

**SYMBOLS OF ABUSE OF POWER IN MUHAMMAD RAMADHAN  
BATUBARA'S SHORT STORY *PESAN DARI SEORANG YANG  
BERNAMA PRESIDEN***

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**ABSTRACT**

In literary works, the language represented through words in the text is an interesting object to be analysed. This is due to the uniqueness of literary language which is different from other written languages. Language in literature is often written into certain symbols that contain hidden meanings far beyond their literal meaning. The short story *Pesan Dari Seorang Yang Bernama Presiden* uses a language full of symbols that need to be interpreted first using semiotic theory in order to understand the meaning of the entire text. The purpose of this study is to reveal the symbols that imply power abuse committed by a character named Presiden. This is a qualitative research with descriptive-analytical method. The main data of this research is the short story text of *Pesan Dari Seorang Yang Bernama Presiden* by Muhammad Ramadhan Batubara. Secondary data sources in the form of relevant journal articles are also used to support the research. The short story text is first read using the *close reading* technique to find the topic. The research data in the form of short story text excerpts are then collected and classified based on the sub-topics. The grouped data is then analyzed by using semiotic theory to reveal the overall meaning of the text. The results found that the symbols of power abuse can be found in the names of the characters, the use of dogs as the Presiden's pets, and the message conveyed by the Presiden. These three results reveal that this short story contains many symbols and allusions that reveal how the character of the Presiden without getting his own hands dirty has committed power abuse against citizens by using the power he has.

**Keywords:** *Literature, Semiotic, Symbol, Abuse of Power, Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden*

**ABSTRAK**

Dalam karya sastra, bahasa yang diwakilkan melalui kata-kata di dalam teks merupakan objek yang menarik untuk dianalisis. Hal ini dikarenakan keunikan bahasa sastra yang berbeda dari bahasa tulis lainnya. Bahasa dalam sastra sering kali dituliskan ke dalam simbol-simbol tertentu yang mengandung makna tersembunyi jauh di balik makna harfiahnya. Cerpen *Pesan Dari Seorang Yang Bernama Presiden* menggunakan bahasa yang penuh dengan simbol-simbol yang perlu diinterpretasikan terlebih dahulu dengan menggunakan teori semiotik agar dapat dipahami makna keseluruhan teksnya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengungkapkan simbol-simbol yang menyiratkan kekerasan kuasa yang dilakukan oleh tokoh bernama Presiden. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-analisis. Data utama penelitian ini bersumber dari teks cerpen *Pesan Dari Seorang Yang Bernama Presiden* karya Muhammad Ramadhan Batubara. Sumber data sekunder berupa artikel-artikel jurnal yang relevan juga digunakan untuk menunjang penelitian. Teks cerpen terlebih dahulu dibaca dengan teknik *close reading* untuk menemukan topik permasalahan di dalamnya. Data penelitian berupa kutipan teks cerpen kemudian dikumpulkan dan dikelompokkan berdasarkan sub-topik permasalahan. Data yang sudah dikelompokkan kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori semiotik untuk mengungkapkan makna keseluruhan teks. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa simbol-simbol kekerasan kuasa tersebut dapat ditemukan di dalam nama-nama tokoh, penggunaan binatang anjing sebagai peliharaan Presiden, dan pesan yang disampaikan tokoh Presiden. Ketiga hasil ini mengungkapkan bahwa cerpen ini mengandung banyak simbol dan kiasan yang mengungkapkan bagaimana tokoh Presiden tanpa mengotori tangannya sendiri telah melakukan kekerasan kuasa terhadap warga dengan menggunakan kekuasaan yang ia miliki.

**Kata Kunci:** *Sastra, Semiotik, Simbol, Kekerasan Kuasa, Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden*

## INTRODUCTION

Literary studies cannot be separated from language studies. Language functions as a medium to convey the meaning of a literary work. Through language manifested in the form of words, phrases, and sentences, the meaning contained in a literary work can be conveyed properly to the readers. In this case, readers are given the freedom to interpret a literary text according to their respective interpretations. However, Sholikhin and Muntazir (2019) argue that this interpretation can be limited by the understanding of language, literature, and cultural conventions. In addition, Kurnianto (2015) argues that the use of distinctive language in literary texts can create beauty in them.

Literary language is unique and different from other types of language. In this case, literary language, which is included in the fictional language variety, is more flexible, frontal, and often breaks out of grammatical rules. Therefore, to understand the meaning and intent of a literary work, its linguistic aspects need to be explored more deeply. This is important because the meaning of a literary work is often hidden behind the surface meaning of the text.

To understand the meaning of literary works, it can be used a semiotic approach. This is in line with Zaimar's opinion (1991) that interpretation of literary works falls within the scope of meaning and meaning is the scope of the field of semiotics. Pungky & Suryaman (2024) state that semiotics is a literary discipline whose term comes from Greek, namely *Semeion* which means sign. Semiotic approach is an approach that looks at signs in the study of literary texts in the form of language. Semiotics was originally introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, through the concepts of sign, signifier, and signified. The sign includes the material aspects of sounds, letters, images, movements, and shapes. The signifier covers the material aspects of language, namely what is said or heard; and what is written or read. The signified, covers the mental aspects of language, namely mental images, thoughts, and concepts.

The semiotic concept was further developed by Roland Barthes. Barthes introduced a model of analysing the significance of signs into two stages known as *two orders of signification*. In this concept, Barthes divides the stages of meaning into two, namely denotation meaning and connotation meaning. Denotation meaning is the meaning obtained in the first stage. Seba & Prihandini (2021) argue that denotation is the literal or primary meaning of a word and usually has a meaning that is commensurate with the meaning found in dictionaries and other literature and does not contain other elements of meaning or hidden meaning. Furthermore, second stage is referred to as connotation meaning, which is the meaning obtained when the sign is mixed with emotions or feelings. In other words, connotation is an implicit meaning or uncertain meaning and can even be metaphorised.

In literary works, meaning is often implicit. This is because literary language often uses symbols and figurative language. One of the literary works written in this style is the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* by Muhammad Ramadhan Batubara. In this short story, almost the entire story is displayed in the form of language symbols that must be interpreted first in order to understand its meaning. These symbols appear in the form of character names and things done by the characters. This short story tells the story of a two-faced leader named the Presiden who carries out certain strategies to pressure his citizens to obey all the messages he conveys without exception.

There are several previous studies that are relevant to this research. First, Wardhani and Wilyanti (2022) entitled *Analisis Semiotika Pada Cerpen Kontemporer “Megatruh” Karya Danarto*. This study focuses on the analysis of denotative and connotative meanings contained in the *Megatruh* short story text. By using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, they found that denotative and connotative meanings are found in almost all pages of the story. In addition, it was also found that this short story describes the main character who enjoys his activities with lizards, banana stems, and acid, which is actually his last imagination before he is picked up by his death.

The second relevant research is from Andari and Halfian (2019) entitled *Makna Konotatif Dalam Kumpulan Cerpen Penjual Bunga Bersyal Merah Karya Yettia KA (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)*. This research uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyse the interrelationship between codes to find meanings which are then concluded as a whole. The results show that the short story *Penjual Bunga Bersyal Merah* emphasises that care, compassion and attention are something that every human being needs. Furthermore, the short story *Laut Bertanya tentang Bulan* emphasises that concern for the environment, especially regarding forests in Sumatra, brings comfort to the people in the area. Finally, the short story *Jeruk-Jeruk yang Mengereng di Kulkas* emphasises that it not good to have a bad attitude or accuse someone without any real evidence.

The third relevant research is Widyatwati (2015) entitled *Cerpen Faruk “Bus Kota” dalam Semiotik Roland Barthes*. This research uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyse the message and meaning contained in the short story. The results showed that literary works as part of a social system are an expression of the author's feelings in life. In addition, the development of technology and information can change the socio-culture in society so that it can affect people's psychology.

The next relevant research is Astika (2014) *Cerpen “Kisah Pilot Bejo” Karya Budi Darma (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)*. This research uses the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes to see the meaning codes in the short story. The results showed that the short story *Kisah Pilot Bejo* by Budi Darma presents diverse meanings, scattered in the codes it contains. From the meaning process, it can be said that Roland Barthes' five forms of codes can be utilised to capture the meaning in the short story with various interpretations in each code. In addition, it was also found that the short story *Kisah Pilot Bejo* is full of irony and contradictory things.

From the four studies above, there are similarities with this study, both of which use semiotic theory in analysing data. Different from the four previous studies, this research focuses on analysing the symbols of power abuse contained in the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* Karya Muhammad Ramadhan. In addition, based on the literature study, no literary research has been found that uses the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* as the object of research. Therefore, this study will focus on analysing the symbols of power abuse that appear in the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* using semiotic theory.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative research with descriptive analysis method. Moleong (2012) states that qualitative research is research that produces analytical procedures without using statistical methods for other forms of quantitative measurement. Data sources were taken from excerpts of the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* by Muhammad Ramadhan Batubara. The data analysis focused on the meaning of symbols related to the form of power abuse by the Presiden character. The excerpts were analysed using semiotic theory, namely symbols and their meanings.

Semiotics is a science that studies various objects, events, and the whole culture as signs. Diana (2016) added that semiotics can be seen through symbols with language as a means of communication. In literary studies, Endraswara (2008) states that semiotics reveals literary works as sign system. Furthermore, Suarta and Dwipayana (2014) state that in literary research, syntactic relationships between signs and the relationship between signs and what they signify are usually considered. Initially, Ferdinand de Saussure introduced the concept of sign into signifier (object) and signified (meaning). Saussure (in Daniati et al., 2019) stated that the signifier is a meaningful sound or meaningful stroke. On the other hand, the signified is the second reference for obtaining a sign or characteristic in semiotics. This concept of sign meaning was later developed by Roland Barthes. Novia (2023) states that Barthes developed meaning into two levels. The first level is denotation, while the second level is connotation. The meaning at the second level (connotation) will be analysed in this study. The steps in doing this research are close reading the text, collecting and classifying data in the form of quotations, analysing quotations with semiotic theory, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* is written with a language full of symbols in it. Therefore, an analysis is needed to see the implicit meaning or connotative meaning contained in the text to understand this short story. In this study, the meaning revealed will focus on the symbols that symbolise power abuse by the Presiden character in the short story. Based on the data taken, the symbols that show the existence of power abuse committed by a character named Presiden are found in the characters' names, the Presiden's dog, and the message from the character named Presiden.

### 1. Symbol of Names

The naming of the characters in the short story can be seen as a symbol of the power possessed by the character. The only characters that have names in this short story are the Kapiten, Jenderal, and the Presiden. Other characters, including the character Aku who also acts as the narrator, are not named at all. This shows the emphasis on the power possessed by the named characters. This can be seen from the following quote.

*Secara umum, kami tidak ada yang kenal baik dengan Presiden, sekadar tegur sapa saja, jarang pula terlibat perbincangan panjang. Presiden ini anak Jenderal sekaligus cucunya Kapiten. Jenderal adalah tokoh kampung zaman awal kemerdekaan, sementara Kapiten merupakan sosok pejuang era kolonial.*

*In general, none of us knew the Presiden well, we just said hello and rarely had long conversations. Presiden is the son of Jenderal and the grandson of Kapiten. Jenderal was a village figure in the early days of independence, while the Kapiten was a colonial-era fighter. (translated)*

Based on the quote above, it can be seen that the Presiden's character is a descendant of a family of important figures who also have power. They do not come from ordinary families, the names Kapiten (Captain) and Jenderal (General) show that they come from military families who have power compared to ordinary citizens. It also shows how the power possessed by this family is always expanded and strengthened. This can be seen from the Kapiten character who later has the son 'Jenderal' and the grandson 'Presiden'. From the naming of these three characters, it can be seen that there is an increase in the level of power possessed by the family, starting from the lowest level of Kapiten (Captain), rising to Jenderal (General), and then the highest to Presiden (President). This also shows the inheritance of capital in the form of power that is perpetuated from generation to generation by the Presiden's family. This is also reinforced by the quote

*"Saat punya anak, Kapiten memberikan nama Jenderal. Tentu, dia ingin anaknya lebih hebat dari dia. Begitupun si Jenderal, memberikan nama Presiden untuk anaknya dengan alasan itu." (translated) "When he had a child, the Kapiten gave him the name General. Of course, he wanted his son to be greater than him. Likewise, the General gave his son the name Presiden for that reason."*

Thus, the naming of the three characters Kapiten, General, and Presiden can be seen as a symbol of the power attached to the three characters. This power is then utilised by the Presiden to commit violence against his citizens. This can be seen in the following quote.

*Namun, baru-baru ini Presiden bikin pesan berbeda. Tidak sekadar dia sampaikan langsung, mengumpulkan warga di tanah lapang, isinya juga aneh. Katanya, kami semua harus pindah ke atas bukit tempat dia tinggal. Kampung akan tenggelam., beberapa waktu ke depan hadir air bah mahadahsyat. Dan, yang paling aneh, kami semua diperbolehkan bangun rumah di tanahnya itu, tidak perlu bayar tapi wajib tanam bahan pangan untuknya. Ternak pun dibolehkan, bahkan dia sip menyediakan bibit sapi atau kambing. Namun setiap hewan ternak itu melahirkan dua anak, maka satu ekor adalah haknya. Jadi, kalau melahirkan empat, dua ekor miliknya. Melahirkan enam, tiga ekor untuknya. Begitu seterusnya, sesuai kelipatan yang ada. Dan, yang memelihara adalah kami.*

*However, recently the Presiden made a different message. Not only did he deliver it directly, gathering residents in a field, the content was also strange. He said that we all had to move to the top of the hill where he lives. The village will be submerged, and in the near future there will be a great flood. And, strangest of all, we were all allowed to build houses on his land, we didn't have to pay but we were obliged to grow food for him. Livestock was also allowed, and he even provided cattle or goat seeds. But for every animal that gave birth to two offspring, one was his right. So, if they give birth to four, two are hers. If it gives birth to six, three are for him. And so on, according to the multiples. And, the one who maintains it is us. (translated).*



From the quote above, the Presiden's character shows the existence of power abuse against his citizens. Power abuse is carried out in a subtle way, namely in the form of an appeal to residents to move to the Presiden's hill. This indirectly reveals that there is usually a difference between where the Presiden and ordinary citizens live, which symbolises the difference in their status. However, this appeal is not merely to give the residents the opportunity to live in the same place as the Presiden. Instead, this appeal implies an order for citizens to work for free for the Presiden's benefit.

By telling the residents to move and cultivate the land at the Presiden's house, it implies that the Presiden wants free labour from the residents as well as economic benefits from the residents' farming activities. This is reinforced by the Presiden's strategy of providing cattle and goats to be raised by the residents, but they must share half of the profits with the Presiden who has done nothing. This is a symbol of the Presiden's power abuse over the community, if interpreted, the Presiden's order is like a tax policy that burdens the community. While it is the citizens who work hard, it is not the citizens who enjoy the results. It can be seen that the Presiden as the highest leader actually issued a policy that is not in favour of the citizens.

## 2. Symbol of Dog as the Presiden's Loyal Aide

In the short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden*, it is mentioned that the Presiden is always escorted and followed by his loyal dogs. The dogs are described as animals that look fierce and scary but are obedient to the Presiden. In addition, these dogs also always wear uniforms. This is shown in the following quote.

*Tapi yang jelas, si Presiden ini bukan hantu, dia nyata. Dia hidup. Dia manusia. Dia punya rumah, tinggalnya di atas bukit agak jauh dari pemukiman warga. Sese kali dia muncul di pasar, duduk di warung kopi sambil berbincang atau sekadar jalan-jalan sore berteman beberapa anjingnya yang bertubuh besar. Anjing-anjing yang menarik, meski bertampang garang dan air liur yang terus menetes, binatang setia itu terlihat lucu karena memakai seragam yang nyaris sama yakni rantai tali bertuliskan: tidak galak. Kami para warga kampung melihatnya seperti paradoks, berarti majas yang contohnya hidup seperti mati; kata guru pelajaran sekolah. Ya bagaimana mungkin binatang bertaring itu tidak menyerang? Tapi itu tadi, persis binatang peliharaannya si Presiden memang juga paradoks: hadir bak hilang, ada pun tiada, wujud juga maya.*

*But clearly, this Presiden is not a ghost, he is real. He's alive. He's a human being. He has a house, he lives on a hill some distance from the residential areas. Occasionally he appears at the market, sits in a coffee shop chatting or just goes for an evening walk with some of his big dogs. The dogs are interesting because, despite their fierce looks and drooling saliva, the loyal animals look cute because they wear almost the same uniform: a chain with the words: not fierce. We villagers saw it as a paradox, meaning a figure of speech in which life is like death; the schoolteacher said. Yes, how could the fanged beast not attack? But that's just it, the Presiden's pet is also a paradox: present is missing, existent is absent, form is also an illusion. (translated).*

From the quote above, the Presiden's dog in question is not just an animal. However, it can be interpreted as a symbol of the Presiden's bodyguards or aides who are usually military

or armed. This is reinforced by the statement that the dogs wear uniforms, which symbolises military uniforms. As a high-ranking official with power, the Presiden has aides who are always by his side. In this short story, to criticise the violence of the Presiden's power, a symbol in the form of a dog is used to symbolise the horror that the aide can do to anyone who dares to go against his master, the Presiden. Just like a fierce dog, the Presiden's aide will only be obedient and loyal to his master's orders and will turn savage to who is considered not in accordance with his master. This is also supported by the following quote.

*Tentu saja pesan langsung si Presiden tidak kami hiraukan. Bagaimana mau hirau, dia bukan kepala kampung. Pun, kampung kami jauh dari sungai dan laut, jadi sulit dibayangkan akan hadir air bah.*

*Masalahnya, tak berapa lama pesan itu terbang bersama angin, anjing-anjingnya presiden mulai turun bukit. Awalnya bergerombol, menyuarakan gonggong yang nyaring. Lalu mulai berpecah, menyasar rumah warga, menyalak keras tanpa peduli siang atau malam. Setelah itu, anjing-anjing itu semakin banyak, tidak hanya yang berseragam kalung saja. Bahkan, ada anjing yang mulai mengajar anak-anak kami. Ada pula warga yang jadi korban, betisnya digigit hingga positif rabies.*

*Of course, we ignored the Presiden's direct message. How could we care, he wasn't the village chief. Also, our village is far from the river and the sea, so it's hard to imagine that there will be a flood.*

*The problem was that no sooner had the message flown away with the wind than the Presiden's dogs started coming down the hill. At first, they clumped together, barking loudly. Then they began to split up, targeting people's homes, barking loudly regardless of day or night. After that, there were more and more dogs, not just the ones in collars. There were even dogs that started teaching our children. Another resident was bitten on his calf and tested positive for rabies. (translated).*

From the quote above, it can be seen that the Presiden's dogs will hunt down who does not want to follow the Presiden's orders. They will ensure that no one who dares to contradict the Presiden will survive. In the quote, it is mentioned that the dogs attacked in groups, symbolising how the army of officers often brutally attacked ordinary citizens when there was opposition to the leader's policies. Then it is also mentioned that these dogs will split up and target one by one residents' houses regardless of day or night. This symbolises the power abuse that is often experienced by citizens who are accused of being provocateurs who mobilise citizens to defend their rights and disagree with the leaders. The quote also shows that it is not only dogs with collars (the authorities) but also other groups of dogs that can be interpreted as hired thugs. This power abuse is usually carried out by the leader through the apparatus to foster fear so that citizens will finally obey the leader orders, as in the following quote.

*Kami yang sebelumnya tak hirau mulai goyah. Beberapa warga malah sudah berpikir untuk pindah ke bukit. Mereka melihat tawaran presiden adalah sebuah jalan keluar dari masalah yang mereka sendiri tidak tahu apa. Sedang yang lain, masih punya kesadaran diri, ada yang mau pindah kampung, setidaknya hingga anjing-anjing itu tidak mengganggu lagi.*

*Those of us who were previously unconcerned began to waver. Some residents are already thinking of moving to the hills. They saw the Presiden's offer as a way out of a problem they didn't know what it was. Others, still self-aware, are willing to move to the village, at least until the dogs are no longer a nuisance. (translated).*

Residents who already felt cornered by the terror of the Presiden's dogs (apparatus) were forced to follow the Presiden's wishes to move to the hill. This means that the residents are forced to do free labour without pay and even pay for their own hard work as a condition for being able to live on the Presiden's hill. In the quote, it is emphasised "They saw the Presiden's offer as a way out of a problem that they themselves did not know what." Which implies that there is actually no problem in their village, the problem that arises is created by the Presiden himself so that the residents surrender and follow the Presiden's orders to be exploited for their labour and property. Those who insist on not following the Presiden's orders are forced to leave their homes. In other words, the residents only have a choice that is equally detrimental to them. By following the Presiden, residents must be willing to be exploited. But if they don't, they have to leave their own village for their own safety.

### **3. Symbolic Message from the Presiden**

The message conveyed by the Presiden's character also symbolises the power abuse he exercises over society. In exercising this power abuse, the Presiden does so without getting his own hands dirty. This can be seen from how the Presiden is able to make his citizens afraid and miserable through the actions of his dogs so that they are forced to follow the Presiden's orders. This can be seen in the following quote.

*Lalu, anjing-anjing itu kenapa semakin banyak? Seperti ada pemberian pun perintah dari Presiden atau anjing tanpa seragam kalung itu hanya ikut-ikutan? Sepertinya aku tak tahu dan memang tidak tahu. Yang jelas, setelah itu memang jumlah anjing bertambah banyak tanpa sekalipun air bah datang. Warga kampung satu atau dua orang mulai tumbang karena rabies. Anak-anak mulai tak nyaman ke sekolah atau sekadar bermain di luar rumah.*

*Di bukit mulai terbangun beberapa rumah, Presiden yang membangun dengan uangnya sendiri dan warga yang mau pindah ke sana wajib bayar tanpa menghilangkan pasal harus tanam bahan pangan. Pun, soal ternak tetap berlaku.*

*Then, why are there more and more dogs? Does it seem like the Presiden is letting them go or are the dogs without collars just tagging along? I don't know and I don't seem to know. What is clear is that after that, the number of dogs increased without even a flood coming. One or two villagers began to die of rabies. Children began to feel uncomfortable going to school or playing outside. On the hill, several houses were built, the Presiden built them with his own money, and people who wanted to move there were obliged to pay without removing the article that they had to grow food. Also, the livestock issue still applies. (translated).*



Without damaging his own image, the Presiden pressurises the citizens to submit under his authority. In the quotation, it is depicted that the dogs are getting more and more as if the Presiden's omission or order. This symbolises the Presiden's deliberate exercise of power by using military apparatus and hired thugs to suppress and terrorise the residents. Residents were forced to leave their homes not because they wanted to and not because there was a real problem. They were forced to leave and follow the Presiden's message because they were afraid that they would become victims of the Presiden's power abuse through the authorities. It is also seen that the power abuse carried out by the Presiden not only harms residents because they have to leave their homes and move to the hill. However, residents are also required to pay without eliminating the obligation to share their crops and livestock. In other words, the residents are burdened with multiple sufferings, both mentally, energetically, and economically. This symbolises the leader's greed on top of the people's suffering. People cannot stay in their homes for fear of their own safety, but they must also be willing to be extorted to their utmost if they want to move to the Presiden's hill.

Thus, the content of the Presiden's message symbolises that citizens must submit to whatever he wants. If they resist, there will be consequences. These consequences are not only for them, but also for their entire families, not to mention innocent and ignorant children. The Presiden symbolises how power can be dangerous in the hands of greedy and empathetic people. Instead of carrying out his duties as a leader, the Presiden symbolises the violence of power perpetrated against his own citizens. The power possessed by the Presiden who is surrounded by the apparatus as his dogs seems to be invincible and by . This can be seen in the following quote.

*Dan beberapa hari yang lalu, pesan dari seorang yang bernama Presiden kembali sampai ke telingaku saat tidur. Seperti mimpi, suara-suara terdengar sayup, tapi terasa benar. Katanya, di atasnya hanya ada Tuhan.*

*Pagi hari ini, pesan dari seorang yang bernama Presiden juga datang lagi. Kali ini tidak seperti mimpi, lebih mengarah ke nyata. Suara-suara terdengar jelas. Bilangnya, itu pun kalau Tuhan ada.*

*And a few days ago, a message from a man named Presiden reached my ears in my sleep. Like a dream, the voices sounded faint, but felt right. He said, there is only God above.*

*This morning, the message from a person named Presiden also came again. This time it was not like a dream, it was more real. Voices were clearly heard. He said, even if God exists. (translated).*

The great power of the Presiden is likened to the phrase "there is only God above him", implying that no other force will be able to overthrow the Presiden's power. The Presiden's power makes citizens powerless to resist in any way. The power of the dogs around the Presiden is very difficult to penetrate, especially by ordinary civilians who do not have weapons, power and money. The power of this Presidential figure is not only imprinted on the citizens, but has also penetrated into their minds. People's fear of the consequences of disputing the Presiden's message has resulted in them always thinking of the Presiden and all his messages. In other words, the Presiden's violent power has reached the psychological level of the citizens.

## CONCLUSION

The short story *Pesan dari Seorang yang Bernama Presiden* is written in a language full of symbols. One of the symbols found in this short story is the symbols of power abuse committed by the character named Presiden. This research found three forms of symbols that symbolise power violence.

**Firstly**, the symbol of power abuse can be found in the naming of the characters in the short story. The names are Kapiten, Jenderal, and Presiden who are one family. These three names symbolise their status as more powerful than ordinary citizens. This is reinforced by the fact that there are no other names mentioned besides the three of them in the short story.

**Second**, the symbol of violence can be found in the use of the word Presiden's pet dog. These dogs symbolise aides who are usually military officers who are always unconditionally loyal in following the Presiden's every move. Just like pet dogs, they are trained to be obedient and loyal only to their master, the Presiden. On the other hand, they will destroy anyone who is considered against their employer.

**Third**, the Presiden's message to the residents. The Presiden's message for residents to move to his hill on the condition that they pay rent, cultivate land, and manage livestock is another symbol of power violence. It is not enough to terrorise the residents by using his dogs so that they are willing to move to the hill, the Presiden is also blackmailing residents who are not richer than him both in terms of energy and wealth. In other words, the helplessness of the residents is exploited by the Presiden for his personal gain. The Presiden appears to be the one who helps, when in fact he is the perpetrator of the misery experienced by the residents.

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