



Social Criticism Da'wah Through Visual Works of @Terasdakwah During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Farkhan Al Faiz^(a), Akhmad Rifa'i^(a)

^(a)Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: farkhanalfaiz@gmail.com, akhmad.rifai@uin-suka.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

Keywords:

COVID-19,

Semiotics,

Social Criticism

Preaching, Visual

Communication

Design

This study aims to analyze the preaching message containing social criticism on the Instagram account @terasdakwah through a semiotic approach. The @terasdakwah account is a digital platform that actively spreads preaching content in a creative style relevant to current social issues. This descriptive qualitative study analyzes the meaning of the preaching message of social criticism (Tafriq) in a Visual Communication Design (VCD) work. The dissection of meaning in visual works uses the semiotic analysis knife of Sumbo Tinarbuko's visual communication and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The results of this study show that: First, the connotative meaning revealed is that these visual works are a form of criticism of the government and society in general for the phenomena that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The connotative level of meaning also found myths contained in the visual works studied, including the death of elderly Hajj pilgrims, the death of expertise, and prolonged frustration threatening mental health. Second, the message of social criticism (Tafriq) preaching contained in the three visual works uploaded by the Instagram account @terasdakwah is included in



the first and second points in Alamsyah's theory. The first point is preaching as a correction for the reconstruction of social order, and the second point is preaching as an effort to institutionalize critical attitudes in Islamic society. Third, this study also shows that preaching is not only limited to religious rituals and formalities but can also be done by conveying social criticism. This research is hoped to provide scientific contributions to the study of preaching and communication science so that it can be a reference for further research on similar topics and discussions according to different contexts and objects of study.

Introduction

Preaching is limited to delivering religious teachings in a ritual and formal manner, and it does not provide a real contribution to society in general. This can also lead to religious understanding that cannot build a correlation between faith, worship, morals, and muamalah (Alex Sobur, 2001). Only a few preaching activists are sensitive to social problems in society; they focus more on spreading preaching messages with materials on faith, sharia, morals, and other formalistic religious materials. Meanwhile, social aspects such as economics, politics, etc, should be discussed more. In essence, preaching is the actualization of Imani (theology) in life (Patmawati, 2015). From an Islamic perspective, all forms of implementing Islamic teachings in various lifelines can be considered preaching activities, including delivering messages with social criticism materials. If viewed from preaching as an agent of change, social criticism is in line with “al-Tafriq,” which means to separate. “criticism” literally means “to separate” between good and evil. (Alamsyah, 2017) Social criticism preaching can be one of the concrete contributions of preachers to society. The role of social criticism preaching for society is as social control in life.

Teras Dakwah is a creative preaching institution that has been actively operating since 2014 (Teras et al.), while the Instagram account @terasdakwah began preaching digitally in 2015. The @terasdakwah account has a fairly broad reach in message distribution, as seen from the current number of followers, which is 212,000.

When compared to several other Islamic preaching accounts, the @terasdakwah account has the most followers, such as the @muslimdesignercommunity account with 68,200 followers, @sketsadakwah with 88,000 followers, @dakwahvisual with 114,000 followers, @si_bedil with 50,400 followers, @handialbanjary with 16,100 followers, @hafidz_design with 1,955 followers, and other Islamic preaching accounts. The exciting thing about the design of the @terasdakwah Instagram content is that it uses the same color palette in one month. The use of illustrations in conveying an issue is designed very interestingly and critically, using characters and depictions of events that are close to reality. The design elements with each other, such as shape, color, lines, and typography, are combined in a balanced way. The application of visual communication design principles such as emphasis, unity, and balance are combined well to produce attractive designs.

The COVID-19 pandemic was not an obstacle for Teras Dakwah to continue preaching amidst the limitations of community mobility. The activeness of Teras Dakwah in preaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was discussed in Taufik Habibi's research (2021). The research showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Teras Dakwah was able to produce creative preaching programs, such as Super Booster, #Tetapdirumahaja, preaching comics, and Geber Pangan. With the COVID-19 pandemic, Teras Dakwah felt increasingly challenged to produce creative preaching content (Habibi, 2021).

This study dissects the meaning of three visual works that contain social criticism of da'wah on the Instagram account @terasdakwah. These works were uploaded during Implementing Community Activity Restrictions (*Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat/PPKM*) between June and August 2021. Delivering messages visually has advantages over other media because, through visual media, humans form perceptions of the world and themselves (Widiatmoko Soewardikoen, 2019). Visual messages can convey information quickly and are readily accepted by the public because people tend to choose visual content over written content (Numanoglu & Bayir, 2009). Delivering messages visually can attract the attention of the communicant because an individual's attention to something is in the first 10 seconds of seeing (Adiloglu, 2011).

Based on a review and examination of several works of literature, more research needs to be done to examine da'wah messages containing social criticism in visual works. Several similar studies, such as research (Ashari, 2022), examine

the message of da'wah and social criticism in the Nasida Ria song album volume 24. Then, the research (Rizaq et al., 2022) discusses the content of the da'wah message represented in the comic book "REAL MASJID" by Tony Trax. Next is the research of Dina et al. (2019); this study dissects the message of social criticism of love in painting. Some of the literature above examines the message of da'wah and social criticism, the message of da'wah in visual works, and the message of social criticism in visual works. However, they have yet to discuss the message of da'wah, which contains social criticism in a visual work. Therefore, the author is interested in studying this theme. The novelty of this study is the dissection of visual works containing social criticism using the semiotic analysis approach of Sumbo Tinarbuko and Roland Barthes.

This research is expected to be an academic contribution as an additional reference in studying Islamic da'wah, communication science, and other social sciences. Further researchers can develop the dissection of meaning in visual works containing social criticism according to the context of relevant issues. This article can also provide insight for da'wah practitioners, as da'wah practices are not limited to lectures and other formal matters. However, da'wah practices can also be carried out by conveying social criticism through visual works to actualize Imani in the context of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to understand human or social phenomena to create a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in words, in detailed reports obtained from informant sources and carried out in a natural setting (Rijali, 2018). The subject of this study is the Instagram account @terasdakwah. At the same time, the object is visual works that fall into the social criticism da'wah content category from June 1, 2021, to August 30, 2021. The data collection techniques used are documentation to collect research data (Sugiyono, 2012), purposive sampling to determine research samples, and literature studies to add research references. The data obtained are then analyzed using visual communication semiotic analysis techniques by Sumbo Tinarbuko and Roland Barthes to dissect the meaning of the social criticism da'wah message in this study. The Visual Communication Design (VCD) theory approach is also used in this study. Visual Communication Design

is a discipline in the field of communication science that focuses on the study of communication concepts and expressions of creative power applied in various visual communication media by processing graphic design elements consisting of images (illustrations), letters, colors, composition, and layout (Tinarbuko, 2015). In this study, Visual Communication Design is used to see the communication process in a visual work. According to Lia and Kirana (2018), visual communication design has two main aspects. First, Visual Communication Design elements consist of lines, planes, size, texture, contrast, and color. Second, the principles of visual communication design are balance, emphasis, rhythm, and unity.

Social criticism is a form of social innovation that can communicate new ideas and spread old ideas with the aim of social change (Luthfi, 2020). In the perspective of social criticism, it is known as *Tafriq* (Alamsyah, 2017). In terms of language, *Tafriq* means separating negative things from positive things so that the positive grows and develops progressively and is not disturbed by destructive obstacles. The theory of *Tafriq da'wah*, or social criticism *da'wah*, put forward by Alamsyah, aims to socialize and internalize Islamic religious values in the reality of society.

A visual work contains communicative meaning. Therefore, visual works need to be interpreted using a semiotic approach. Visual communication semiotics aims to study verbal signs (titles, subtitles, and text) and visual signs (illustrations, typography, logos, and visual layout) (Tinarbuko, 2009). Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis knife is needed to strengthen the process of interpreting visual work, Rohe's concept of reading codes. Roland Barthes' semiotic concept is a development of Ferdinand de Saussure, namely "signifier + signified = sign" as the first level and adds a level for the second meaning (Sobur, 2003). Barthes then gave the term "denotation" for the first level of meaning and the term "connotation" or "myth" for the second level of meaning. Denotation is the meaning that can be seen directly from a sign. At the same time, connotation is the interaction that occurs when a sign meets things around it, such as emotions, mythology, ideology, logic, cultural values, and other collective values. The following is an overview of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis concept.

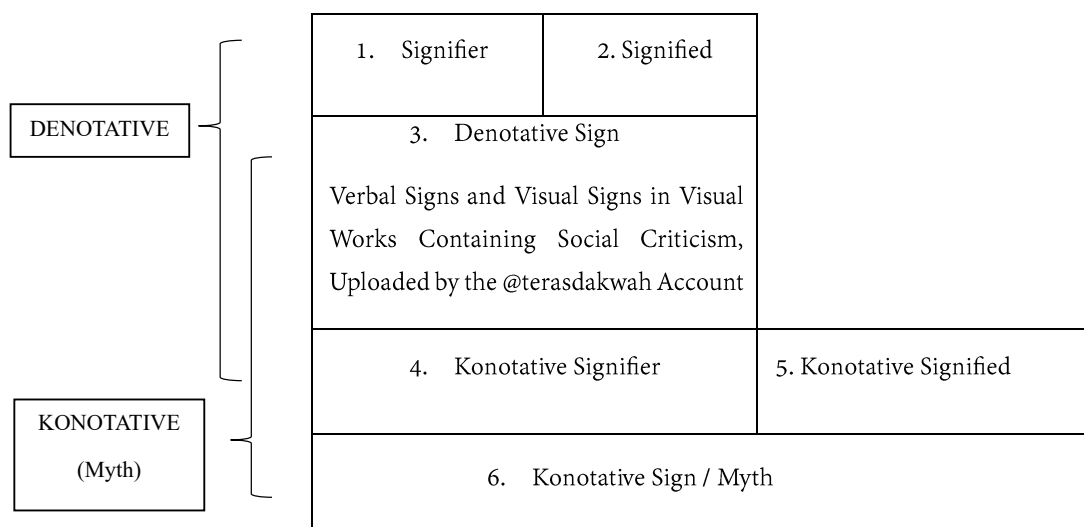


Chart 2: Roland Barthes' Analysis Concept (Sobur, 2003)

From the concept diagram above, in the same situation, denotative signs also become connotative markers (4). So, in Barthes' semiotic concept, connotative signs do not only have additional meaning but also contain both parts of denotative signs that underlie their existence (Sobur, 2003).

The dissection of meaning in this study uses Sumbo Tinarbuko's visual communication semiotics analysis to determine verbal and visual signs (Tinarbuko, 2009). Then, it is strengthened by Roland Barthes' semiotics, which has an ideological and cultural approach (Sobur, 2003). To facilitate research, Barthes' semiotic model offers a decoding of sign reading, including Hermeneutic, semantic, symbolic, narrative, and cultural codes. Meanwhile, Barthes' model has a two-level concept of meaning to classify meaning; the first level is called denotation, and the second is called connotation. Denotation is associated with the closedness of meaning or can be understood as the true meaning. The connotation is identical to the ideological operation known as myth (Sobur, 2003).

Findings and Discussion

The sample selection in this study used a purposive sampling technique, namely a data source sampling technique with specific considerations (Sugiyono, 2012). Based on Alamsyah's understanding (2017) regarding the role of social criticism da'wah (Tafriq), there are several criteria for content to be categorized as social criticism da'wah content, including (1) A form of correction to reconstruct

the social order. (2) Contains criticism of life problems in society. (3) Is open and upholds tolerance (tasamuh). Several contents fall into the category of social criticism da'wah content. The reduction is carried out and selected with the number of responses in the form of likes and comments in one month, with a period of June 1, 2021 - August 31, 2021; the selection of this date was because, at that time, the period of the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) was taking place. So, at that time, da'wah activities transformed into digital media (Rasyid & Rahmawati, 2022). After the reduction, three contents remained as research samples to reveal the meaning of the social criticism preaching a message on the Instagram account @terasadakwah.

I. Death of Elderly Hajj Pilgrims

Figure 1: June Visual Works



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/terasadakwah/> (accessed on June 6, 2024)

This content was uploaded on June 9, 2021. The visual work received 10,896 likes and 92 comments. Visually, two elderly married couples are seen in front of a dressing table. They look unfortunate reading the newspaper news about “Hajj

Cancellation.” The wife’s character sits on a chair while reading the newspaper news, tears streaming down her face. Meanwhile, the husband’s character stands behind his wife, holding his wife’s shoulders as if he is strengthening his wife to remain strong in facing reality, even though the husband also looks very sad reading the news. Visually, the illustration design depicts the condition of an elderly couple of prospective hajj pilgrims who have been preparing their physical, financial, and other provisions for years. However, the elderly couple had to cancel their hajj two years ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Verbal Signs and Visual Signs

Based on verbal and visual signs, the message in the content above can be captured with the help of hermeneutic codes, semantic codes, narrative codes, and cultural codes (Tinarbuko, 2009). First, the hermeneutic code lies in the enigma. It can be seen from the verbal sign, the text “Hajj Canceled, June, Chinese Foreign Workers Invade Indonesia. Then, from the visual sign, there is an icon of two older women and men. So the question arises of who they are and why they are sad to see the newspaper news about the hajj’s cancellation. Second, the semantic code contains connotations at the signifier level. Third, the narrative code is a code that contains a story; the visual narrative code is located in the icon of an older woman and man, a newspaper, a wall decoration of the Kaaba, and the June calendar, which tells the story of a pair of elderly hajj pilgrims who canceled their hajj. Fourth, the cultural code contains myths of cultural values, knowledge, and so on, located in the icon of a white peci and a white hijab, which represent a Muslim who wants to perform the hajj.

Denotative Meaning

The denotative meaning contained in the visual work above can be captured using the semic code; the semic code is a connotation at the signifier level, which also becomes a denotation at the first level of meaning (Sobur, 2003). Based on the semic code, the design expresses the sadness of a couple of hajj pilgrims who were canceled from going to the holy land. Judging from the visual signs built from the elements and principles of VCD (Tinarbuko, 2009), the two male and female icons of prospective hajj pilgrims are very old, meaning that it took years

to save and prepare everything. That is what makes the two male and female icons very sad when they hear the news of the cancellation of the hajj. This denotative meaning is also the answer to the hermeneutic code that contains the enigma (puzzle) of why the two middle-aged male and female icons are very sad.

Connotative Meaning

In the connotative level of use, the design is a signifier of a sign that contains a myth. Connotation is a meaning produced from a combination of signifiers and signifieds at the second level. The signifier at this level illustrates the sadness of an elderly couple who failed to go on the Hajj. Then, the sign can be understood using hermeneutic code (Tinarbuko, 2009). The existing verbal sign says, "CANCELLED HAJJ, JUNI, CHINESE TKA INVADE INDONESIA." The verbal sign contains the context of the issue conveyed through the work. The meaning of criticism that can be understood through the meaning at the connotative level is a message of criticism of the government that does not provide clarity on the departure of hajj pilgrims (KEMENAG, 2021). On the other hand, the government also brought Chinese Foreign Workers (TKA) into Indonesia (Tempo.co). The Indonesian people very unequally felt this policy during the COVID-19 pandemic; when Indonesian citizens were prohibited from going abroad, the government instead brought foreigners into Indonesia. The myth in the visual work is the elderly couple's concerns in performing the Hajj; these concerns are declining health or even death. If that year they cancel the Hajj and there is no clarity on when they will depart, then it is feared that the following year, their health will decline or even one of them will die.

Discussion

Based on the process of interpretation at the connotative level, the work implies a message of criticism of the government because of its policy of canceling the departure of the 2021 Hajj pilgrims without being accompanied by clarity of departure. The message of social criticism (Tafriq) in the visual work is a message to the ruler to be wise to his people and pay attention to the problems of vulnerable people, such as the elderly.

Delivering criticism is part of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, which Islamic teachings order to advise mad'u (objects of da'wah). This advice can be conveyed

to siblings, relatives, the community, and the government. This is in line with the words of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

From Tamim ad-Dari (narrated), the Prophet SAW said: Religion is advice. We asked: To whom? The Messenger of Allah replied: To Allah, His book, His messenger, the leaders of the Muslim community, and their laity [HR. Muslim: 55] (Sunnah.Com)

In Alamsyah's definition of the message of social criticism (Tafriq) da'wah, the visual work is included in the role of da'wah point two as an effort to institutionalize a critical attitude in Islamic society. Da'wah is a process of actualizing Islamic teachings, and a da'i must have social sensitivity. With social sensitivity, da'i can proactively anticipate problems that arise in society (Alamsyah, 2017).

II. The Death of Expertise

Figure 2: July Visual Works



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/terasdakwah/>
(accessed on June 6, 2024)

This visual work was uploaded by the Instagram account @terasadakwah on July 13, 2021. This upload received 8987 likes and 137 comments. In the visual work above, the media interviewed three people. Visually, the first person from the left is a religious expert, then next to him is a medical expert, and behind the two people is a person identical to the character Khaby Lame. The illustration design depicts the condition of society during the COVID-19 era. Who needs clarification about whose words to follow.?

Verbal Signs and Visual Signs

Judging from the verbal and visual signs, the message in the above content can be captured using hermeneutic, symbolic, narrative, and cultural codes (Tinarbuko, 2009). First, the hermeneutic code contains an enigma, which includes an element of the puzzle of why medical experts are juxtaposed with clerics; then, behind the two of them, there is a character identical to Khaby. Second, the symbolic code lies in the aspect of ambiguity or conflict between the icon of the cleric and the icon of the medical expert. Third, the narrative code contains a story related to what happened. Fourth, the cultural code includes the myth that a cleric has competence in religion. In contrast, a doctor or medical expert has competence in the medical field, in this case, related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cultural code also captures the myths that are developing, such as the issue of COVID-19 being a conspiracy and so on.

Denotative Meaning

The denotative meaning of the visual work above can be captured with the hermeneutic code, which contains the puzzle of why, in this situation, a religious leader (Ulama) is side by side with a medical expert. The answer is that the visual work is a representation of the community that often asks for something, not from the expert; in this context, it is related to COVID-19. The visual signs in the form of a microphone and a cell phone directed at the cleric contain the message that many people believe the words of religious leaders more than the opinions of medical experts and epidemiologists regarding COVID-19. Based on the 2020 national digital literacy survey, the level of public trust in religious figures in conveying information is in the highest position (KOMINFO, 2020).

11.1% strongly believe, 50.6% believe, 34.7% are indifferent, and 2.7% do not. The data shows the high public trust in religious figures in conveying information. Of course, this is very dangerous if religious leaders do not have in-depth knowledge of the information conveyed, especially regarding COVID-19.

Connotative Meaning

Connotatively, the visual work is a critique of the reality of society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The critical message built into the visual work can be captured with a symbolic code (Tinarbuko, 2009); the code reveals the ambiguity or conflict between two icons of Islamic religious experts (ulama) and the icon of a doctor (medical expert). In terms of competence, both have expertise in their respective fields but are united in the context of the same issue, namely the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the visual signs in the content, it appears that religious experts (ulama) direct their two hands to medical experts, containing the message that clerics advise asking medical experts in the case of COVID-19.

Through the narrative code, the critical message is also apparent from the narrative story built by the designer. From the visual signs, there is an icon of a black man wearing a purple hoodie that is identical to the character of Khaby Lame. Khaby Lame is a Senegalese-Italian TikTok video content creator. He is known for his videos that satirize people who complicate his life with a flat expression. (Wikipedia, 2021). The placement of the Khaby icon between the icons of medical experts and religious experts contains a critical message that the COVID-19 case is the domain of medical experts and epidemiologists, not religious leaders. So, there is no need to make it challenging to ask religious leaders but to ask medical experts, epidemiologists, and people competent in COVID-19. The visual work also contains a myth from the COVID-19 pandemic phenomenon, namely "The Death of Expertise." Tom Nicols popularized the Death of Expertise in his book *The Death of Expertise*. Tom criticized the phenomenon of American society, which believed in the truth of information according to their wishes. Worse, they rejected the opinions of professionals and experts who were competent in their fields (Nichols, 2019). This is a phenomenon called the death of expertise; the term is also relevant to describe the phenomenon of society during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Discussion

Based on meaning at the connotative level, the design contains criticism of the phenomenon of a society trusting religious leaders more than medical experts when it comes to COVID-19. An ulama can know about COVID-19, but regarding competence, educational background, and experience, a religious expert (ulama) needs to gain expertise in the medical world, especially regarding COVID-19. So, community behavior must be criticized as a form of social control in the amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar (Wahab, 2015).

A hadith states that a case will be damaged if not handed over to an expert. Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wassalam said:

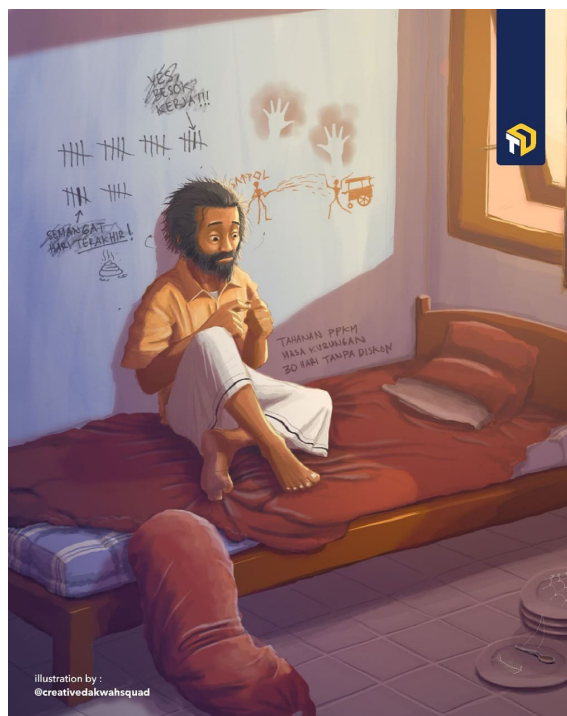
“From Abu Hurairah radhilayyahu'anhu said; Rasulullah shallallahu 'alaihi wasallam said: “If the mandate has been wasted, just wait for destruction to occur.” A friend asked how the meaning of the mandate could be wasted. The Prophet answered, “If the matter is not left to the experts, wait for the destruction.” Hadits Bukhari No. 6015 | Amanat Diangkat (n.d.)

The hadith above is a normative basis that something must be left to the experts, including in the case of COVID-19, which is related to the safety of human lives; the case of COVID-19 must be entrusted to medical experts and epidemiologists, not religious experts or other professions who do not have expertise in the matter.

In the sense of Alamsyah (2017), the message of social criticism (Tafriq) contained in the visual work falls into the first category: As a correction for the reconstruction of the social order. To the ideals of da'wah, social criticism is in line with the principle of amar-ma'ruf nahi munkar (Wahab, 2015). The corrections and criticisms that emerge aim to reorganize (reconstruct) the existing social order based on the spirit of Islam.

III. Unemployment Threatens Mental Health

Figure 3: August Visual Work



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/terasdakwah/> (accessed on June 6, 2024)

The visual work was uploaded on August 1, 2021. This work received 6314 likes and 27 comments. This work depicts one of the conditions of society during the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM). A man is seen sitting on a bed while leaning against the wall of his room, lamenting his life during the PPKM period. With a sad character depiction and a concerning room atmosphere, this design wants to convey criticism of PPKM and its derivative policies, which are considered to be causing misery to society.

Verbal Signs and Visual Signs

Based on verbal and visual signs, the message in the above content can be captured using hermeneutic, narrative, and cultural codes (Tinarbuko, 2009). First, the hermeneutic code contains an enigma, which includes elements of a puzzle about what actually happened and why the man seemed confused by the concerning conditions. Second, the narrative code contains a story related to what happened and the context of the event, from visual signs such as piles of

dirty dishes, messy beds, shabby clothes, and scribbles on the walls that contain meaning. Third, the cultural code contains myths, knowledge, and cultural values.

Denotative Meaning

The denotative meaning of the visual work above can be captured with a hermeneutic code that contains a puzzle: why does a man in a yellow shirt look confused, with a blank stare and a messy room? The answer can be seen from the meaning of the verbal and visual signs. The visual work represents the condition of one of the communities affected by the PPKM, which continues to be extended. As a result of the PPKM, the man lost his job, so he was unable to meet his living needs. This can be seen from the verbal sign on the room wall that reads "PPKM PRISONER 30 DAYS CONFIDENCE WITHOUT DISCOUNT". This aligns with data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) on the analysis of current issues in 2021, which shows that more than 25 million working-age people were affected by COVID-19. 24.03 million people experienced reduced working hours, and 4.33 million were unemployed (BPS, 2021). Based on BPS data and reading of visual works using hermeneutic codes, the background of the events and the context of the issues in the visual works are in 2021 when PPKM was implemented.

Connotative Meaning

At the connotative level of meaning, the visual work marks a sign containing a myth. If read using cultural codes (Tinarbuko, 2009), two visual signs can reveal a message of criticism and a myth in the visual work. First, a picture of someone spraying a crowd of people. Second, a picture of a hand motif on the wall. The first visual sign is a criticism of the phenomenon of Satpol PP disbanding traders who sell after 20.00 WIB (Saputra, 2021); this is very unfortunate because the task of the authorities is to protect the community and should be able to act more humanely in disciplining people who violate PPKM hours.

The second verbal sign in the form of hand paintings on the wall is similar to hand paintings in several ancient caves, such as those in Cueva de las Manos Cave, Patagonia, Argentina (UNESCO, 1999)



Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/936> (accessed on May 18, 2024)

Similar paintings have also been found in several ancient caves in Indonesia, such as in Maros, South Sulawesi, Pangkajene, South Sulawesi, and others (Wikipedia, 2023). Researchers estimate that painting on cave walls was originally a request to certain powers so that what was expected could be realized according to what was painted. Regarding the handprint painting, Van Heekeren (1950) revealed that the painting was related to death ceremonies and life in another world or life after death (Tanudirjo, 1985). Furthermore, Van Heekeren, through an ethnoarchaeology study approach, linked handprints and religion. He stated that the handprint depicts the journey of a deceased spirit who is groping toward the afterlife.

If associated with what was described by Van Heekeren (Heekeren, 1950) with an ethnoarchaeology study approach, then the hand painting on the visual work uploaded by the @terasdakwah account in August gives rise to two connotative meanings. First, it is a form of expression and surrender of the man in the picture to the Almighty because only Allah can help his servants in every difficulty. Second, the man is frustrated due to unemployment and wants to end his life. A connotative meaning will emerge as a critical message from several reading codes with various verbal and visual signs. From the visual work above, there are two critical messages, namely criticism of the government as the holder of power and policy and criticism of society in general so that they can help each other in difficulties, especially during the PPKM period. The visual work also contains a myth, namely that frustration due to being unemployed for too long can threaten mental health. If this mental disorder is not treated, it can have fatal consequences, so the desire to end his life arises.

Discussion

A visual work uploaded on social media is not without purpose and goal; there is a message that the designer wants to convey through the visual work. Based on the meaning of the connotative level, the design contains criticism of the phenomenon in society during the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM). PPKM, with its various policies, is considered very burdensome for people to carry out activities, especially for working and running their businesses (Andriyani et al., 2021). Few are unemployed and do not have jobs, so they cannot meet their living needs or even eat.

Based on the reading of the meaning at the connotative level, the message of social criticism (Tafriq) in the visual work above is a criticism of the government as the holder of power and the party with authority to make policies. The government is responsible for the community's welfare, especially in the PPKM situation. In distributing social assistance to affected communities, the government must be firm and transparent so that the aid is right on target. The visual work also criticizes the corruption of COVID-19 social assistance funds carried out by the former Minister of Social Affairs Juliari Peter Batubara (Kompas.com). Juliari was proven to have accepted a bribe of IDR 32.2 billion from social assistance corruption; this action is a portrait of reprehensible behavior exemplified by the government in this country. Moreover, President Jokowi has issued Presidential Decree Number 12 of 2020, which states that COVID-19 is a national disaster. As stated in Article 2 Paragraph 2 of Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning the Criminal Act of Eradicating Corruption, corruption in managing specific conditions, including disasters, can be punished by death. However, in the end, Juliari was charged with 11 years in prison, a fine of IDR 500 million, subsidiary to 6 months in jail, paying compensation of IDR 14.5 billion, and revocation of political rights for four years after serving his prison sentence (Tempo.co).

In addition to criticizing the government, the visual work also criticizes society. In difficult situations and conditions, fellow human beings must help each other. In Islam, the Prophet Sallahu'alaihi wassalam ordered his followers to help each other, especially their neighbors. In a hadith, it is stated:

From Abu Hurairah radhiyallahu 'anhu, Rasulullah shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or

be silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guests.” (HR. Bukhari and Muslim) [HR. Bukhari, no. 6018, 6019, 6136, 6475 and Muslim, no. 47] (rumaysho.com)

The hadith above explains clearly that neighbors and faith have a strong correlation. This means that in everyday life, a person must empathize with others, especially neighbors. Because neighbors are the closest people to their residence and the closest social interaction with someone, if there is no mutual understanding and empathy with neighbors in community life, then this needs to be reconstructed, and an ideal social relationship must be built, namely a social relationship that cares for and empathizes with each other.

In Alamsyah's understanding, the message of the Tafriq da'wah contained in the visual work uploaded by the Instagram account @terasdakwah in August falls into the first category, namely as a correction for the reconstruction of the social order. By the ideals of da'wah, social criticism is in line with the principle of amar-ma'ruf nahi munkar. The corrections and criticisms that emerge aim to reorganize (reconstruct) the existing social order based on the spirit of Islam. The government's policy of continuously extending PPKM has given rise to polemics in society, especially with the corruption of government officials' social assistance funds, which need to be reconstructed. Therefore, social criticism is essential to realize change for the better.

Conclusion

After going through the process of analyzing several visual works on the @terasdakwah account using the visual communication semiotics analysis of Sumbo Tinarbuko (Tinarbuko, 2009) and Roland Barthes (Sobur, 2003), several messages of social criticism were found related to the phenomena that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several messages of social criticism were then interpreted using the theory of social criticism of da'wah (Alamsyah, 2017). So, the following points can be concluded:

First, the connotative meaning revealed from the three visual works is a message of criticism of the phenomena that occurred in society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The issues raised regarding the cancellation of the 2021 Hajj departure, the public's higher trust in religious leaders than medical experts

in the matter of COVID-19, and the last issue is the prolonged PPKM which has an impact on Termination of Employment (PHK) and unemployment. These criticisms are directed at the government as policymakers and are aimed at the public in general. The interpretation at the connotative level also reveals several myths contained in these visual works, including the myth of the death of elderly pilgrims while performing the Hajj or waiting for the departure schedule and the death of experts because society trusts religious leaders more than medical experts. Finally, frustration and depression due to unemployment threaten mental health and have the potential to commit suicide.

Second, the message of social criticism (Tafriq) preaching contained in the three visual works uploaded by the Instagram account @terasadakwah about criticizing the phenomenon of society during the COVID-19 pandemic is included in the first and second points in Alamsyah's theory (2017). The first point is preaching as a correction for the reconstruction of the social order, and the second point is preaching as an effort to institutionalize a critical attitude in Islamic society. Based on the ideals of preaching, social criticism aligns with the principle of amar-ma'ruf nahi munkar. The emerging corrections and criticisms aim to rearrange things not in the ideal social order. Preaching is a process of actualizing Islamic teachings; a preacher must have social sensitivity. With social sensitivity, preachers can proactively anticipate problems that arise in society. So, the role of preaching in society is not just conveying formalistic ritualistic religious teachings; society can also feel the contribution of preaching concretely.

Third, preaching is the actualization of Imani in the context of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar. Therefore, preaching is not limited to ritual and formal religious activities. However, preaching also includes things outside of that which aim to call for goodness. Preaching activities can be done through visual works using social media such as Instagram. Visual works are influential as a medium for conveying messages because humans are more sensitive to visually appealing things than writing.

References

- 20 TKA Cina Masuk Indonesia, PKS: Pemerintah Anomali bin Ajaib - Nasional *Tempo.co*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 14, 2024, from <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1480056/20-tka-cina-masuk-indonesia-pks-pemerintah-anomali-bin-ajaib>
- Abduh Tuasikal, M. (n.d.). *Hadits Arbain #15: Berkata yang Baik, Memuliakan Tamu dan Tetangga*. Retrieved May 25, 2024, from <https://rumaysho.com/18958-hadits-arbain-15-berkata-yang-baik-memuliakan-tamu-dan-tetangga.html>
- Adiloglu, F. (2011). Visual communication: Design studio education through working the process. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.182>
- Alamsyah, A. (2017). KRITIK SOSIAL (DALAM PERSPEKTIF DAKWAH). *Jurnal Jurnalisa*, 3(1), 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.24252/JURNALISA.V3I1.3071>
- Alex Sobur. (2001). Dakwah Alternatif Di Era Global : Suatu Pendekatan Perubahan Sosial. *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, 123(10).
- Andriyani, L., Gultom, A., Ketiara, K., Dahlan, J. K. H. A., Timur, K. C., Tangerang, K., Dahlan, J. K. H. A., Timur, K. C., & Selatan, K. T. (2021). Dampak Sosial Ekonomi Kebijakan Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat (PPKM) di Indonesia. *Seminar Nasional Penelitian LPPM UMJ*.
- Anggraini S, L. & N. K. (2018). *Desain komunikasi visual : dasar-dasar panduan untuk pemula* (I. Fibrianti, Ed.; V). Penerbit Nuansa.
- Ashari, A. (2022). Pesan Dakwah Dan Kritik Sosial Pada Album Lagu Nasida Ria Volume 24. *Skripsi Program Studi Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam Fakultas Dakwah Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga*.
- BPS. (2021). *Analisis Isu Terkini 2021*. Badan Pusat Statistik. <https://www.bps.go.id/publication/2021/12/17/cbf55095af484eae147e2b2e/analisis-isu-terkini2021.html>.
- Breaking News: Korupsi Bansos Covid, Juliari Batubara Dituntut 11 Tahun Penjara* - Nasional *Tempo.co*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2024, from <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1488251/breaking-news-korupsi-bansos-covid-juliari-batubara-dituntut-11-tahun-penjara>
- Dina, L. L., Suherlan, Y., & Prawita, D. (2019). KRITIK SOSIAL SEBUAH CINTA (DALAM SENI LUKIS). *Gelar : Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.33153/blr.v16i2.2491>

- Dosen, A., Dakwah, F., Komunikasi, D., & Alauddin, U. (2017). *KRITIK SOSIAL (DALAM PERSPEKTIF DAKWAH)*.
- Habibi, T. (2021). Adaptasi Gerakan Dakwah di Tengah Pandemi COVID-19: Studi Kasus Teras Dakwah. *Idarotuna*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.24014/idarotuna.v3i2.12588>
- Hadits Bukhari No. 6015 | Amanat diangkat*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 16, 2024, from <https://www.hadits.id/hadits/bukhari/6015>
- Heekeren, H. . R. van. (1950). *The Rock Paintings and Other Prehistoric Discoveries near Maros (South West Celebes) "Laporan Tahunan Dinas" Purbakala Tahun 1950*.
- KEMENAG. (2021). *Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 660 Tahun 2021 Tentang Pembatalan Keberangkatan Haji Pada Penyelenggaraan Ibadah Haji Tahun 1442 H 2021 M Kementerian Agama RI*. Kemenag.Go.Id. <https://kemenag.go.id/informasi/keputusan-menteri-agama-nomor-660-tahun-2021-tentang-pembatalan-keberangkatan-haji-pada-penyelenggaraan-ibadah-haji-tahun-1442-h---2021-m>
- KOMINFO. (2020). *Survei-Literasi-Digital-Indonesia-2020*. <https://aptika.kominfo.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Survei-Literasi-Digital-Indonesia-2020.pdf>
- Korupsi Bansos COVID-19: Mensos Juliari Diduga Terima Rp 17 Miliar hingga Bukti Uang dalam Koper*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2024, from <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/12/06/09194161/korupsi-bansos-COVID-19-mensos-juliari-diduga-terima-rp-17-miliar-hingga>
- Luthfi, A. H. (2020). Analisis Semiotika Kritik Sosial dalam Balutan Humor pada Komik Faktap. *Jurnal ILMU KOMUNIKASI*, 17(1), 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.24002/JIK.V17I1.1968>
- Nichols, T. (2019). *Matinya kepakaran = the death of expertise : perlawanan terhadap pengetahuan yang telah mapan dan mudaratnya* (2nd ed.). Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.
- Numanoglu, G., & Bayir, S. (2009). Evaluation of information and communication technology textbooks according to principles of visual design. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.375>
- Patmawati. (2015). SEJARAH DAKWAH RASULULLAH SAW DI MEKAH DAN MADINAH. *Al-Hikmah*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.24260/al-hikmah.v8i2.75>
- Rasyid, H. A. N., & Rahmawati, D. E. (2022). MEDIA SOSIAL SEBAGAI MEDIA DAKWAH ALTERNATIF DI MASA PANDEMI COVID-19. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Program Pengabdian Masyarakat*. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ppm.46.836>

- Rijali, A. (2018). *ANALISIS DATA KUALITATIF*. 17(33).
- Rizaq, M. C., Sunarmi, S., & Becti, M. A. (2022). Analisis Pesan Dakwah pada Komik Dakwah “Real Masjid” Karya Tony Trax. *IKONIK : Jurnal Seni Dan Desain*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.51804/ijsd.v4i2.1819>
- Sahih Muslim 55a - The Book of Faith - كتاب الإيمان - Sunnah.com - Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2024, from <https://sunnah.com/muslim:55a>
- Saputra, I. Y. (2021). *Viral Satpol PP Semprot Warung dengan Damkar, Wali Kota Semarang Berang - Solopos.com | Panduan Informasi dan Inspirasi*. Solo Pos. <https://jateng.solopos.com/viral-satpol-pp-semprot-warung-dengan-damkar-wali-kota-semarang-berang-1137419>
- Sobur, A. (2003). *Semiotika Komunikasi / Alex Sobur (Cet.3)*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sugiyono. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Tanudirjo, D. A. (1985). LUKISAN DINDING GOA SEBAGAI SALAH SATU UNSUR UPACARA KEMATIAN. *Berkala Arkeologi*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.30883/jba.v6i1.431>
- Teras Dakwah. (n.d.). *Tentang - Teras Dakwah*. Teras Dakwah. Retrieved October 15, 2021, from <https://www.terasdakwah.com/index.html>.
- Tinarbuko, S. (2009). *Semiotika komunikasi visual* (M. Nasrudin, Ed.; Cet. III). Jelasutra.
- Tinarbuko, S. (2015). *DEKAVE Desain Komunikasi visual–Penanda Akhir Zaman Masyarakat Global*. Media Pressindo.
- UNESCO. (1999). *Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas*. Unesco World Heritage Convention. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/936/>
- Wahab, M. A. (2015). Kontekstualisasi Amar Ma’Ruf Nahi Munkar. *Pendidikan Agama Islam*.
- Widiatmoko Soewardikoen, D. (2019). *Metodologi Penelitian: Desain Komunikasi Visual*. PT. Kanisius.
- Wikipedia. (2021). *Khaby Lame - Wikipedia bahasa Indonesia, ensiklopedia bebas*. Id.Wikipedia.Org. https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khaby_Lame
- Wikipedia. (2023, November 1). *Lukisan gua*. Wikipedia.Org.