

## CHAPTER 2

### FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES

In this chapter, I will explain in detail related theories to object analysis along with supporting references. In analyzing the meanings contained in this music video, I examine it from a semiotic perspective. Among sign experts, two terms developed between semiotics and semiology, it is clear that the word semiotics in addition to the word semiology are still used. Both semiotics and semiology, the shortcomings are more or less interchangeable because they are both used to refer to the science of signs.

#### **Semiotics**

Etymologically, semiotic comes from the Greek word "Semion" which means "sign". The sign itself is defined as something that can represent something else. Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as the study of a series of events occurring around the world as a sign. Here I will provide some definition of semiotics from different book sources:

According to Sobur (2006: 15), semiotics is a science or analytical method for studying signs. The signs here are the tools we use in trying to find a way in this world, among humans and together with humans. According to Teeuw (as cited in Danesi 2010: 3), semiotics is a linguistic model that accounts for all essential factors and aspects for understanding linguistic phenomena as a unique means of communication in any society. Related to some semiotic opinions according to experts, the development of semiotics as a method of study into various scientific branches is possible because there is a tendency to view social di courses as linguistic phenomena. According to Yakin & Totu (2014:1), semiotics is the study of signs. In general, the definition of semiotics, as different semioticians agree it on, is "the study of sign or an epistemology about the existence or the actuality of sign in social life". Saussure (Saussure 1983:118; Saussure 1974:120), states that a sign has two entities, namely Signifier and Signified or "Signs" and "Meanings" or "Signers" and "Signs". Signifier is the sound that is approved or the agreed streak (material

aspects), that is what is agreed upon and what is written or read. Signified is a mental picture, which is a thought or concept of mental and language aspects. According to Piliang (1998:262), the language is used as a model in many social discourses. Based on the semiotic viewpoint, if all social practices can be regarded as linguistic phenomena, they can also be seen as signs.

According to Saussure (as cited in Hidayat, 1998:26), semiology is based on the assumption that as long as human actions and behavior carry meaning, or as long as they function as signs, there must be behind it a system of differences and conventions that make that meaning possible. Where there is a sign there is a system. While Peirce (as cited in Berger, 2000, p. 11-22), called the science that he built as "the semiotics". For Peirce, who was an expert in philosophy and logic, human reasoning is always carried out by means of signs. This means that humans can only reason through signs. In his mind, logic is the same as semiotics and semiotics can be assigned to all kinds of signs. We know that there are many definitions of semiotics itself, both Saussurean and Peircean.

Based on the explanation above, semiotics is the study of signs, meaning of decisions, interpretation, symbolism, and communication. Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, studying the structure and meaning of language more specifically.

### **Semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857- 1913)**

Based on the sub-chapter above, I have explained the definitions of semiotics from various experts, as well as the basic elements of the science of semiotics. Next, I will explain the semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure. Ferdinand de Saussure is a linguist who has developed the basic theory of general linguistics. He is also known as the founder of modern linguists. The emergence of sign theory in linguistics began when he felt that the theories were supposed to place on more general. According to Lechte (2001), he is never actually printed his thoughts into a book. His notes were collected by his students into an outline. His work was compiled and published as a book with the title "Course in General

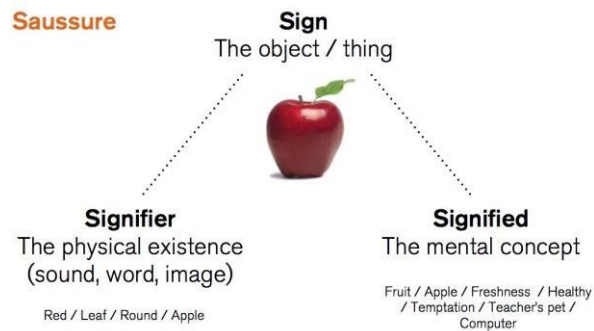
Linguistics". Given below are the excerpts from Saussure which are considered as a catalyst for the emergence of semiotic field:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993, p. 4).

Grenz (2001) states that Saussure's greatness is that he succeeded in attacking the "historical" understanding of language development in the 19th century. At that time, the study of language focused on linguistic behavior (human speech, parole). Saussure uses an anti-historical approach that sees language as a whole and internally harmonious system (langue). He has proposed a theory of language called "structuralism" to replace the "historical" approach of his predecessors. The following is a concept from Saussure's semiology which is divided into four concepts, namely:

**a. Signifier and Signified**

The first concept is the signifier and signified which are the components that form the sign and their roles cannot be separated from one another. Signifiers are things caught by our minds such as sound, images, visual images, and so on. Meanwhile, signified is the meaning or impression that we have in our minds for what caught. If viewed from a linguistic point of view which is the basis of Saussure's semiological concept, the parable can be analogized with the word and object "door." A signified door is a component of a collection of letters, namely d-o-o-r, while signifier can be understood as something that connects one room to another. The combination of this signifier and signified, then forms a sign for the "door." not just an inanimate object used by humans. (Culler as cited in Ahimsa, 2006 : 35).



**Figure 2.1 Signifier and Signified**  
(Albydav, 2017)

### **b. Langue and Parole**

The second concept is the aspect of language which is divided by Saussure into two, namely langue and parole. Langue is a language system and an abstract system that is used collectively as if mutually agreed upon by all language users, as well as being a guide in language practice in society. Parole is the practice of language and individual speech forms in society at a time or moment. The langue realized and applied by individuals in society as a form of language utterance, then referred to as parole. The parole of one individual to another may vary because the realization and application can vary from one another. (Culler as cited in Ahimsa, 2006 : 35).

### **c. Synchronic and Diachronic**

The third concept of language study is divide by Saussure into two, namely synchronic and diachronic. Synchronic is the study of language which studies the language in a time, while diachronic studies the language continuously or as long as the language is still used. Synchronic is often referred to as a descriptive linguistic study because it studies many things that aim to describe or explain what language is used at a time. Diachronic is more of a historical and comparative study because it aims to find the history, changes, and structural development of a language in an infinite time. (Culler as cited in Ahimsa, 2006, p. 46).

### **d. Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic**

Saussure's last semiological concept is the concept of the relationship between elements divided into syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Syntagmatic explains the relationship between elements in linguistic concepts that are regular and arranged in an orderly manner. Meanwhile, paradigmatic describes the relationship between elements in a speech that is not found in the other speech in question, which appears to be visible in the language but does not appear in the sentence structure. According to Saussure (as cited in Sobur, 2016, p. ix), paradigms is a set of signs or vocabulary from which choices are made and only one unit of these options can be selected. Syntagms are combinations of signs with other signs from existing devices based on certain rules, resulting in meaningful expressions.

Based on the explanation of Saussure's semiology above, the relationship between semiotics and linguistics must be realized by the nature of the bond between the two fields (signifier and signified) which Saussure focuses on the kind of the word as a sign. Then Saussure conceptualized his semiology into four kinds, namely; signifier and signified, langue and parole, synchronic and diachronic, also syntagmatic and paradigmatic.

### **Semiotics of Charles Sander Peirce (1839 – 1914)**

Charles Sanders Peirce is well-known as a pioneer of pragmatism doctrine who has provided the basic in the general theory of signs through his writings, and texts that have been compiled 25 years after his death in a single comprehensive piece of work entitled *Oeuvres Completes* (Zoest, 1991). Peirce proposed the term “semiotic”, which according to him is synonymous with the concept of logic that focuses on the knowledge of human thinking process as portrayed in his writing published in 1931/1958:

Logic, in its general sense, is, as I believe I have shown, only another name for semiotic, the quasi-necessary, or formal doctrine of signs. By describing the doctrine as “quasi-necessary”, or formal, I mean that we observe the characters of such signs as we know, and from such an observation, by a process which I will not object to naming Abstraction, we are led to statements, eminently fallible, and therefore in one sense by no means necessary, as to what must be characters of all signs used by a “scientific” intelligence, that is to say by an intelligence capable of learning by experience (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993, p. 4).

According to Peirce, a sign or representation is something that for someone represents something else or capacity. Something else that Peirce called as an interpretant. The interpretant of the first sign, in turn, will spur on a particular object. Peirce suggests that a sign or representamen has a “triadic” relationship with the interpretant and its object. The process of “semiosis” is called by Peirce as signification (Indiawan, 2013:167). Peirce says that human reasoning is always done through signs. Peirce states that semiotics consists of three basic elements, namely the sign, the object, and the interpretant, or we called the triangle meaning theory (Kriyanto, 2008:265).

Peirce as cited in Chandler (2007:29), offered a triadic (three-part) element consisting of:

1. **The representamen:** the form which the sign takes (not necessarily material, though usually interpreted as such) – called by some theorists the “sign vehicle”.
2. **An interpretant:** not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign.
3. **An object:** something beyond the sign to which it refers (a referent).

To qualify as a sign, all three elements are essential. The sign is a unity of what is represented (the object), how it is represented (the representamen) and how it is interpreted (the interpretant). The interaction between the representamen, the object and the interpretant is referred to by Peirce as “semiosis” (Peirce 1931-58, 5.484).

Here then are the three basic elements of Semiotic by Peirce:

### 1. **Symbol/symbolic**

An element in which the signifier does not resemble the signified but which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional – so that this relationship must be agreed upon and learned: e.g. language in general (plus specific languages, alphabetical letters, punctuation marks, words, phrases and sentences), numbers, morse code, traffic lights, national flags (Chandler, 2007:36).

### 2. **Icon/iconic**

An element in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified (recognizably looking, sounding, feeling, tasting or smelling like it) – being similar in possessing some of its qualities: e.g. a portrait, a cartoon, a scale-model, onomatopoeia, metaphors, realistic sounds in “programme music”, sound effects in radio drama, a dubbed film soundtrack, imitative gestures (Chandler, 2007, p. 36 – 37).

### **3. Index/indexical**

An element in which the signifier is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way (physically or causally) to the signified (regardless of intention) – this link can be observed or inferred: e.g. ‘natural signs’ (smoke, thunder, footprints, echoes, non-synthetic odors and flavors), medical symptoms (pain, a rash, pulse-rate), measuring instruments (weathercock, thermometer, clock, spirit-level), “signals” (a knock on a door, a phone ringing), recordings, a photograph, a film, video or television shot, an audio recorded voice (Chandler, 2007:37).

Based on explanation of Peirce’s semiotics above, Peirce developed semiotics based on the philosophy and logic. For Peirce, a sign is a represent (representament), which means the real meaning of a sign. A sign refers to something (the object) for someone (the interpreter). These three interrelationships determine the process of semiosis. Then, Peirce divides semiotics into three basic elements, namely; icon, symbol, also index.

#### **Type of Semiotics**

According to Hoed as mentioned by Sobur (2006:15), there are two types of semiotic studies, namely as follows:

##### **a) Semiotics of communication**

Semiotics communication emphasizes the theory of the production of signs, one of which assumes the existence of six factors in communication, namely the sender, receiver of the code (sign system), messages, communication channels, and references (things being discussed).

##### **b) Semiotics significance**

Significant semiotics emphasizes sign theory and its understanding in a particular context. In this second type, there is no question of the purpose of communicating on the contrary, the priority is the understanding of a sign so that the cognitive process of the recipient of the sign is more concerned than the communication process.

### Order of Signification

Saussure's bilateral or dyadic sign model comprises three terms; the sign and its constituents that are signifier and signified. It means that every sign consists of a signifier and a signified. Signifier refers to the form which takes (mental image) while the signified refers to the concept it represents (mental concept). A sign has to have both a signifier and a signified. A sign is a knowable combination of a signifier with a particular signified. The relationship between the signifier and signified is called "signification".



**Figure 2.2 The Order of Signification**  
(Princeton, 2019)

Saussure (1974: 65) defines a sign as being composed of signifiers and signified.

- a) **A signifier (signifiant):** a form which the sign takes. It is something that can be touched, listened, or seen that used to represent what people want to express in communication.
- b) **A signified (signifié):** a concept it represents. It is an abstract concept of what the signifier means. It can also be interpreted as the concept of the meaning of what people want to express in communication.

If we take a linguistic example, the word "Open" (when it is invested with meaning by someone who encounters it on a shop doorway) is a sign



consisting of a signifier: the word open; a signified concept: that the shop is open for business. A sign must have both a signifier and a signified. You cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a completely formless signified (Saussure 1983, 101; Saussure 1974, 102-103). A sign is a recognizable combination of a signifier with a particular signified. The same signifier (the word “open”) could stand for a different signified (and thus be a different sign) if it were on a push-button inside a lift (“push to open door”). Similarly, many signifiers could stand for the concept “open” (for instance, on top of a packing carton, a small outline of a box with an open flap for “open this end”) - again, with each unique pairing constituting a different sign.

### **Signifier**

The signifier is now commonly interpreted as the material (or physical) form of the sign - it is something which can be seen, heard, touched, smelt or tasted. For Saussure, both the signifier and signified are purely “psychological” (Saussure 1983, 12, 14-15, 66; Saussure 1974, 12, 15, 65-66). According to Saussure (as cited in Copley and Jansz, 2003:10), a signifier is the thoroughly material aspect of a sign: if one feels one's vocal cords when speaking, it is clear that sounds are made from vibrations (which are undoubtedly material in nature). Saussure describe the verbal signifier as a "sound-image".

### **Signified**

The signified is the concept, the meaning, the thing indicated by the signifier. It need not be a “real object” but is some “referent” to which the signifier refers. The thing signified is created in the perceiver and is internal to them. Whilst the signifier is more stable, the signified varies between people and contexts. The signified does stabilize with habit, as the signifier cues thoughts and images. According to Barthes (1983:155), the sign is the unity of a signifier with the signified. In other words, the signifier is the sound that is meaningful. So, signifier is the material aspect of language, i.e. what is said or heard and what is written or read. The signified is the mental picture, thought, or concept. So, signified is the mental aspect of the language.

As for the signified, most commentators who adopt Saussure's model still treat this as a mental construct, although they often note that it may nevertheless refer indirectly to things in the world. Saussure's original model of the sign “brackets the referent”: excluding reference to objects existing in the world. His signified is not to be identified directly with a referent but is a “concept” in the mind - not a thing but the notion of a thing. Some people may wonder why Saussure's model of the sign refers only to a concept and not to a thing. An observation from the philosopher Susanne Langer (who was not referring to Saussure's theories) may be useful here. Note that like most contemporary commentators, Langer uses the term “symbol” to refer to the linguistic sign (Saussure, 1974).

### **Meaning**

Pateda (2001:79), suggests that the term meaning is confusing words and terms. The meaning is always integrated in the utterances of words and sentences. According to Ullman as cited in Pateda (2001:82), he argues that meaning is the relationship between meaning and understanding. Meaning is the link that exists between the elements of the language itself (Djajasudarma, 1999: 5). Connection between symbol and reference is indirect. While the relationship between symbol by reference and reference by reference, are direct. (Ogden and Richards as cited in Sudaryat, 2009: 13). According to Saussure's view, meaning is "understanding" or "concept" that belongs to or is contained in a linguistic sign. According to Saussure, every linguistic sign consists of two elements, namely: (1) the interpret (French: *signifié*, English: *signified*) and (2) the object (French: *signifiant*, English : *Signifier*). What is object or meant (*signifié*, *signified*) are actually nothing but the concept or meaning of a sound sign. While the interpret (*signifiant*, *signifier*) are sounds formed from the phonemes of the language concerned. These two elements are elements in language (intralingual) which usually refers to a referent which is an element outside the language (extralingual).

### **Type of Meaning**

According to Chaer (1994: 289 - 296), there are 12 types of meaning. The meanings are lexical, grammatical, contextual, referential and non-referential, denotative, connotative, conceptual, associative, words, terms, idioms, and proverb meanings.

### 1. Lexical Meaning

The lexical meaning is the actual meaning, according to the results of our sensory observations, the meaning as it is and the meaning in the dictionary. Lexical is a form derived from the noun form of the lexicon (vocabulary). It is said that lexical meaning is a meaning that is in accordance with the referent, a meaning that is in accordance with the results of the observation of the senses, or a meaning that is really real in our lives. For example: the word “horse” has a lexical meaning of a kind of animal.

### 2. Grammatical Meaning

The grammatical meaning is the meaning that occurs after the grammatical process (affixation, reduplication, compositumization). The difference between lexical and grammatical meanings is that lexical meaning is the basic meaning/meaning of word for word, while grammatical meaning is a new meaning that appears when the words become a sentence. For example: the word “horse” has a lexical meaning of animal, while its grammatical meaning can be a means of transportation.

### 3. Contextual Meaning

Contextual meaning is the meaning of a laksem or word that is in a context. For example, the context meaning of the word “head” in the following sentences:

- a. There is no white hair on grandmother's head yet.
- b. As the head of principal he had to reprimand the student.
- c. The phone number is on the letterhead.

### 4. Referential and Non-Referential Meaning

Referential meaning is a word that has its referent. So that a word can be called referential if there is a reference or referent. Words such as “horse”, “red”, and “picture” are words that have referential meaning because there are references in the real world. Meanwhile, non-referential meaning is a word that has no reference in the real world. For example the words “and”, “or”, and “because”. These words have no reference in the real world.

#### 5. Denotative and Connotative Meaning

Denotative meaning is the original meaning, original meaning, or the actual meaning that a word has. For example, the word "thin" (meaning denotative which means the state of a person's body that is smaller than the normal size). While the connotative is another meaning that is added to the denotative meaning that is related to the sense of a person or group of people who use the word. For example, the word "thin" in the example above has a neutral connotation. But the word 'Slim', which is actually synonymous with the word skinny, has a positive connotation, namely a pleasant value; people would love to be said to be slim. On the other hand, the word "Slender", which is actually also synonymous with the word thin or slim, has a negative connotation, an unpleasant taste value, people will feel bad if they say their body is slender.

#### 6. Conceptual Meaning

Conceptual meaning is the meaning that a lexeme has regardless of any context or association. The word "Horse" has the conceptual meaning of "a kind of four-legged animal that is usually ridden", and the word "house" has the conceptual meaning of "a building where humans live".

#### 7. Associative Meaning

The meaning of association is the meaning of the word relating to the relationship of the word to something outside the language. For example, the word “jasmine” is associated with “something holy or sacred”, the word “red” is associated with “courage or power”, the word “crocodile” is associated with evil.

## 8. Word Meaning

The meaning of the word is a general meaning, rough and unclear. The words "hand" and "arm" as words, their meanings are usually considered the same.

## 9. Terms meaning

The meaning of the term is a definite meaning, clear, not doubtful, even without the context of the sentence and it should be remembered that the meaning of the term is only used in certain scientific fields/activities. For example, the words "hand" and "arm". The two words in medical have different meanings. "hand" means "part from the wrist to the fingers". While the word "arm" is "part of the wrist to the base of the shoulder".

## 10. Idiomatic Meaning

The meaning of an idiom is a meaning that cannot be predicted from the meaning of its elements, both lexically and grammatically. For example, grammatically the form of "selling a house" means "the one who sells receives money and the one who buys receives his house", but in English the form of "break a leg" does not have that meaning, but means "Fighting, you can do it!". So that meaning is called idiomatic meaning.

## 11. Proverb Meaning

Proverbs have meanings that can still be traced or traced from the meanings of their elements. Because there is an association between the original meaning and its meaning as a proverb. For example, the proverb 'Like a dog and a cat' means two people who never get along. This meaning has an association that animals whose names are dogs and cats when they make a sound are always fighting, never peaceful.

## **Racism**

Racism is a belief system or doctrine, states that racism inherent in humans is different from culture or individuals, that a particular race has the right to rule over others. Racism has been a driving factor for social discrimination,

segregation, and racial violence, including genocide. According to Britannica (Smedley, 2020), humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called “races”; that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioral features; and that some races are innately superior to others. And the things that distinguish one race from another race that there is a causal link are physical differences, behavior, and culture. Perceived patterns of physical difference, such as skin color, eye shape, and hair. Racism can also appear because of social status and different languages.

The available of digital freedom of speech, the White people uses it to do racist. According to Back (as cited in Keum & Miller, 2018), White nationalists use the internet to justify a racist culture and propagandize the ideas of racial supremacy. Racist treatment that they do is text-based or multimedia formats. Berkman, (as cited in Keum & Miller, 2018), states that 73% of the Internet users in the United States are online every day. The number of the internet users who online every day is very high. This high number allows for major acts of racism. Racism will still exist if some people cannot be tolerant of other people and they believe that they are superior, such as white people who think that they are superior to black people or people with a yellow tone. People can easily get racial treatment from the stranger on the internet.

#### **2.4 Literature Review**

There are three journal and three thesis that raise issues similar enough to what I want to discuss in this research. The first one is an undergraduate thesis entitled “*Simbol-Simbol Rasis Dalam Video Klip Bob Marley "One Love" (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)*” by Widyastama (2011). This undergraduate thesis is about the racist symbols of the black race against the white race that are found in the music video using semiotic of Barthes' theory of signification based on denotative and connotative. The second is an undergraduate thesis entitled “*Sign And Their Meanings On Pepsi Advertisement Titled Kendall Jenner: Live Border, Live Louder, Live For Now (A Semiotic Study)*” by Rismawati (2020).

She has analyzed about signifier and signified that are found in Pepsi advertisement using semiotic theories of Saussure.

The third one is a journal entitled “Humanism of Coldplay’s Video Clip” by Jibril and Herawati (2018). This journal is about the message of humanity that are contained in the music video "Paradise" through semiotic theory. The fourth is a journal entitled “Analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure’s Semiotic as Representation of Humanity Value in The Call Movie” by Setyadi, Putri , and Putra (2018). This journal is about human values which are represented through scenes, dialogues, and settings through scenes that have been selected by the writers. This journal uses Saussure's signifier and signified semiotic theory. The fifth is an undergraduate thesis entitled “Racism Experienced by Martha Cabrera as an Immigrant and Latin American in the film *Knives Out*” by Wati (2021). She has analyzed about the meaning or message of racism through the sign that found in the film through semiotics theory from Barthes’ which are denotation, connotation and myth, also Saussure’s theory which are syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The sixth one is a journal entitled “Pierce’s Semiotics Analysis On Benny’s Cartoons Related To Covid 19 Issues” by Robingah (2020). This journal is about signs contained in *Kartun Benny* regarding to issues of coronavirus happened these days in Indonesia and many countries in the world using Peirce’s theory which are symbol, icon and index.

Whilst in my research entitled “Revealing the Meaning of Childish Gambino's Music Video “This Is America”, is more focused on the signifiers and signified that are contained in Childish Gambino music video. There are several similarities from previous research, the difference between other research and mine lies on the object of research that I use, namely music video. In general, many researchers use semiotics to analyze an advertisement, movie, or movie script. Even if the researcher uses music video, it is not as much as advertisements and movie scripts. Then I will analyze the signifier and signified, reveal the hidden meaning of this music video using Saussure's theory and I also use the theory of racism to support my research.