidence.

b. Educating

Satire arouses laughter as a means of ridicule and derision, with the intonation of correcting human faults. Most of the satirist have the purpose in their satire shown. They are not only giving an entertainment but also giving an advice to make it better of someone or institutions who is poked.

Mike : "Well, okay, let me help you out here. You might as well face the fact that you're gonna be alone and stop pining away for some fantasy guy you're never gonna get."

Abby : "How can you possibly?"

Mike : "Hey, Lassie. The show's called *The Ugly Truth*. If you can't face it don't call."

Based on the dialogue above, the writer concludes that Mike Chadway used the satire words to confront Abby directly. It has purpose actually. Mike Chadway wanted Abby to realize that she never get a perfect man if she just spends her time for some fantasy. Abby must know it to improve herself.

V. CONCLUSION

The writer concludes that Mike Chadway as the major character mostly used the satirical representation in his interaction with the other characters in *The Ugly Truth* movie. The writer gets the classifications of satirical representation through connotative meanings which are analyzed in this research. There are three classifications. The first is impressive looks, which used to convey the suggestions. The second is a monotonous person, which used to convey an understanding of men in reality. The last is an ugly creature, which used to provoke the targets.

The major character uses three techniques to present satire humor. The three of them are figurative language. The first satirical technique is hyperbole, it is exaggeration to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression, but is not meant to be taken literally. The second is simile, it used to compared two things through some connotative meanings. The last one is methapor, it used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity. The major character has

the purposes by using the satirical representation. Mike Chadway wants to criticize the targets by combining the critical statement and humor. Mike Chadway also gives the entertainment to the other characters by the amusement. The main of satirical purpose is to improve and to give the motivation to the people whom was poked by him. The major character uses the satire humor to point out what he means through unusual ways.

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