

Analysis of Signs in the Poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" by Chairil Anwar

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Article Info

History Articles
Received:
5 September 2025
Accepted:
10 October 2025
Published:
30 December 2025

Keywords:
Semiotic analysis;
poetry; symbolism

Abstract

Poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" (Sunset in a Small Harbor) is a modern Indonesian poem rich in symbols, metaphors, and expressive imagery. The richness of these signs makes the poem open to various interpretations, particularly those related to inner experience and human existence. Therefore, a study capable of uncovering the meaning of the poem more deeply and systematically is needed. This study aims to analyze the meaning of signs and symbols in the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" using a semiotic approach. The focus of the research is directed at revealing the relationship between the signifier and the signified that forms the overall meaning of the poem. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Data was obtained through literature study with the poem text as the main data source and supported by relevant literature references. Data analysis was carried out by identifying and interpreting signs in the poem using a semiotic approach. The results of the study indicate that this poem represents the poet's existential experiences of loneliness, loss, alienation, and acceptance of the transience of life. The important findings of this study confirm that the symbols of dusk, harbor, and time function as signs of self-reflection and the boundary between hope and reality. This research is useful for enriching the study of Indonesian literature and helping readers, educators and students understand poetry more critically and deeply, not only in its literal meaning, but also its symbolic meaning.

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a form of artistic expression expressed through language, both spoken and written. Literature, as a reflection of culture, values, and ideas that develop in society, plays a vital role in human life. Literary works are the result of human thought. According to Susana and Fadil (2016), literary works are works containing the ideas and thoughts of a writer or author related to the context of the surrounding society. They use beautiful diction or word choice to convey ideas. The purpose of creating literary works is as a medium of entertainment that contains various messages to be conveyed by literature lovers or readers of literary works. Through the choice of words written by the author, there are values, and readers are expected to take the message. According to Wahyuni (2017), the author strives to enable readers to acquire these values and be able to reflect them in their lives.

Literary works usually only provide entertainment, but they can also be a medium for conveying moral messages, social criticism, and reflections on life. According to Kamagi (2015), reflections of creativity, feeling, and intention are used as reflections in human life in the form of literary works. A creative process can be interpreted as a reflection of creativity. Meanwhile, feeling and intention are forms of feelings contained in a literary work, including poetry. According to Haisyah et al. (2020), poetry itself is a type of literary work composed of language rich in meaning. The words in poetry have meanings that contain values. Sumardjo (2019) states that a literary work that expresses the poet's thoughts and feelings aesthetically through the use of beautiful and figurative words is called poetry.

Several studies on the topic of semiotic analysis have been conducted. Among them is the research of Humaira, MA (2022) with the title "Analysis of Meaning in the Poem "To the Beggars" by Chairil Anwar Using a Semiotic Approach". The study discusses the meaning of disappointment and anger that is in the relationship between the signified and the

signified by depicting the poet's disappointment towards the beggar and is complemented by a forced sense of pity. According to Sari (2017) the structure of poetry cannot stand alone but is interconnected. According to Wellek and Warren (2019) poetry is composed of words that are carefully chosen and arranged to produce certain effects, both aesthetic and emotional to create art. Pradopo (2019) states that poetry uses beautiful and structured language and is expressed through the poet's thoughts and feelings in a unique and imaginative way. Nurgiyantoro (2022) states that poetry is a literary work that is bound by stanzas and lines, has rhyme and rhythm, and expresses the poet's thoughts and feelings in an aesthetic way. According to Kurniawan (2022), poetry is a literary work that uses language in a beautiful and meaningful way to express the poet's thoughts and feelings. Poetry often uses figures of speech, symbols, and rhythm to create an aesthetic effect.

Poetry is the art of language that weaves beautiful meanings within the rhythm of the author's imagination. Poetry is also a means of conveying the poet's feelings, expressions, and emotions expressed in short, concise figurative language (Rohmah, 2020). One such poem is "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil," a poem by Chairil Anwar that contains numerous figurative languages and signs that are typical expressions of Chairil Anwar. A poem certainly has a structure so it cannot stand alone. Style is the author's way of expressing thoughts through language in a distinctive way that shows the soul and personality of the writer or language user (Keraf 2010:113). The poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" reflects Chairil Anwar's distinctive style of language that is expressive, individualistic, and full of symbolism and metaphor.

With the setting of dusk and the harbor, Chairil Anwar composes touching poetic imagery and depicts unspoken separation and irreplaceable emptiness. The object of this research is the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil", which is reviewed from the aspect of the poem's inner structure (theme, tone, feeling, and message) and the use of imagery and poetic symbols that build the atmosphere and meaning in the poem. The poem "Senja di Pelabuhan

Kecil" is also a strong representation of the poet's inner struggle in facing life, death, and alienation. This research aims to analyze and reveal the symbolic meaning and imagery in the poem. Then interpret how this poem can convey feelings of grief and separation in the context of life. Through this poem, it provides an understanding to the reader that poetry does not merely express feelings but also conveys the social and existential conditions of an individual living in a time of turmoil.

This poem is not only a literary work containing aesthetic value, but also a symbolic expression that depicts the complexity of human emotions and life's struggles. Roland Barthes's early semiotic approach aims to uncover social phenomena in the form of signs, omens, and markers within the poem's verses. Semiotics is an approach deemed relevant for this study because it uncovers the true implied meaning. In the context of Barthes's semiotics, the meaning of poetry is not singular, but layered. In semiotic analysis, poetry is not merely seen as a collection of words, but as a complex and multidimensional sign system (Jariyah & Prihatin, 2024). Through a semiotic approach, we can certainly explore the symbols in poetry in more detail so that we can appreciate, feel, and enjoy the meaning contained, or what moral message the author wants to convey through the verses of the poem.

This research also reveals the various choices of diction used by Chairil Anwar in his poem. The poem *Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil* has both connotative and denotative meanings that are clearly described in each stanza. Denotative meaning is the actual or straightforward meaning according to the facts, while connotative meaning is an additional or figurative meaning that contains certain emotional values and interpretations beyond its literal meaning. This research is important because through a semiotic approach, this poem is interpreted as a representation of the experience of alienation, failed love, and the poet's existential anxiety. Therefore, this research is important to bridge the gap between literary texts and readers' understanding through a systematic and scientific analysis of the meaning of signs.

In this study, researchers analyzed the poem "*Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil*" written by Chairil Anwar using a semiotic approach. The semiotic approach is used because it can help understand the hidden meaning behind each word and stanza of the poem. According to Isnaini (2017), semiotics is the science that studies everything related to signs, systems, and how signs are used. So, semiotics does not just look at text as a series of words, but also looks at the deeper meaning of the signs that appear. In addition, semiotics also explains the system, rules, and signs that have meaning. Pribadi & Firmansyah (2019) stated that semiotics is very important in creating poetry so that the poem can provide an overview and understanding to the reader. In addition, Nurfitri (2018) stated that in semiotic studies, researchers can analyze signs and symbols that exist in human life, including those used in literary works such as poetry.

According to Sugihartati (2020), semiotics helps readers understand how simple symbols or signs can convey complex and emotional messages. This allows readers to feel closer to the poem they are reading. Damayanti (2021) further states that semiotics can also help writers or poets structure poetry so that its meaning can be more widely understood by readers from various backgrounds. Meanwhile, Sari (2022) explains that semiotics not only discusses signs in general, but also how readers interpret those signs according to social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, according to Putri (2023), semiotic analysis allows us to be more critical in reading poetry and not only enjoy the beauty of the words but also understand the values and moral messages contained within. With a semiotic approach, readers can explore hidden meanings and enjoy the beauty of poetry more deeply and with appreciation.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on the meaning of literary texts, particularly in uncovering the signs, symbols, and meanings

contained in poetry. The data in this study were obtained through literature studies. The data collection technique was carried out by repeatedly reading and examining the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" by Chairil Anwar, then collecting supporting sources in the form of books, journal articles, and scientific references relevant to the study of semiotics and poetry analysis. The data analysis method used is qualitative analysis. The analysis technique is carried out by identifying the signs contained in the poem, then interpreting the meaning of these signs and symbols using semiotic theory. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of

descriptive descriptions to illustrate the meaning of the poem as a whole. This method allows researchers to capture the dynamics of feelings, inner conflicts, and reflections on life implied behind the poetic words in the poem. Therefore, the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" is not only understood as a literary text, but also as an existential expression of a poet who is facing mortality and alienation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here is the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" by Chairil Anwar

CHAIRIL ANWAR

Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil

Ini kali tidak ada yang mencari cinta
di antara gudang, rumah tua, pada cerita
tiang serta temali. Kapal, perahu tiada berlaut
menghembus diri dalam mempercayai mau berpaut.

Gerimis mempercepat kelim. Ada juga kelepak elang
menyinggung muram, desir hari lari berenang
menemu bujuk pangkal akanan. Tidak bergerak
dan kini tanah dan air tidur hilang ombak.

Tiada lagi. Aku sendiri. Berjalan
menyisir semenanjung, masih pengap harap
sekali tiba di ujung dan sekalian selamat jalan
dari pantai keempat, sedu penghabisan bisa terdekap.

The poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil" is a poem by Chairil Anwar. He is a literary figure whose work is beyond doubt. His grammar is simple, but has broad and profound meaning. Chairil Anwar's poem describes as if drawing the reader into the story. The theme of this poem is the feeling of loss and deep loneliness experienced by the author. Overall, this poem tells of a loss that is likened to dusk. Although dusk is beautiful, but its light can disappear when the sun sets. Loss is a conflict in life that leaves a person alone without a figure of

encouragement or a life partner. The message or message that can be taken from this poem is sincerity, but still believe in the permanence of life because in this world nothing is eternal like dusk that slowly disappears but the next day gives new colors.

*"Ini kali tidak ada yang mencari cinta
di antara gudang, rumah tua, pada cerita tiang
serta temali. Kapal, perahu tiada berlaut
menghembus diri dalam mempercayai mau
berpaut"*

The quote above is the first stanza of the poem "Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil. Ini kali tidak ada yang mencari cinta denotatively means that currently, no one is looking for or wanting love. Then di antara gudang, rumah tua, pada cerita tiang serta temali refers to the physical location in the port which contains old buildings (warehouses, old houses) and ship equipment (masts, rigging). This sentence has the meaning of despair in looking for love, and in his life anywhere there is no longer a search for love. The words gudang, rumah tua, tiang serta tali temali show that everything is no longer useful because it is timeless. As for connotatively Ini kali tidak ada yang mencari cinta depicts an atmosphere of loneliness, emptiness, and hopelessness . di antara gudang, rumah tua, pada cerita tiang serta temali, connotatively these elements symbolize the past, damage, obsolescence, and uselessness.

Then the word kapal, perahu tiada berlaut denotatively means that ships and boats are not sailing or are not at sea, but rather stranded or not functioning. This confirms that the items are no longer functional. Connotatively, it is a strong metaphor for helplessness, stagnation, and loss of hope. The author shows that if he truly loses love, he will despair and lose hope. The last sentence in the first stanza, namely menghembus diri dalam mempercaya mau berpaut can be interpreted denotatively as the action of a ship or boat "exhaling" or "surrendering" while believing that one day it will be connected or functioning again. Connotatively, this phrase contains connotations of resignation, bitter acceptance, and the remains of fragile hope. Menghembus diri can be interpreted as taking a deep breath as a sign of exhaustion or despair, but also contains a slight nuance of releasing oneself from a burden. Mempercaya mau berpaut indicates the remaining belief, however small, to reconnect or have a purpose. The author seems to have resigned himself to the situation that befell him, while exhaling is a state of letting out a long breath in order to feel calm and accept and believe everything.

"Gerimis mempercepat kelam. Ada juga kelepak elang menyinggung muram, desir hari lari

berenang menemu bujuk pangkal akanan. Tidak bergerak

dan kini tanah dan air tidur hilang ombak"

In the second stanza, Gerimis mempercepat kelam, denotatively describing the weather as light rain accelerates the arrival of darkness. However, connotatively, gerimis symbolizes an

atmosphere of gloom or sadness in someone's heart. Gerimis connotatively also implies small suffering which ultimately leads life to destruction or death of the soul. Then Ada juga kelepak elang menyinggung muram, elang is a symbol of strength, freedom, and hope. However, in this second line, the eagle is actually connected to gloom, a sign that strength and hope are not free from sorrow and gloom. The eagle, which usually rules the sky, is now seen as a sign of sadness, meaning that hope can be fragile amidst widespread suffering. In the second line , desir hari lari berenang menemu bujuk pangkal akanan presents time as an active character that continues to move. Desir hari is included in the figure of speech that focuses on time, while lari berenang gives the impression of fast and inevitable movement towards our goal. The words bujuk and pangkal akanan give a positive nuance (from the right) in our culture, often interpreted as symbols of goodness or salvation. Therefore, this line can be interpreted as time bringing humans to a place of rest or solace, whether it be hope, tranquility, or even a peaceful death. In the final line, Tidak bergerak dan kini tanah dan air tidur hilang ombak, has the meaning of a dead and frozen world. The connotation is that land and water are elements of life, and when both are asleep and the waves are gone, it means there is no dynamism, spirit and life.

"Tiada lagi. Aku sendiri. Berjalan menyisir semenanjung, masih pengap harap sekali tiba di ujung dan sekalian selamat jalan dari pantai keempat, sedu penghabisan bisa terdekap."

The quote above is the third stanza. The sentence Tiada lagi means loss, absence, or the

end of something such as a relationship, hope, etc. It signifies an empty and hollow condition. Then the sentence *Aku sendiri* means loneliness, isolation, and feelings of alienation. It signifies a subject who is abandoned or chooses to be alone. The sentence *Berjalan menyisir semenanjung* means slow and aimless, searching for something on the edge of life. It signifies a process of searching or contemplation at the limits of existence. Then the sentence *masih pengap harap* means hope that is suppressed, cramped, and almost extinguished. It signifies hope that is difficult to realize and burdensome. In the third line, *sekali tiba di ujung dan sekalian selamat jalan* means the desire to reach the end of suffering or journey, while also saying goodbye. It signifies the presence of hope and despair. In the fourth line, *dari pantai keempat, sedu penghabisan bisa terdekap* means a distant and perhaps imaginary place, a place where the deepest sorrow can be expressed and accepted. It signifies the desire to find refuge and emotional liberation.

The denotative meaning of the third stanza literally describes a person walking alone on the edge of a peninsula, still holding suppressed hopes, longing to reach the end of the journey and say goodbye, and hoping that his sadness can be expressed somewhere far away. Meanwhile, connotatively, this stanza depicts several meanings; first, loneliness and alienation *Aku sendiri* emphasizes feelings of isolation and loss. The sentence *Berjalan menyisir semenanjung* symbolizes the search for identity or the meaning of life amidst uncertainty. The second meaning is suppressed hope *masih pengap harap* indicates that hope still exists, but is burdened by hardship and suffering. The third meaning is the desire to end suffering *sekali tiba di ujung dan sekalian selamat jalan* expresses the desire to reach the end of suffering and say goodbye to the past. And finally, the fourth meaning is the search for refuge *dari pantai keempat, sedu penghabisan bisa terdekap* symbolizes the desire to find a place where sadness can be expressed and accepted without judgment.

CONCLUSION

Based on a semiotic analysis and a review of the inner structure of Chairil Anwar's poem "*Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil*," it can be concluded that this poem is a profound representation of the experience of loss, loneliness, and contemplation. Through the use of signs and symbols in each stanza and line of the poem, Chairil Anwar successfully conveys feelings of isolation, suppressed hopes, and the desire to find peace and meaning amidst the sadness he experiences. The semiotic analysis reveals layers of meaning hidden in each line, while the review of the inner structure clarifies the main theme, tone, feelings of sadness, and the message of fortitude in the face of loss. This poem is not only an expression of personal feelings, but also a reflection on the fragile human condition and the search for meaning in a life full of uncertainty. Thus, the poem "*Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil*" can inspire readers to reflect on life, death, and the importance of appreciating every moment we have.

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