A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON KIM ADDONIZIO’S POEMS

BASED ON C. S. PEIRCE’S THEORY

A Thesis
Submitted to letters and humanities faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
The Degree of Strata one

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ABSTRACT


The objectives of this study are to find out the use of symbol in the Kim Addonizio’s poem. This study applied library research and the compiled data were analyzed through descriptive analysis method. This method tried to describe, explain, and analyze the using of symbol using semiotic theory by Charles Sanders Pierce. The unit of analysis of this research was the three of Kim Addonizio’s poems. They were chosen because they were containing of symbols.

For the semiotic analysis, the writer marked the data by choosing literary works that were containing of symbols; all literary work were the three of Kim Addonizio’s poem; reading the literary work intensely, and classifying the data that were containing symbol; categorizing that symbol, so that could be understood each other; in categorizing all data, the writer put them in the table by synchronizing each symbol with each poem; interpreting the meaning of that symbol.

After analyzing the symbol, it could be concluded that each poem contain of different symbol with different meaning and function. And these differences had given the different ideas. From the semiotic analysis of the three poems, *Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Women Want*, mostly, Kim Addonizio would like to convey the ideas about sadness, love, sexuality, freedom, and equal right.
APPROVEMENT

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The thesis has been defended before the Faculty Letters and Humanities’ Examination Committee on Augustus 10, 2010. It has been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, Augustus 10, 2010

The Examination Committee

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the next.

Jakarta, Augustus, 2010

Andri Hermawan
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In the name of Allah the most Gracious and the most Merciful

All praise and gratitude are to Allah SWT, the lord of the universe for his guidance in completing this thesis. May blessing and salutation be upon the most honorable prophet and messenger Muhammad saw, his families and all of his followers.

The main thing that the writer wants to convey, this thesis is dedicated to his beloved mother (Uum Herawati) who never tired of loving her children, the most patient woman who became inspiration for the writer to keep fighting for the sake of looking good pleasure of Allah. And for his father in heaven (Aceng Ruhatma) that although the author could no longer see, but his prayers are always felt at any moment, revive the spirit comes when tired and also for the most beautiful woman, the angle in his heart (Neng N’ca Khoirunnisa), the writer apologizes for the delay of this thesis; her patience waiting for the completion of this thesis became a force for the writer to always keep fighting despite many obstacles ahead.

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The writer
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A. Background of the Study

A work of literature, like a painting, is a work of art. It is an object that embodies thoughts and feelings; study of it can increase our understanding of exactly what it is and can deepen our response to it.\(^1\) Literature is human personal expression in the form of experience, thoughts, feeling, ideas, enthusiasm, and conviction in the concrete description by using language. Studying literature is the same as studying human being because literature is the reflection of the social process of human beings. There are some ways to express ideas, especially in a literary work. There is a literary work that brings us to the world of dreams and takes us away from reality. It has to be contrasted with a literary work that needs our interpretation.

Literary work consists of two types, namely imaginative and non-imaginative. Both literary works are basically the same that is both are expressed aesthetically, but they have a different in expression. Imaginative type is commonly using connotative sentence to express an idea, while non-imaginative type is more realistic than the imaginative one. It uses denotative sentence. Non-imaginative type consists of essay, criticism, biography, autobiography, history, memoir, diary, and letters. And imaginative type consists of poetry, fiction, and

drama. In this paper, the writer takes poetry as an object that will be further analyzed.

Poetry as a kind of literary work is a reflection of poet’s thought and feelings. Poems are like the fingerprints of the poet. They tell you what the poet was thinking, what frame of mind he or she was in. Poets are in love with words. The gift of language makes us human, and poets make the fullest of it. We might call poetry language at its best: poets use its full potential, using more of it to better advantage than we usually do. They often seem to write a heightened sense of awareness, with a special intensity. Poetry mobilized the image-making capacity of language. It delights the ear and stirs our emotions. It has potential, if we let it, of making us more thoughtful human beings.\(^2\) Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions to suggest alternative meanings in the words, or to evoke emotional or sensual responses. One of the devices is symbolism. The use of symbol often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations.

Richard Abcarian states “A symbols in poetry, however, usually mean something more precise. In poetry, a symbol is an object or event that suggest more than itself. It is one of the most common and most powerful devices available to the poet, for it allows him to convey economically and simply a wide range of meanings.\(^3\) A rose, for example, can represent beauty or love or transience. A tree may represent a family’s roots and branches. A soaring bird might stand for freedom. Light might symbolize hope or knowledge or life. These


and other familiar symbols may represent different, even opposite things, depending on how they are deployed in a particular poem. Natural symbols like light and darkness, fire and water can stand for contradictory things. Water, for example, which typically symbolizes life (rain, fertility, food, life) can also stand for death (tempest, hurricanes, floods). And fire, which often indicates destruction, can represent purgation or purification. The meaning of any symbol, whether an object, an action, or a gesture, is controlled by its context. A final word of symbols. If a reader fails to recognize a symbol, he has missed an important part of the poem’s meaning.

Kim Addonizio was born in Washington, D.C., on July 31, 1954, as one of five children of Pauline Betz Addie, a U.S. tennis champion in the 1940s, and Bob Addie, a sportswriter for the Washington Post. She fell in love with poetry and read her work at open mike around the city. Addonizio moved to San Francisco, California, in 1976, where she worked in a succession of jobs as secretary, waitress, and office clerk. She began writing poetry in her twenties. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from San Francisco State University when she was twenty-eight years old, in the same year that her daughter was born. She has published four collections: The Philosopher’s Club, Jimmy & Rita, Tell Me, and What Is This Thing Called Love. Addonizio has also authored two instructional books on writing poetry: The Poet’s Companion (with Dorianne Laux), and Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within, both from W.W. Norton.

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This research is chosen because the writer is interested in studying literature. By reading literature work automatically can develop our knowledge and science and can arrange the works that are chosen by the author. Besides that, the writer can also get the author’s feeling or experiences from the object of the research in Kim Addonizio’s poem. After reading and explicating the poems, the writer can give some information concerning with the poems through the working of symbol in building each poem. Because the reader of this research can get an understanding of more general aspect through it such as human character, love, relationship, behavior, and massage of life. The writer educated a research concerning with the meaning analyzing of symbol of Addonizio’s poem. As we know that symbol is something you can see but that has taken on a meaning beyond itself. To support the study, the writer reviewed the reference material such as books and other references. The writer used the structure of semiotic as an approach in this research.

Realizing the fact above, the writer decided to do as good as possible in the research entitled “A Semiotic Analysis on Kim Addonizio’s Poems Based on C. S. Peirce’s Theory”

B. Focus of the Study

The writer limited the problems on the meaning analyzing of symbol of Kim Addonizio poem; Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Woman Want. Those three poems had been chosen by the writer because all of them were containing of symbol.

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C. Research Questions

According to the focus of study, the researcher limits it by formulating the research questions as follows:

1. What symbols does Kim Addonizio utilize in her poems?

2. What are the meanings of symbol from those analyzed poems?

D. Significance of the Study

This study has significance for the students, especially for the process of learning the Department of English studies in state Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta. This study is meant to encourage the students to study more about literature and linguistic. And this study gives information concerning the poem through the implicit meaning of symbols.

E. Methodology of Research

1. Objective of Research

The purpose of this study is to grasp a content of the poem, find out the description, and the other objectives as follows:

a. To know the utilized symbols in the Kim Addonizio’s poem.

b. To describe the performance of semiotic expression in Kim Addonizio’s poem.

c. To know the meaning of symbols that used in the following poem:

   Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Woman Want.

Moreover, the writer also wants to apply his ability in the poem by appreciating and studying a work art based on theory from some other
theories. Therefore, the writer can construct a study that connects the literature and another science.

2. **Method of Research**

This research is a qualitative method which describes about symbols on three Addonizio poems; *Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Woman Want*, and the meaning of those symbols. The writer uses the theory of semiotic as an approach in this research.

3. **Instrument of Research**

The writer himself as an instrument and as the subject of research by reading some books and other references. The writer as an instrument through reading any supporting data resources and analyzing poem to know the meaning of symbols on three Addonizio’s poems.

4. **Unit of Analysis**

The units of analysis in this research applied to be analyzed the Addonizio’s poems which was written in her book of poetry, *What Is This Thing Called Love* (2004); *Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Woman Want*, Those poems were containing of symbol that should be analyzed by the researcher.

5. **Technique of Data Analysis**

All the data that have been included in this research are qualitative data. The writer chooses literary works which contain of symbol, so the writer explicates the poem and interprets the meaning of symbol.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Definition of Poetry

Poetry is a form of literature that many readers hold in a special kind of affectionate admiration. Poetry deals in matters beyond direct statement—in meanings conditioned by emotional attitudes—and its intention is to evoke the full flavor and impact of experience. Poetry often achieves its effect by the selection of words that are suggestive not only of sensory experience but of emotional attitudes.¹

Poetry might be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language.² It is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound, and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response. The good of poetry depends on the excitement that leads to discovering the genuine. We can reach that goal only by full attention to the poem, to its words and their meanings. Many readers will feel that they have something to learn about improving their attentiveness about ways of getting into a poet’s language and of entering more fully into the life of the poem.³

Robert Frost has said, “Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one

thing and meaning another." Words have their literal meaning, but they can also be used so that something other than the literal meaning is implied.⁴

The poem gives us something to visualize, taking in with the mind’s eye. It is as if our days like a piece of embroidery were stitched through with a continuing thread of missing the other person. The poem does not just give us information to feed into a data bank. We are capable of caring one way or the other, we are capable of entering imaginatively into the poet’s feeling, or sharing his sense of loss. Finally, the poem is printed as lines of verse.⁵

Poetry is the media to communicate what we felt, saw, and observed from our environment and what we thought. Poetry can enchant and enthrall the readers because it offers entertainment and understanding. How significant the role of poetry, Shakespeare, praised in his sonnet that enclosed in the two last lines:

\[
\text{So long as men can breathe or eyes can see} \\
\text{So long lives this and gives life to thee.}^6
\]

From that quotation we see that so long we live in this world, so long it will be everlasting and will gives us the useful life, because the language of poem is created as the reflection from good feeling and thinking. So the poem is the media of thinking process or contemplation. The main objective of most poetry is communication. You are trying to communicate your ideas and feelings to your audience, or you are trying to entertain them. Admittedly, some poets write for

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themselves alone and have no audience. Those who never show or read their poems to another human being are the exception to this rule. But for the rest of us, we are trying to communicate. Some of the suggestions were based on pure communication principles, starting with the idea that there are four goals for communicating: to inform, to entertain, to persuade, or to query.

In the poem “mirror” by Silvia Plath was the representation of the idea that beauty lies in the hand of the perceiver. The mirror merely reflects the image to the woman, but it is the woman herself who is judging. Furthermore, the candles and the moon provide a vague image of the woman. They cast untrustworthy shadows that hide her true image, and perhaps take away from some of the beauty the woman may have. The candle and the moon are representational of self-misconceptions and others expressing their harsh bias view.

B. Definition of Semiotics

The word semiotics derived from the Greek root, *seme*, as in *semiotikos*, an interpreter of sign. Semiotic is the study of signs and symbol and their meaning and the use, especially in the writing, or method to analyze the sign. Barthes actually said, the semiotic basically want to discuss how human signify its things. Cobley and Jansz also said “discipline is simply the analysis of signs or the study of the functioning of sign systems.”

One of the broadest definitions is that of Umberto Eco, who states that ‘semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign’ (eco 1976, 7).

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Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘sign’ in everyday speech, but of only anything which ‘stands for’ something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. Contemporary semioticians study not in isolation but as part of semiotic ‘sign-system’ (such as a medium or genre). They study how meanings are made and how reality is represented. Semiotics is concerned with meaning-making and representation in many forms, perhaps most obviously in the form of ‘text’ and ‘media’.  

Semiotics is divided into two kinds: semiotic communication and semiotic signification. First is semiotic communication, the theory of sign production which one assumes the fifth factors in communication: sender, receiver, massage, media, and reference. So, actually, the semiotic communication is more about the goals of communication. Second is semiotic signification, this term is more important to discuss which the receiver’s cognitive process is having more attention. The semiotic significant is usually used in poems, drama, or prose. Here, the readers have to understand by themselves about the meaning of symbol or sign used by author in his literary work.

Semiotic tries to explain combination of sign which were the essential, the character, and form of sign, and the process of its signification. Semiotic gives big attention to everything that can be esteemed as a sign. One sign can be used as a signifier that has the important meaning to substitute something else. There is

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9 Alex Sobur M.Si (2003), *op. cit.* p. 15.
nothing considered except sign in semiotic, the study is about anything that has
related to sign, whether it is signifier, signified, how the sign can produce
meaning of the sign or anything else. Semiotic is one of the ways that
communication can be delivered.

According to Saussure, the sign is the whole that result from the
association of the signifier with the signified. The relationship between the
signifier and the signified is referred to as ‘signification’. A sign must have both a
signifier and a signified. We cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a
completely formless signified. A sign is a recognizable combination of a signifier
with a particular signified.  

Signifier and signified represent two fundamental levels of language. The
term signifier refers to the concrete word of sound and the term signified, on the
other hand relates to the concept or idea expressed by the sound or icon. In other
word, the two levels of language are in a relationship reciprocal. Form and content
cannot be separated.

Semiotic is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign
is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else
that doesn’t necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment
in which a sign stands for it. These are the fields of semiotics:

1. Analytic semiotics. This is semiotics, which analyze the system of
   sign. Peirce explain that semiotic have object of the sign and analyzed
   becomes idea, object, and meaning.

2. Description semiotics. It is referred to the system of the sign that are described as the real thing.

3. Zoo semiotics. It is referred to the system of the sign on the behavior of non-human.

4. Cultural semiotics. Semiotics studies about the system of sign in the culture of society.

5. Social semiotics. It is referred to the system of sign, produced by the human who have being the form of symbol.

6. Narrative semiotics. It is referred to the system of sign on the mythology and folklore narrative.

7. Natural semiotics. Semiotics studies the system of sign from the nature.

8. Normative semiotics. It is referred to the system of sign made by human being, which have the form of the norms.

9. Structural semiotics. This is semiotic which studying about the system of sign through the language structure.\textsuperscript{11}

C. Definition of Symbol

A symbol is a representamen whose representative character consists precisely in its being a rule that will determine its interpretant. All words, sentences, books and other conventional signs are symbols.\textsuperscript{12} For Peirce, a symbol

\textsuperscript{11} Mansoer Pateda, \textit{Semantik Leksikal, Edisi Kedua} (Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta, 2001), pp. 29-32.

is “a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object”. In the Peirce’s concept, symbol is interpreted according to a rule or a habitual connection. The symbol is connected with its object by virtue of the idea of the symbol-using mind, without which no such connection would exist.13

According to Perrine, “a symbol may be defined as something that means more than what it is”.14 A symbol is, put simply, something that stands for something else. The everyday world is full of common examples. Symbol in poetry are said to be those words and groups of words that have a range of references beyond their literal signification or denotation. Poems sometimes create a symbol out of thing, action or event that has no previously agreed on symbolic significance.15

Any ordinary words, as “give”, “bird”, “marriage”, are the examples of a symbol. It is applicable to whatever may be found to realize the idea connected with the word; it does not, in itself, identify those things. It does not show us a bird, nor enact before our eyes a giving or a marriage but supposes that we are able to imagine those things, and have associated the word with them.16

The symbol of language substituted one concept there was in our idea or our thinking. A symbol may be private (its meaning known only to one person),

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original (its meaning defined by its context in a particular work), or traditional (its meaning defined by our common culture and heritage). At its most complexes, a symbol may be all three. Some symbols are public symbols and contextual symbols. Public symbols are those objects or events that history has invented with rich meanings and associations. In a sense, then, a public symbol is a ready-made symbol. In contrast to public symbols, contextual symbols are objects or events that are symbolic by virtue of the poet’s handling of them in particular poem—that is, by virtue of the context.17

D. Semiotics Theory of Charles Sanders Peirce

In this chapter, the writer uses theory from philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce to find the answer of the research question. Peirce was born in 1839, he was an American philosopher which more originality and multidimensional. One of the most popularity was because of the theory of sign. In semiotic, Peirce often said that generally the signs had substituted something for someone. For Peirce, sign “is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign”18

Peirce formulated his own model of the sign, of ‘semiotic’ and of the taxonomies of signs in a triadic (three-part) model:

1. The Representamen: the form which the sign takes.

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18 Alex Sobur M. Si (2003), *op. cit.* p. 41.
2. An Interpretant: not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign.

3. An Object: to which the sign refers.\(^{19}\)

To use Peirce’s terminology, we can say that the sign, in the broad sense, consists of three interconnected elements: (1) the sign in the narrow sense, also referred to as the representamen, that which represents something else; (2) the object, that which the sign stands for, that which is represented by it; and finally (3) the (possible or potential) meaning the sign allows for, which may materialize as its translation into a new sign. Peirce refers to this as the interpretant.\(^{20}\)

These are best known as thrichotomy of Peirce theory. The thrichotomy can be visualized in this triangle:

![Diagram of the thrichotomy triangle]

Figure 1. The Process of Linguistic Sign

The interaction between the representament, the object and the interpretant is referred to by Peirce as ‘Semiosis’. Within Peirce’s model of the sign, the traffic light sign for ‘stop’ would consists of: a red light facing traffic at an

\(^{19}\) Daniel Chandler (2002), \textit{op. cit.} p. 32.

intersection (The Representament); vehicle halting (The Object) and the idea that a red light indicates that vehicles must stop (The Interpretant). Described by picture:

**Representamen**: A red light facing Traffic at an intersection

**Object**: Vehicle halting

**Interpretant**: Vehicles must stop

Figure 2. The Process of Linguistic Sign

Signs are divisible by three trichotomies; first, according as the sign in itself is a mere quality, is an actual existent, or is a general law; secondly, according as the relation of the sign to its object consists in the sign’s having some character in itself, or in some existential to that object, or in its relation to an interpretant; thirdly, according as its interpretant represents it as a sign of possibility or as a sign of fact or a sign of reason.

According to the first division, a Sign may be termed *a Qualisign, a Sinsign, or a Legisign*.

1. *A Qualisign* is a quality which is sign. It cannot actually act as a sign until it is embodied; but the embodiment has nothing to do with its character as a sign.

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2. A **Sinsign** is an actual existent thing or event which is a sign. It can only be so through its qualities; so that it involves a qualisign, or rather, several qualisigns.

3. A **Legisign** is a law that is a sign.

According to the second trichotomy, a sign may be termed an **Icon**, an **Index**, or a **Symbol**.

1. **An Icon** is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such object actually exists or not. For example: a cartoon, a portrait, and so on.

2. **An Index** is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object. This category can include such natural occurrences as smoke and fire, dark cloud and impending rain, a human footprint and the presence of a human being, but it also encompasses more consciously controlled meaning.

3. **A Symbol** is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object.

According to the third trichotomy, a sign may be termed a **Rheme**, a **Dicisign or Dicent Sign**, or an **Argument**.

1. **A Rheme** is a sign which, for its interpretant, is a sign of qualitative possibility, that is, is understood as representing such and such kind of
possible object. Or we may say that a rheme is a sign which understood to represent its object in its character merely.

2. **A Dicent** sign is a sign, which for its interpretant, is a sign of actual existence. Or a sign which is understood to represent its object in respect to actual existence.

3. **An Argument** is a sign which, for its interpretant, is a sign of law. Or we may say that is a sign which is understood to represent its object in its character as sign.22

Here is the other example of semiotic process by triangle of Peirce. When a girl wearing mini skirt, that girl was communicate about her self to others who may interpret as a symbol of sexiness. Describes by picture:

![Figure 3. The Process of Linguistic Sign](image)

Based on the explanation about the semiotic of Peirce above, that the function of essential of the sign make something efficiency. Usually semiotic of Peirce used in the part of life, such as painting, architecture, sociology, psychology, literature and communication in the society.

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A. Explication and Symbol Analysis of Verities

VERITIES

Into every life a little ax must fall.

Every dog has its choke chain.

Every cloud has its shadow.

Better dead than fed.

He who laughs, will not last.

Sticks and stones will break you,

and then the names of things will be changed.

A stitch in time saves no one.

The darkest hour comes.

“Verities” was written in 2006 by Kim Addonizio, an American poet who was born in Washington, D.C., on July 31, 1954. This poem “verities” is very brief. Only nine short lines long, the poem captures, through the alteration of trite phrases, the sad state of existence. Addonizio brings the reader into a sad perspective of the world: a place where danger is just around the corner and misery is waiting to prey upon an innocent victim. Even with its dismal subject matter, Addonizio manages to invite the reader into the poem with one sweetly cynical first line: “Into every life a little ax must fall”. The reader becomes
painfully aware of the presence of tragedy. Indeed, this line speaks to the inevitability and sly away that misfortune seeps into an individual’s life.

Addonizio then moves into three fast paced statements that hit hard with pessimism: “Every dog has its choke chain./ Every cloud has its shadow./ Better dead than fed.” (Line 2-4) these three lines act as dirge to carry the reader into the poems dark heart where Addonizio will reveal, with even greater cynicism, the futility of existence. In essence, the poem itself is a verity; it is one statement about life’s futility and darkness. And the poem’s length is a literal comment of the brief nature of life.

As the media to communicate the ideas and feelings to audiences, this poem analyzed based on four goals for communicating: to inform, to entertain, to persuade and to query. Kim Addonizio used the symbols of silent thing and also the symbol of society in this poem to bring the reader into a sad perspective of the world. Verities, Ax, and Darkest Hour were the three symbols and each of them has its own significance.

Those three symbols are considered to represent the Addonizio’s view of sad perspective and disasters that occur in her world. Verities, Ax, Darkest Hour are the manifestations of what Addonizio wants to convey in his poem until the reader can clearly conclude and understand what Addonizio means.

The writer tried to interpret the utilized symbols in “Verities” by using triadic-theory of semiotic process which are proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce to know the meaning of symbol from this analyzed poem, they are; representament, interpretant and object. The representament is the form which the
sign takes. An interpretant is not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign. And an object is to which the sign refers.

*Verities* means a belief or principle about life, the world, that is accepted as true, in this poem, *Verities* as the symbol of life’s futility. Addonizio reveals her dark heart with cynicism and pessimism in every line of the poem signifies that danger and misery are waiting to prey upon an innocent victim.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4. The Process of Linguistic Sign**

*Explanation:* The word “Verities” stands for a symbol which relates to an innocent victim as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Verities” is life’s futility (as interpretant). The dark heart with cynicism and pessimism in every line of the poem reveals that Addonizio brings the reader into a sad perspective of the world: a place where danger is just around the corner and misery is waiting to prey upon an innocent victim.
Ax is a tool with a wooden handle and a heavy metal blade used for chopping wood and cutting down trees, but in this poem, ax is representing a tinge of violence. “Into every life a little ax must drop” (1st line) indicates that something bad is imminent, that will happen in almost every line in this poem.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram](image)

**Explanation:** The word “Ax” stands for a symbol which relates to individual’s life as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Ax” is tinge of violence (as interpretant). The first line of this poem indicates that something bad is imminent.

Darkest hour means unpleasant and without any hope that something good will happen, but in this poem, darkest hour is representing disaster or looming calamity. “A stitch in time saves no one. The darkest hour comes.” (Line 8 & 9) ironically, Addonizio’s altering “a stitch in time saves nine” serves as a numeric
orientation in the poem, both literally and figuratively. The poem has “nine” lines, but no “one” can be save or disaster or “a stitch in time” will not saves anyone of these lines from looming calamity.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Figure 6. The Process of Linguistic Sign](image)

**Explanation:** The word “Darkest Hour” stands for a symbol which relates to poem’s length as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Darkest Hour” is disaster or looming calamity (as interpretant). Kim Addonizio’s altering “a stitch in time saves nine” serves as a numeric orientation in the poem. The poem has “nine” lines, but no “one” can be save or “a stitch in time” will not saves anyone of these lines from disaster or looming calamity

**B. Explication and Symbol Analysis of First Poem For You**

*FIRST POEM FOR YOU*
"First Poem For You" was written in 2006 by Kim Addonizio, an American poet who was born in Washington, D.C., on July 31, 1954. This poem "First Poem For You" tells us about author’s true love. She is really scared to show her love outright. The fact that she is in the dark could signify that she is confused, possibly about their relationship. She seems glad to know that the tattoos will last until death but scared to see if their relationship will eventually become filled with pain and bitterness instead of the ‘love’ she is feeling now for him. Because it is as terrifying as she mentions, she wants to shy away from
loving him but she tries regardless of the outcome. The tattoos seem to be easier and less terrifying than the man, for they will never change but his love for her could either for better or worst.

Addonizio also describes a relationship in her poem “first poem for you”, in which her words unfold a vivid experience of someone that she has an intense love connection. Her words reveal strong desire she has for this someone. Through touch and memory, she is able to describe her experience in detail. Addonizio’s passion is released by reminiscing back the time she spent with this person. Her feelings are so strong that she is not afraid to free her words for the world to see.

As the media to communicate the ideas and feelings to audiences, this poem analyzed based on four goals for communicating: to inform, to entertain, to persuade and to query. Kim Addonizio used the symbol of nature and also the symbol of society to compare the tattoos and poetry to love in a relationship. Lightning, Water, Serpent and Pictures are four words that have a symbolic meaning for the poem. For these four symbols has its own significance.

Those Symbols are considered to represent the Addonizio’s view of love and tattoos on her boyfriend’s body which she was in a relationship with a guy. Lightning and Water are the form of manifestation of the power of love that she felt when her boyfriend stands beside her. Serpent and the Pictures are the form of tattoo and masculinity of her boyfriend. The incorporation of those symbols will produce a message about the relationship of strength and purity of love with tattoos that exist in her boyfriend’s body.
The writer tried to interpret the utilized symbols in “First Poem For You” by using triadic-theory of semiotic process which are proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce to know the meaning of symbol from this analyzed poem, they are; representament, interpretant and object. The representament is the form which the sign takes. An interpretant is not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign. And an object is to which the sign refers.

*Lightning* symbolizes power of love, the girlfriend of the guy with the tattoos enjoys touching the tattoos when she is unable to see the guy. She knows by heart just where the lightning is pulsing, “*lines of lightning pulsing just above your nipple, can find, as if by instinct*” (1st stanza, lines 4-5), just like a person’s heartbeat; a beat that can go faster or slower depending on the situation. It is instinctive for the woman to know where every tattoo on the guy, just like in a relationship, a person may know every mark or scar on the other’s body.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

```
Lightning
(Representament)

Heartbeat
(Object)

The Power of Love
(Interpretant)
```

Figure 7. The Process of Linguistic Sign
Explanation: The word “Lightning” stands for a symbol which relates to heartbeat as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Lightning” is the power of love (as interpretant). It is her experience when being a relationship with someone. In “First Poem For You”, Addonizio enjoys touching her boyfriend’s tattoos when she is unable to see the guy. She knows by heart just where the lightning is pulsing.

Water means a liquid without color, smell, or taste, but in this poem, water is symbolizes pure love, that her boyfriend at her heart. “The blue swirls of heart on your shoulder” (1st stanza, lines 5-6), the woman knows that just above his shoulder are the blue swirls of water.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 8. The Process of Linguistic Sign

Explanation: The word “Water” stands for a symbol which relates to her boyfriend’s love as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word
“Water” is pure love (as interpretant). In “First Poem For You” Kim Addonizio knows that just above his shoulder are the blue swirls of water.

The serpent symbolizes the bravery, and it also shows he has no fear against his enemies. We are able to identify the person through her detailed description throughout the entire poem with the key words such as heart, pulsing, nipple, and shoulder.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram of linguistic sign process]

Figure 9. The Process of Linguistic Sign

Explanation: The word “Serpent” stands for a symbol which relates to her boyfriend’s body as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Serpent” is the bravery (as interpretant). In “First Poem For You” Kim Addonizio knows that her boyfriend shows that he has no fear against his enemies. Addonizio describes the boyfriend through her detailed description
throughout the entire poem with the key words such as heart, pulsing, nipple, and shoulder.

*Pictures* symbolizes her boyfriend’s tattoos. “*when I pull you to me, until we are spent and quite on the sheets, I love to kiss the pictures in your skin*” (1st & 2nd stanza, lines 7-10) means that she pulls him closer to her while they are lying down and falling asleep, she expresses her love and care for him until there is no more time left in the night, until it’s spent. Kiss the pictures in his skin means kissing his tattoos.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram of the Process of Linguistic Sign](image)

**Figure 10. The Process of Linguistic Sign**

*Explanation:* The word “Pictures” stands for a symbol which relates to her boyfriend’s skin as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Pictures” is the tattoos (as interpretant). In “*first poem for you*” Addonizio shows her love for her boyfriend by kissing the pictures in his skin.
C. Explication and Symbol Analysis of *What Do Women Want*

**WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?**

*I want a red dress.*

*I want it flimsy and cheap,*

*I want it too tight, I want to wear it*

*until someone tears it off me.*

*I want it sleeveless and backless,*

*this dress, so no one has to guess*

*what's underneath. I want to walk down*

*the street past Thrifty's and the hardware store*

*with all those keys glittering in the window,*

*past Mr. and Mrs. Wong selling day-old*

*donuts in their café, past the Guerra brothers*

*slinging pigs from the truck and onto the dolly,*

*hoisting the slick snouts over their shoulders.*

*I want to walk like I'm the only*

*woman on earth and I can have my pick.*

*I want that red dress bad.*

*I want it to confirm*

*your worst fears about me,*

*to show you how little I care about you*

*or anything except what*

*I want. When I find it, I'll pull that garment*
from its hanger like I'm choosing a body
to carry me into this world, through
the birth-cries and the love-cries too,
and I'll wear it like bones, like skin,
it'll be the goddamned
dress they bury me in.

“What Do Women Want” was written in 2006 by Kim Addonizio, an American poet who was born in Washington, D.C., on July 31, 1954. This poem “what do women want” tell us about women’s relationship to clothes, to have that one little sexy dress they see at shop. This is a poem that asserts a lust for life in the face of unstated social restrictions, but Addonizio tempers that lust with self-depreciating humor and a vivid sense of environment and resilience. The speaker is a woman who just wants to live and be herself.

She wants to celebrate her power over man, as if she were the last woman on earth, choosing whomever she so desires, the word “you” in the poem here may thus be taken to be men in general. She wants to show the men that she cares little for them, and their worst fears of her are true. “...anything except what, I want” (lines 20-21) emphasize that her desires are solely for herself only.

At the same time, because the emancipation of her desire seems to be tied to that red dress, and what is signifies not just to her, but also her in relation to men who presumably desire her in it, there almost appears to be a turning back to the whole issue of women not being free to desire on their own, but are re-
circumscribed within men’s desires. The confidence that she exude inhere through that red dress.

As the media to communicate the ideas and feelings to audiences, this poem analyzed based on four goals for communicating: to inform, to entertain, to persuade and to query. In this poem, Kim Addonizio used the symbol of nature and also symbol of society to describe the power of her sexuality, freedom, and equality. *Dress, sleeveless and backless, and garment* are four words that have a symbolic meaning for the poem. From these four symbols has its own significance.

Those Symbols are considered to represent the Addonizio’s view about the power of sexual in a piece of clothing that she wanted to possess, uses and shows it to everyone. Those symbols are the form of manifestation of what Addonizio wants to convey in his poem until the reader can clearly conclude and understand what addonizio’s tells and conveys in her work.

The writer tried to interpret the utilized symbols in “What Do Women Want” by using triadic-theory of semiotic process which are proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce to know the meaning of symbol from this analyzed poem, they are; representament, interpretant and object. The representament is the form which the sign takes. An interpretant is not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign. And an object is to which the sign refers.

*Dress* symbolizes speaker’s own desires of her strength and confidence. Addonizio creates is as much about fantasy as it defiance. The rich detail of the longed-for dress speaks volumes about a performative statement the speaker
wishes to make, but it is still just something that she wants, perhaps more than the
dress itself and therefore not yet a reality. Addonizio sets the context of her
speaker’s identity, what she wants is a sexy red dress and more than that, she
wants to fly in the face of moralistic convention, embracing her sexuality and
taking pleasure in the attention it brings, no matter what anyone else might think.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Diagram showing the process of linguistic sign explanation]

**Explanation:** The word “Dress” stands for a symbol which relates to
speaker’s sexuality as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the
word “Pictures” is the desire of strength and confidence (as interpretant). In
“What Do Women Want” Addonizio sets the context of her speaker’s identity,
what she wants is a sexy red dress and more than that, she wants to show her
strength and confidence embracing her sexuality.
Sleeveless and Backless as the symbol of speaker who proud of her body and wants to flaunt it as she saunters sexily down the street. There is a combination of both feminist and feminine sensuality. Indeed, the dress should be too tight, molding curves of her body, leaving nothing to the imagination, a dress to kill, one thing that reduces men to slobbering fools.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

![Figure 12. The Process of Linguistic Sign](image)

**Explanation:** The word “Sleeveless and Backless” stands for a symbol which relates to feminine sensuality as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word “Sleeveless and Backless” is proud of her body (as interpretant). In “What Do Women Want” Addonizio wants to flaunt it as she saunters sexily down the street.

*Garment* representing the speaker’s identity of her life. There is a kind of dialectical relationship with the dress. That is also the dress she wants to be buried
in marks perhaps a change and shift in what the dress means. It suggests that the
dress is now as both her body and herself. Above all else, she wants to be herself
in whichever ways she chooses, in her own skin and also to be wanted as her very
own self and not as her body alone, her own desires and pleasure.

For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

*Figure 13. The Process of Linguistic Sign*

**Explanation:** The word “Garment” stands for a symbol which relates to the
body as its object. In Kim Addonizio’s poem, the meaning of the word
“Sleeveless and Backless” is life’s identity (as interpretant). The symbol states
that the dress as both her body and her self together. Addonizio wants to be
herself in whichever ways she chooses, in her own skin, as it were; and also,
possibly, to be wanted as her very owns self, and not as her body alone. She wants
for her own self, her own desire and pleasure on her own terms.
A. Conclusion

After having analyzed on Kim Addonizio’s poems, the writer concludes some points, such as follows:

Poetry is a form of literature that many readers hold in a special kind of affectionate admiration. And as kind of language that says more and says it more intensely then does ordinary language.

A symbol is something that means more than what it is. Symbol in poetry are said to be those words and groups of words that have a range of references beyond their literal signification or denotation. Poems sometimes create a symbol out of thing, action, or event that has no previously agreed on symbolic significance.

*Verities, First Poem For You, and What Do Women Want* are three kind of Kim Addonizio’s poems constructed by the symbol as one kind of intrinsic element of poetry. In *Verities*, the appearances of symbol are represented by the words *Verities, Ax, and Darkest hour*; in *First Poem For You*, the appearances of symbol are represented by the words *Lightning, Water, Serpent, and Pictures*; in *What Do Women Want*, the appearances of symbol are represented by the words *Dress, Sleeveless and Backless, and Garment*.

The use of symbols in *Verities* is describes as *sad perspective of the world*. The use symbols in *First Poem For You* is describes as *to compare between the
tattoos and poetry to love in a relationship. The use of symbol in What Do Women Want is describes as the power of her sexuality, freedom and equality.

Kim Addonizio almost uses the symbol of nature and also the symbol of society and silent thing in her three poems. The writer utilize triadic-theory of semiotic process which are proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce to know the meaning of each symbol, they are; representament, interpretant and object. The representament is the form which the sign takes. An interpretant is not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign. And an object is to which the sign refers.

Based on that triangle theory, we can possibly analyze from every side of term, if we analyze from the representament, then the representament will explain the object and the interpretant, and so on.

B. Suggestion

Based on those conclusions the writer hopes this study can contribute supporting reference in analyzing work of literature through semiotic framework. However this study is not perfect yet.

For the readers who are interesting to do same study about semiotic, the writer suggests to take the theory of Peirce to find out the result of research. Finally, the writer hopes that this study will be useful for the enrichment of studying semiotic, especially in the English Department, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta.
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VERITIES

Into every life a little ax must fall.
Every dog has its choke chain.
Every cloud has its shadow.
Better dead than fed.
He who laughs, will not last.
Sticks and stones will break you,
and then the names of things will be changed.
A stitch in time saves no one.
The darkest hour comes.
First Poem for You

I like to touch your tattoos in complete
darkness, when I can’t see them. I’m sure of
where they are, know by heart the neat
lines of lightning pulsing just above
your nipple, can find, as if by instinct, the blue
swirls of water on your shoulder where a serpent
twists, facing a dragon. When I pull you
to me, taking you until we’re spent
and quiet on the sheets, I love to kiss
the pictures in your skin. They’ll last until
you’re seared to ashes; whatever persists
or turns to pain between us, they will still
be there. Such permanence is terrifying.
So I touch them in the dark; but touch them, trying.
What Do Women Want

I want a red dress.
I want it flimsy and cheap,
I want it too tight, I want to wear it
until someone tears it off me.
I want it sleeveless and backless,
this dress, so no one has to guess
what's underneath. I want to walk down
the street past Thrifty’s and the hardware store
with all those keys glittering in the window,
past Mr. and Mrs. Wong selling day-old
donuts in their café, past the Guerra brothers
slinging pigs from the truck and onto the dolly,
hoisting the slick snouts over their shoulders.
I want to walk like I'm the only
woman on earth and I can have my pick.
I want that red dress bad.
I want it to confirm
your worst fears about me,
to show you how little I care about you
or anything except what
I want. When I find it, I'll pull that garment
from its hanger like I'm choosing a body
to carry me into this world, through
the birth-cries and the love-cries too,
and I'll wear it like bones, like skin,
it'll be the goddamned
dress they bury me in.