



The Symbolism of Death in Taufiq Al Hakim Short Story Daqqat al-Sa'ah: A Peirce Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

Death in literary texts is frequently represented in an implicit manner through symbolic signs that require semiotic interpretation to access their underlying meanings. In Arabic short stories, death commonly operates as an existential motif shaped by language and narrative symbolism. This study seeks to examine the icons, indices, and symbols that construct the representation of death in Taufiq al-Hakim's short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with reading and note-taking techniques, the analysis is conducted using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic model, which consists of representamen, object, and interpretant. The findings indicate that death is articulated through recurring signs such as the sound of a ticking clock, barking dogs, specific temporal markers, power outages, medical authority, and the sudden death of Hamadah. These signs collectively generate an understanding of death as an existential condition beyond human control. This research contributes to literary semiotic studies by emphasizing death as the central semiotic structure of the narrative and reaffirming the applicability of Peirce's semiotics in interpreting implicit meanings in Arabic literary texts. Future research may expand this approach to other Arabic works or integrate semiotic analysis with psychological and existential perspectives.

Keywords: Arabic Short Stories, Icon-Index-Symbol, Peirce's Semiotics, Symbolism of Death

ملخص

غالبًا ما يتم تمثيل الموت في النصوص الأدبية بطريقة ضمنية من خلال علامات رمزية تتطلب تفسيرًا سيميائيًا للوصول إلى معانيها الكامنة. في القصص القصيرة العربية، غالبًا ما يعمل الموت كموضوع وجودي تشكله اللغة والرمزية السردية. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى فحص الأيقونات والمؤشرات والرموز التي تشكل تمثيل الموت في قصة توفيق الحكيم القصيرة «دقة الساعة». باستخدام نهج وصفية نوعية مع تقنيات القراءة وتدوين الملاحظات، يتم إجراء التحليل باستخدام النموذج السيميائي الثلاثي لتشارلز ساندرز بيرس، والذي يتكون من الممثل والموضوع والمفسر. تشير النتائج إلى أن الموت يتم التعبير عنه من خلال علامات متكررة مثل صوت دقات الساعة ونباح الكلاب وعلامات زمنية محددة وانقطاع التيار الكهربائي والسلطة الطبية والموت المفاجئ لحمادة. تولد هذه العلامات مجتمعة فهمًا للموت كحالة وجودية خارجة عن سيطرة الإنسان. تساهم هذه الدراسة في الدراسات السيميائية الأدبية من خلال التأكيد على الموت باعتباره البنية السيميائية المركزية للسرد وإعادة تأكيد قابلية تطبيق سيميائية بيرس في تفسير المعاني الضمنية في النصوص الأدبية العربية. قد توسع الأبحاث المستقبلية هذا النهج ليشمل أعمالاً عربية أخرى أو تدمج التحليل السيميائي مع المنظورات النفسية والوجودية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أيقونة-مؤشر-رمز، رمزية الموت، سيميائية بيرس، قصص قصيرة عربية



Introduction

Death as a cultural and existential phenomenon is often studied in scientific research because it is understood to transcend biological events, but rather as the result of the construction of meaning through signs, symbols, and social representations in literary texts.¹ In literary studies, the symbol of death is used to portray inner experiences, psychological pressures, and human views on destiny and existence, so that semiotic analysis is necessary to reveal hidden meanings that are not explicitly stated.² The theme of death occupies a central position in literary studies because it is directly related to the universal human experience and is always relevant in various social and cultural contexts.³ In which Death is directly related to the fading of consciousness.⁴ This is in line with Elie Wiesel in *Night*, who interprets death not merely as a physical event, but as an experience that destroys the meaning of life, and human existential consciousness.⁵ Reader's interest in literary works that address death continues to grow, given that symbols of death are often used to reflect inner turmoil, and life transformations.⁶ The representation of death becomes a means of formulating existential meaning through symbolic language that is impermanent.⁷

In social life, symbols of death are not only found in cultural practices passed down from generation to generation, but also appear in literary works. Literary works reflect life through symbolic language that constructs meaning.⁸ Representations of death through the media, art, and public narratives shape the way society understands the value of life, and loss that accompany the process of death, so that these signs contribute to the social construction of the meaning of death itself.⁹ The dissemination of symbols of death in public spaces also has a variety of influences on society; on the one hand, it can strengthen moral awareness and empathy, but on the other hand, it can give rise to misinterpretations or romanticizations of tragedy that have a negative impact on collective understanding.¹⁰ This phenomenon is in line with the culture in many regions of

¹ Pradana Indra Iswara, I Ketut Sudewa, and Maria Matildis Banda, "Makna Kematian dalam Puisi Misa Arwah Karya Dea Anugerah," *Ulil Albab: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 3, no. 12 (5 November 2024): 68–77. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56799/jim.v3i12.5884>

² Zufardien Muhammad, "Menghadapi Kematian Perspektif Muhammad Azhari Bin Ma'ruf dalam Naskah *Laṭā'if Al-'Abidin*," *Manuskripta: Journal of Nusantara Manuscript Studies* 14, no. 2 (31 Desember 2024): 371–400. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33656/manuskripta.v14i2.51>

³ Muhammad Nurwahidin, "Ketakutan Akan Kematian dan Religiusitas," in *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Psikologi Kesehatan IV*, 2014, 49–55. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33476/knpk.v1i2.5267>

⁴ Iriana V Yakushevich, "Linguosensorics of Death Symbols in Marina Tsvetaeva's 'Poem of Air': To the 130-Th Poetess's Anniversary," *Rudn Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics, and Semantics* 13, no. 2 (2022): 262–79. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-2-262-279>

⁵ Elie Wiesel, *Night*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), hlm. 34.

⁶ Nur Fadhillah, "Variasi Makna *Nūr* dalam *Al-Qur'an* (Trichotomy Relations Charles Sanders Peirce)," *Al-Qolamuna: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam*, 1, no. 4 (26 Oktober 2024): 248–61. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71242/jc1d4852>

⁷ Sopi Wahyuni et al., "Dekonstruksi Makna Kehidupan dan Kematian Dalam Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* Karya Fiersa Besari: Kajian Semiotika Jacques Derrida," *Deiktis: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra* 5, no. 4 (31 Desember 2025): 5656–5664. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53769/deiktis.v5i4.2480>

⁸ Zughrofiyatun Najah et al., "Language Style in Poetry Mahmud Sami Basba Al – Barudi (A Stylistic Analysis)," *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 1, no. 2 (8 Juli 2021): 134–144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqtayr.v1i2.1352>

⁹ Wili Azhari, "Makna Kematian dalam Puisi-Puisi Joko Pinurbo Melalui Pendekatan Semiotika," *Jurnal Bahtera Sastra Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2014), n.p. https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/BS_Antologi_Ind/article/view/645/480

¹⁰ Muhammad Rifan Fadliansyah and Muhammad Rayhan Bustam, "Analisis Penggambaran Kematian di dalam Cover Album *Avenged Sevenfold*: Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes," *MAHADAYA: Jurnal, Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya* 3, no. 2 (30 Oktober 2023): 233–44. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34010/mhd.v3i2.11275>

Indonesia, where death is seen as an important phase in the journey of life and is always accompanied by rich symbolic elements.¹¹ In this context, short stories often contain implicit symbols that require interpretive readings of their psychological and social dimensions.¹²

The presence of symbols of death in literary works requires the use of an analytical approach that is capable of interpreting signs in depth. Semiotics, as the study of signs, focuses not only on verbal language, but also encompasses the entire system of signs used by humans to represent sensory experiences and cultural meanings.¹³ Human thought itself operates through signs that enable communication and the formation of meaning in relation to the surrounding environment.¹⁴ Hegel defines symbols as layered signs used by writers to convey implicit meanings and enrich the depth of literary works.¹⁵ In this case, Primandhika¹⁶ explains that semiotics encompasses three levels of analysis, namely syntax, which examines the relationship between signs; semantics, which discusses meaning; and pragmatics, which examines the use of signs in the context of their users.

In the field of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce's theory holds an important position because it emphasizes the dynamic process of meaning through the triadic relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant. Peirce viewed that every sign has representative and interpretative properties, so that meaning is not static, but rather continues to evolve through a process of semiosis that is influenced by context.¹⁷ He rejected the view that meaning is entirely determined by individual interpretation.¹⁸ In the process of interpreting signs, Peirce classified signs based on the relationship between the sign and the object it represent into three main categories. Icons refer to signs that represent objects through a relationship of resemblance. Indices indicate a direct connection between the sign and the object, either through a casual relationship or a factual relationship. Symbols are signs that acquire meaning through social agreement or prevailing cultural conventions.¹⁹ This framework affirms that the meaning of signs is always open and contextual.²⁰

¹¹ Diana Martalia and Ida Ayu Etsa Pracintya, "Simbol dan Makna Tradisi Upacara Kematian Nyurup Etnis Tengger Desa Argosari: Daya Tarik Wisata Edukasi Budaya," *AKADEMIK: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis* 3, no. 3 (1 September 2023): 207–16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37481/jmh.v3i3.1038>

¹² Fatimah Amanda and Dwi Wahyu Candra Dewi, "Semiotika pada Cerpen Kabut Otak Karya Aslan Abidin," *Mantra: Jurnal Sastra Indonesia (Sastra, Bahasa, Budaya)* 3, no. 2 (1 Oktober 2025): 214–19. <https://jurnal.uts.ac.id/index.php/mantra/article/view/5674>

¹³ Thomas A Sebeok, *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics*, 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), hlm. 8-11.

¹⁴ Halina Sendera Mohd Yakin and Andreas Totu, "The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 155, (6 November 2014): 4–8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.247>

¹⁵ Waleed Khalid Alhazmi and Saber Ismail Badawy, "The Symbol and Ideological Connotations in the Theatre of Raja Alem: Al-Mawt Al-Akhir Li-l- Mumaththil (the Actor's Last Death) as a Case Study," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, (17 Desember 2025): 1–23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2025.2602441>

¹⁶ Restu Bias Primandhika, "Ngaji Filsafat: Semiotika Charles S. Peirce dan Roland Barthes," 2020, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344944378>

¹⁷ Yuli Adila Nahla Firdaus and Sony Sukmawan, "Suara Religius Nasionalis Ijo-Abang Tokoh Besut pada Kesenian Besutan," *Fon: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia* 21, no. 1 (30 Maret 2025): 43–57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25134/fon.v21i1.11010>

¹⁸ Wang Weiyang, "The Mode of Textual Existence in Communicative Narratology," *Signs and Media* 1, no. 2 (12 Oktober 2021): 201–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/25900323-12340011>

¹⁹ Rini Prismayanti, T. Thyhaya Zein, and Hariadi Susilo, "Ikon, Indeks, dan Simbol dalam Meme di Instagram," *Literasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah* 14, no. 2 (31 Juli 2024): 521. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23969/literasi.v14i2.12043>

²⁰ Susanna Marietti and Rosella Fabbrichesi, *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce*, EBSCO Ebook Academic Collection, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), hlm. 209.

Peirce explains that a sign can be understood as something that can be captured by the senses or the mind and functions to represent a particular object through a process of interpretation.²¹

Peirce's semiotic approach is relevant for examining symbols of death as it allows signs to be read as relationships between symbolic forms and the reader's experience. Peirce's triadic framework provides space for layered meanings, so that symbols are not only understood as aesthetic elements, but also as constructions of meaning related to social and cultural experiences.²² Another advantage of this theory lies in its flexibility in analyzing various types of signs, including language, visual, and cultural practices.²³ Therefore, Peirce's semiotics is considered the most appropriate approach for revealing the meaning of death symbols in literary texts, especially short stories. Short stories are fictional literary works born from the imagination of the author and reflect human life. This is also understood as a short, concise, and clear narrative that focuses on one main character.²⁴

This study aims to examine the symbolism of death in Taufiq al-Hakim's short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. The originality of this study is reflected in its deliberate emphasis on the symbolism of death as the main focus of analysis in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah. This study views death as an organized system of signs that operates through icons, indices, and symbols. Through this perspective, this study presents a renewed semiotic interpretation that highlights existential tension and the narrative arc towards death.

The short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah was chosen as the object of research because of the characteristics of short stories that allow symbols to work densely and effectively in a limited narrative space. Short stories have complex intrinsic and extrinsic elements, including diction and the use of symbols that often present ambiguity of meaning, thus requiring a semiotic approach to reveal messages that are not explicitly conveyed.²⁵ This story depicts a series of events that take place in a short period of time, with the story centered on Mahmoud, who is lying sick in his home, accompanied by several supporting characters and dialogues that dominate the plot. The use of symbols in short stories is also closely related to how authors construct meaning through the intrinsic elements of literary texts.²⁶ In addition, every work of fiction contains a series of signs that reflect the way the author constructs reality and an imaginary world through certain symbols.²⁷ On that basis, the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah is considered relevant for analysis using Peirce's semiotic theory because it presents strong and distinctive symbolism of death.

²¹ Aji Rizqi Ramadhan et al., "Eschatology in the Quran: Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Study of Surah Al-Waqi'ah," MASHDAR: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran dan Hadis 6, no. 1 (26 Juni 2024): 15–26. DOI: <https://10.15548/mashdar.v6i1.8547>

²² Adinda Putri Dewanny, "Kajian Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce Terhadap Rumah Si Pitung" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2022). <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/63069>

²³ Rini Fitria, "Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce dalam Iklan Kampanye Pasangan Calon Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Provinsi Bengkulu Tahun 2015," Manhaj 1, no. 1 (5 April 2017): 44–50. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1161/mhj.v5i1.698.g621>

²⁴ Salsabila Azahra et al., "Deiksis dalam Cerpen 'Harum' Karya Raditya Dika: Kajian Pragmatik," Deiktis: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra 5, no. 4 (9 Desember 2025): 5589–5598. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53769/deiktis.v5i4.2556>

²⁵ Andra Muhamad Rizky and Resti Suparti, "Analisis Ikon Pada Cerpen 'Gubrak!' Karya Seno Gumira Adjidarma," Semantik: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa dan Budaya 1, no. 4 (14 November 2023): 74–79. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61132/semantik.v1i4.80>

²⁶ Marfu'ah Nur Jannah and Elen Inderasari, "Ikon, Indeks, dan Simbol dalam Kumpulan Cerpen Menghardik Gerimis Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono Serta Relevansinya Dengan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Madrasah Aliyah," Madah: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra 12, no. 2 (2 November 2021): 184–198. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31503/madah.v12i2.376>

²⁷ Abi Senoprabowo et al., "A Comparative Study of the Concept of Religious Tolerance in Indonesian Commercial Advertisements Using Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Analysis," HARMONI 24, no. 1 (30 Juli 2025): 21–52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v24i1.851>

As a basis for this research, the researchers used previous studies. The study conducted by Mahyu et al., discussed family disorganization in the novel *Suara Hati* by Mela Sukmawati using Peirce's semiotic framework to identify the relationship between icons, indices, and symbols in representing family conflicts found in literary texts.²⁸ The same semiotic approach was also applied by Rizky and Suparti in their analysis of icons in the short story "Gubrak!" by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, which focuses on the function of signs as a means of forming meaning in the narrative structure of short stories.²⁹ In addition, Jannah and Inderasari examined icons, indices, and symbols in the short story collection *Menghardik Gerimis* by Sapardi Djoko Damono and their relevance in the context of Indonesian language learning. This study shows how semiotic signs play a role in constructing the meaning of literary texts and have pedagogical implications.³⁰ Fadhillah et al. research applies Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics to examine icons, indices, and symbols in Triyanto Triwikromo's short story *Sesat Pikir Para Binatang* (The Misguided Thinking of Animals), which shows the role of semiotic signs in constructing symbolic meaning and social criticism.³¹ Meanwhile, Amany uses Peirce's semiotic approach in her analysis of Sapardi Djoko Damono's poetry anthology *Hujan Bulan Juni* (June Rain) and finds that poetic signs serve to form reflective and existential meanings.³² However, these studies have not specifically examined the symbols of death in the short story *Daqqat al-Sa'ah*.

Drawing on earlier research, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework has been extensively employed in literary studies to analyze meaning construction through icons, indices, and symbols. Nevertheless, most existing research has concentrated on social, moral, pedagogical, or structural aspects, while the symbolism of death has rarely been positioned as the primary focus of analysis. In addition, Taufiq al-Hakim's short story *Daqqat al-Sa'ah* has not yet been examined through Peirce's semiotic perspective with specific attention to death symbolism. Therefore, this study fills that gap by analyzing death as a construction of meaning that is gradually formed through a network of signs in the text.

The novelty of this research lies in the placement of the symbolism of death as the main analytical focus in *Daqqat al-Sa'ah*, which is analyzed through Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic framework. Accordingly, this study seeks to address how icons, indices, and symbols related to death operate in the short story and what meanings emerge from their interaction? Rather than proposing a statistical hypothesis, this qualitative inquiry is based on the analytical premise that the symbolism of death in *Daqqat al-Sa'ah* is systematically shaped through semiotic relations and serves as a representation of existential tension and the process leading toward death.

²⁸ Moulia Mahyu, Nurlaksana Eko Rusminto, and Gedung Meneng, "Disorganisasi Keluarga dalam Novel *Suara Hati Karya Mela Sukmawati: Semiotika Peirce*," *Konfiks: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra & Pengajaran* 9, no. 1 (19 September 2022): 36–45. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26618/jk/8026>

²⁹ Rizky and Suparti, "Analisis Ikon pada Cerpen 'Gubrak!' Karya Seno Gumira Ajidarma," *SEMANTIK: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Budaya* 4, no. 1 (14 September 2023): 74–79. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61132/semantik.v1i4.80>

³⁰ Jannah and Inderasari, "Ikon, Indeks, dan Simbol dalam Kumpulan Cerpen *Menghardik Gerimis* Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono Serta Relevansinya dengan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Madrasah Aliyah," *Madah: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 12, no. 2 (2 November 2021): 184–198. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31503/madah.v12i2.376>

³¹ Indah Fadhillah et al., "Ikon, Indeks, dan Simbol pada Cerpen *Sesat Pikir Para Binatang* Karya Triyanto Trinikromo," *Referen* 1, no. 2 (30 Oktober 2022): 137–48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22236/referen.v1i2.10317>

³² Dhia Zagra Styah Amany, "Makna Tersembunyi: Kajian Semiotika Peirce pada Antologi Puisi *Hujan Bulan Juni* Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono," *Jurnal Bastrindo: Kajian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia* 5, no. 2 (28 Desember 2024): 91–101. <https://bastrindo.jurnal.unram.ac.id/index.php/jb/article/view/1821/75>

This study aims to complement previous studies by presenting Peirce's semiotic analysis, which focuses on the symbolism of death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah short stories. Through this study, it is hoped that a new understanding will emerge regarding how signs, whether icons, indices, or symbols, work in constructing representations of death and the narrative meanings contained therein. This study is based on the argument that symbolism of death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah short story does not appear randomly, but is formed through the relationship between signs in the form of icons, indices, and symbols present in the short story, which are thought to function as markers of existential tension and representations of the process leading to death.

Method

This type of research uses descriptive qualitative methods, because the data analyzed are utterances and narratives in short stories that can be observed, not numbers. In qualitative research, the main emphasis is on the process and meaning constructed from the subject's perspective.³³ The focus of the research is to reveal the signs of death that appear through dialogue and situations in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The identification subsection in this study uses primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data source, namely the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah by Taufiq al-Hakim, published by the Hindawi Foundation in 2023. The text consists of 18 pages and serves as the main object of analysis.³⁴ The short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah can be accessed via this link <https://www.hindawi.org/books/27480493/>. Meanwhile secondary data sources, in the form of books, articles, and scientific studies relevant to Peirce's semiotics and symbol analysis in literary works.

The characteristics subject of this study is a literary work rather than human respondents. Consequently, the research does not require demographic profiling, inclusion exclusion criteria, or ethical procedures related to human participation. The unit of analysis is the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah by Taufiq al-Hakim. The investigation is limited to textual data, including narrative sequences, dialogues, and symbolic elements associated with representations of death. Accordingly, the role of "participant" in this research is fulfilled by the text itself, treated as an organized system of signs analyzed through Peirce's semiotic perspective. The research design in this study used data collection techniques conducted through reading and note taking.³⁵ By repeatedly analyzing the text to find icons, indices, and symbols related to the symbol of death. The research steps included: (1) reading the short story thoroughly to understand the context of the story; (2) marking sections that contained signs of death; (3) grouping the data according to the categories of icons, indices, or symbols; and (4) analyzing the meaning based on Peirce's triadic model. The data analysis technique applied in this study refers to Miles and Huberman's analysis model, which includes three stages: data reduction, which is selecting and filtering text sections relevant to the focus of semiotics; data presentation, which is presenting categorized text quotations for easy analysis; and drawing

³³ Fahriana Nurrisa, Dina Hermina, and Norlaila Norlaila, "Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Penelitian: Strategi, Tahapan, Dan Analisis Data," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran (JTTP)* 02, no. 03 (31 Januari 2025): 793–800. <https://jurnal.kopusindo.com/index.php/jtpp/article/view/581>

³⁴ Taufiq Al-Hakim, *Daqqat Al-Sa'ah*, Hindawi Ed, (Cairo: Hindawi Foundation, 2023), hlm. 1-18. <https://www.hindawi.org/books/27480493/>

³⁵ Tamim Mulloh, Ade Destri Deviana, and Muhammad Ridho Naufal, "Satire: Sindiran Humor dalam Naskah Drama Arab," *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no. 1 (2024): 22–36. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqtayr.v4i1.4000>

conclusions, which is formulating the meaning of death symbols that appear in short stories according to research objectives.³⁶ The data validation technique in this study is the triangulation technique. This technique increases the validity and reliability of research results by utilizing various data sources, methods, theories, or different researchers.

Result and Discussion

The short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah by Taufiq al-Hakim presents a picture of the situation before death through a series of brief events focusing on the character Mahmoud, a man who is lying sick in his home. Throughout the narrative, Mahmoud is constantly overwhelmed by anxiety about death, which he believes will occur at a certain time, while the presence of other characters, such as the tax collector, doctor, and family members, is portrayed through tense dialogues. At the end of the story, Hamadah (Mahmoud's healthy son) dies suddenly, shocking everyone. This event confirms that death can occur suddenly and is beyond human control or calculation.³⁷ Death is not presented directly from the beginning of the story, but is built gradually through the appearance of recurring auditory, visual, and symbolic signs. This is in line with Asiri's findings, which confirm that death in literary texts is not depicted through a single symbol, but is built up gradually through the accumulation of narrative markers that build tension until the end of the story.³⁸ This condition requires a semiotic approach to interpret the relationship between these signs and the construction of the meaning of death in the text. The signs of death are not through a direct depiction of death, but as a means of forming existential meaning that is understood through the process of semiotic interpretation.³⁹ Therefore, this study uses Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of semiotics, which views meaning as the result of the interaction between representamen, object, and interpretant.⁴⁰

Table 1. Mapping the Signs in the Short Story Daqqat al-Sa'ah (Peirce's Triadic Model)

No	Representament	Object	Interpretant
1.	دقت الساعة	The ever-moving process of time	Mahmoud's closeness to death accompanied by psychological burdens
2.	نباح الكلب	Response to the presence of elements that are not directly visible	Signs of the arrival of death (Izrail) based on the beliefs of prominent figures
3.	الرابعة إلا ثلاث دقائق	Concrete timepiece	Mahmoud's belief that his death was imminent

³⁶ M B Miles, A M Huberman, and T R Rohidi, *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode Metode Baru* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia (UI -Press), 1992), hlm. 490. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=I1vm0AEACAAJ>

³⁷ Totok S Wiryasaputra, *Konseling Kedukaan Kematian Mendadak*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi, 2023), hlm. 114.

³⁸ Sheima Mohammed Faleh Al-Shammari, "The Theme of Death in the Narrative Experience of Mohammad Asiri," *Arts for Linguistic Literary & Studies* 7, no. 1 (26 Februari 2025): 226–43. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53286/arts.v7i1.2406>

³⁹ Eva Nurhasanah, "Analisis Semiotik Puisi 'Kematian dan Makam Mistik' Karya Jalaluddin Rumi," *Khiraani: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 1, no. 1 (22 Maret 2023): 55–67. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47861/khirani.v1i1.279>

⁴⁰ F Bellucci, *Peirce's Speculative Grammar: Logic as Semiotics*, Routledge Studies in American Philosophy (London: Routledge, 2017), hlm. 400.

4.	المحصّل	The figure of the “taker”	The symbolization of the angel of death as the reaper of souls
5.	قطع التيار	Energy interruption	The cessation of human relations with the continuity of life
6.	الطبيب	Medical authority	The fragility of human beliefs in understanding life and death
7.	حمادة ابني يموت	Death as a factual event	God's provisions that are beyond human prediction

Based on table 1, it was found that the signs function in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah through the triadic relationship proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, namely representamen, object, and interpretant. Peirce's triadic model is understood as the main foundation in modern semiotics, where the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant forms an open-ended meaning-making process that depends on context.⁴¹ Representamen are manifested in various concrete forms found in the text, such as sounds, time markers, characters, and events. The meaning of a sign is directly related to the object it represents.⁴² These signs then refer to specific objects, including ideas about time, death, authority, and destiny. Jannah et al. emphasize that the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant does not form meaning instantly, but develops through a process of semiosis that occurs continuously in literary texts.⁴³ It is not a rigid structure.⁴⁴

This triadic approach shows that death in short stories is not explicitly presented, but is gradually constructed through a network of interconnected signs. Therefore, Peirce's semiotics provides a systematic framework for reading the symbolism of death, as well as a basis for analysis before further discussion of icons, indices, and symbols separately. This finding is in line with the structural semiotic approach, which views symbolic meaning in short stories as being constructed indirectly through the interrelationships between signs in the narrative structure and can only be understood through a process of interpretation.⁴⁵

The results of the study are presented through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics of Taufiq al-Hakim's short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah. This study focuses on aspects of objects that focus on icons, indices, and symbols because all three are considered to be real representations of signs in the text.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Tony Jappy, *The Bloomsbury Companion to Contemporary Peircean Semiotics*, Bloomsbury Companions, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), hlm. 529.

⁴² Zhao Yiheng, “Redefining ‘Sign’/ ‘Symbol’ and Semiotics,” *Signs and Media* 2, no. 1–2 (30 Oktober 2023): 55–70. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/25900323-12340022>

⁴³ Haniyah Izzatul Jannah, Fadlil Yani Ainusyamsi, and Resa Restu Pauji, “Analisis Simbol dalam Cerpen Athfalul Ghabab Karya Muhammad Athiyah Al Abrasyi,” *Pupujian: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Sastra dan Kearifan Lokal* 4, no. 1 (16 Juli 2025): 1–14. <https://ejournal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/pupujian/article/view/874>

⁴⁴ Chris Barnham, *The Natural History of the Sign: Peirce, Vygotsky and the Hegelian Model of Concept Formation*, Semiotics, Communication and Cognition [SCC] (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), hlm. 255.

⁴⁵ Tiara Nur Mulyawati, Abdul Latif, and Achmad Yani, “Food and Drink Mini Short Story by 'Alaa Al-Deeb (Semiotic Structural Analysis) | Mini Cerpen 'Makanan dan Minuman' Karya 'Alaa Al-Deeb (Analisis Struktural Semiotik),” *Mantiqu Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 3, no. 2 (16 September 2023): 152–167. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqu tayr.v3i2.3793>

⁴⁶ Rahma Fatiya et al., “Strengthening Spiritual Representation Through Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotic Analysis in The Song Gala Bunga Matahari,” *Journal of Pragmatics Research* 7, no. 1 (5 April 2025): 107–31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v7i1.107-131>

The following is the data from the analysis of the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah by Taufiq al-Hakim based on Pierce's semiotics.

Table 2. Data Analysis in the Short Story Daqqat al-Sa'ah

No	Type of Sign	Number	Quotation
1	Icon	2	دقت الساعة نباح الكلب
2	Index	4	دقت الساعة نباح الكلب الرابعة إلا ثلاث دقائق حميدة صخرء
3	Symbol	5	المحصّل حقيبة صغيرة سوداء قطع التيار الطبيب حمادة ابني يموت
Total		11	

Based on table 2, it was found that the signs of death in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah are spread across three semiotic categories, namely icons, indices, and symbols, each of which has a different role in constructing the narrative meaning of death. The table shows that these signs are present in various narrative forms, such as sounds, time markers, characters, and important events, which together form a layered representation of death throughout the story. Icons work primarily through sensory similarities, allowing readers to grasp the psychological pressure experienced by the characters. Indices function as causal and contextual markers that signal the approaching presence of death in the narrative plot. The emphasis on indices in Arabic literary semiotics studies shows that the atmosphere of space, physical condition, and time markers function as the main markers of death that are conveyed implicitly.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, symbols represent socially and culturally constructed meanings that transcend literal interpretations, emphasizing themes of fate, uncertainty, and human limitations. The systematic classification presented in Table 2 provides an empirical basis

⁴⁷ Itidal Salman Iraby and Sura Saleem Abdel Shaheed, "Semiotic Connotations in the Arabic Novel the Baghdad Morgue, for Example," *Journal of Arabic Language and Literature (JALSL)* 2, no. 4 (30 September 2023): 67–78. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26389/AJSRP.R041222>

for further analysis and shows that the symbolism of death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah is not presented randomly, but is constructed through a coherent semiotic system that supports a more in-depth interpretation.

This finding is reinforced by the semiotic view that signs work through a process of layered interpretation and inter-sign relations, so that the analysis of icons, indices, and symbols is a valid methodological approach in literary studies.⁴⁸ Every human death is generally accompanied by the appearance of various signs, whether in the form of living creatures, specific objects, inner intuition, or changes in physical condition. Signs are understood as signals that anticipate events before they actually occur; thus, the signs of death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah function as narrative signs that build the reader's awareness of the presence of death before the event of death takes place.⁴⁹ Philosophically, death is not understood solely as a biological event, but as an existential experience mediated by symbols, in line with the results of the analysis which show that death in the text is constructed through a system of signs, rather than being presented as a direct fact.⁵⁰

The symbols in the text do not function independently, but rather construct meaning through a network of interrelated signs. Fajriah et al. show that symbols in literary works represent phases of human life, including death, which is understood not as a literal event, but as a construction of meaning mediated by cultural signs and symbols. This perspective reinforces the results of the analysis in table 2 that the signs of death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah are constructed gradually through icons, indices, and symbols that shape the reader's existential consciousness.⁵¹ Furthermore, the symbolic meaning in literary texts can only be understood through a layered process of interpretation, not through a direct interpretation of narrative events. Thus, the sign classification system in table 2 is not only descriptive but also represents how the text constructs the meaning of death as a complex symbolic and cultural experience.⁵²

Based on the classification of signs in table 2, the following description focuses on discussing each category of icons, indices, and symbols to reveal their roles and meanings in constructing representations of death in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah.

A. Symbols of Death in Daqqat al-Sa'ah based on Peirce Semiotic's

1. Icon

A sign that bears a resemblance to its object.⁵³ Based on table 2, the following are symbols of death that are included in the icons category.

⁴⁸ Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 5th ed., Basics (Routledge (Firm), (London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Incorporated, 2025), hlm. 398.

⁴⁹ Tuti Kasih, *Pertanda*, (Jakarta: Bhuana ilmu populer, 2019), hlm. 8.

⁵⁰ Ade Hashman, *Melawan Kematian Menuju Keabadian*, (Selangor: PTS Publishing House Sdn. Bhd., 2021), hlm. 320.

⁵¹ Utik Aulia Nur Fajriah, Yusro Edy Nugroho, and RM. Teguh Supriyanto, "Simbol Perjalanan Hidup Manusia dalam Kumpulan Puisi Sesanti Tedbak Siti Karya Iman Budi Santosa," *Kawruh: Journal of Language Education, Literature, and Local Culture* 7, no. 2 (20 Oktober 2025): 92–101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32585/kawruh.v7i2.7012>

⁵² Muhsin Muhsin et al., "Narasi Kematian dalam Cerpen 'Ana Al-Maut' Karya Taufik Al-Hakim: Analisis Semiotika Naratif Roland Barthes," *Loghat Arabi: Jurnal Bahasa Arab dan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 1 (30 Juni 2025): 112–122. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36915/la.v6i1.334>

⁵³ Fivin Bagus Septiya Pambudi, *Buku Ajar Semiotika*, (Jepara: UNISNU PRESS, 2023), hlm. 211.

a. دقت الساعة (The clock is ticking)

The ticking clock that can be heard throughout the short story Daqqatal-Saah's becomes an icon of death because its sound represents the passing of time. The character Mahmoud becomes increasingly anxious every time he hears the ticking, which he believes is a sign that he only has a few minutes left to live. This ticking sound is not just an ordinary sound, but evokes an image that is approaching and inevitable. This icon depicts the psychological pressure of a character who feels trapped by time as it moves steadily towards his death.

b. نباح الكلب (Dog barking)

The sound of a dog barking appears at the moment when the character is overcome with fear. Iconically, dogs are real animals and their barking is a physical sound that can be heard by the general public. The icon of a dog barking not only describes the physical environment, but also symbolizes the character's increasing fear. In the story, this barking creates a tense atmosphere, as if the surrounding environment knows that something bad is about to happen because the sound appears repeatedly and gets louder. This icon reinforces the image of the character's proximity to death and builds a tense narrative atmosphere.

2. Index

An index is something that functions as a marker that causes a cause and effect relationship. Based on Table 2, the following are symbols of death that are included in the indices category.

a. دقت الساعة (The clock is ticking) as an index

In the development of the story, the ticking clock is no longer just an icon, but has become an index that forces the characters to realize that time is running out. Mahmoud feels that he cannot escape the passing seconds, so the clock becomes a sure sign that death is approaching and is inevitable. There is also the term alarm clock, which in various works of literature and film often functions as a symbol of time and how time affects the characters' life journeys. Alarm clocks are often used in literary works to represent the symbolism of time, one of which is anxiety and worry. The clock ticks quickly as a sign that reflects the characters' anxiety and worry about the pressure of time.⁵⁴

b. نباح الكلب (Dog barking) as an index

In addition to being an icon, the dog's barking also serves as an index because Mahmud considers the barking to be a reaction to the presence of the angel of death. This means that the sound is proof that a supernatural force is approaching him. In addition to being an icon, the dog's barking also serves as an index because Mahmud considers it a reaction to the presence of the angel of death. This means that the sound is proof that a supernatural force is approaching him. The following excerpt indicates the arrival of the angel of death:

⁵⁴ Ivan Adi, "Jam Weker dalam Karya Sastra dan Film: Simbolisme di Dunia Fiksi," Indotrading, 2023. <https://pantronic.web.indotrading.com/blog/jam-weker-dalam-karya-sastra-dan-film-simbolisme-di-dunia-fiksi>

محمود (مصغياً): نباح الكلب! ... هذا ... هذا النباح الغريب! ... لقد رأى ولا

شك عزرائيل يقترب، آتياً الآن إلى بيتنا! .. إن الكلاب كما يقال ترى عزرائيل

Meaning: Mahmud (listening): Dogs barking! ... Strange barking! ... He must have seen "Izroil" ... approaching, coming to our house now! ... Dogs, as they say, can see "Izroil."

The barking of dogs here indicates something invisible (Izrail) but happening, namely the nearness of death. As the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ نُبَاحَ الْكِلَابِ وَهَيِّقَ الْحَمِيرِ بِاللَّيْلِ، فَتَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُنَّ يَرِينَ مَا لَا تَرُونَ

Meaning: If at night you hear the barking of dogs or the braying of donkeys, humans are advised to seek protection from Allah, because these sounds are believed to be caused by the presence of something that cannot be seen by human eyes.⁵⁵

c. الرابعة إلا ثلاث دقائق (Three minutes to four o'clock)

The mention of the time "three minutes to four" is directly related to Mahmud's fear that his death was predetermined. The change in minutes is proof that he was getting closer to the end of his life. Researchers found this topic in a conversation between Mahmoud and Al Muhassil (the tax collector), as follows:

المحصل (ينظر في ساعته): الرابعة إلا ثلاث دقائق!

محمود: ثلاث دقائق! ... المسألة قربت!

Meaning:

Tax collector (looking at his watch) : Three minutes to four!

Mahmoud : Three minutes! ... It's almost time!

The above conversation caused Mahmud to panic. From Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic perspective, the time marker functions as an index, because it shows a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the passage of time and Mahmoud's increasing proximity to death, which he believes will occur at a certain time. The passing seconds are no longer just a marker of time, but an indicator of the increasingly real presence of death. Time, in this context, appears as a physical object that triggers Mahmoud's anxiety, leading to the interpretation that his death is very near and cannot be postponed. In addition, this conversation reflects the limitations of humans in facing destiny, because knowing the time does not give one the ability to control the situation, but rather increases fear.

d. حميدة صخراء (Hamidah screamed)

When Hamidah (Hamadah's mother) screams because her child suddenly dies, the event becomes an index that informs the reader that death is a real occurrence in the story. The scream is a spontaneous response to loss and a strong indication that tragedy has truly befallen the family. This

⁵⁵ Raehanul Bahraen, "Ketika Mendengar Ayam Berkokok, Anjing Mengonggong dan Ringkikan Keledai Malam Hari," Muslim Afyah, 2013. <https://muslimafiyah.com/ketika-mendengar-ayam-berkokok-anjing-mengonggong-dan-ringkikan-keledai-malam-hari.html>

index makes the reader realize that death is not only the fear of the main character (Mahmoud), but also a reality in the narrative. The following is an excerpt that indicates Hamidah's scream as an index.

حميدة (صارخة): مات وحيداً!

Meaning: Hamidah (shouting): She (Hamadah) died alone!

3. Symbol

A symbol is a type of sign whose meaning is formed based on social agreement. This means that a certain shape or object functions as a signifier and is conventionally used in society. Based on Table 2, the following are symbols of death that are included in the symbols category.

a. المحصّل (Tax collector)

Mahmoud mistakenly interpreted tax collectors as angels of death. The presence of tax collectors as collectors symbolizes angels who collect lives. This symbol shows that fear can change the meaning of a sign. In the al-Maany dictionary, المحصّل comes from the word يحصّل - حصّل which means; to collect, gather and produce.⁵⁶ In a cultural and religious context, the angel of death is a symbol of God's decree regarding life and death. This interpretation shows that Mahmud accepted death as an inevitable divine destiny. The following is a quote that shows that tax collectors are considered angels of death.

المحصّل (يستدرك): بالنيابة عنه، فهو على كل حال محصّل ... مثلي ... أنا أقوم بتحصيل اشتراكات وفحص عدادات ... وهو يقوم بتحصيل أرواح ... مع العلم بأني أستطيع التهاون قليلاً أو الغلط أو الكسل ... فأتأخر يوماً أو أتقدّم عن الميعاد ... أما هو المسكين، فلا يستطيع أن يتقدّم عن مواعيده دقيقة، أو يتأخّر ... فهو قد حدد لك الرابعة ... فما إن تدق الساعة الرابعة حتى يحصّل!

Meaning: Tax collector (realizing): By name, he is a collector... like me... I collect fees and check meters... while he collects souls... knowing that I can relax a little or make mistakes or be lazy... so that I am a day late or arrive earlier than promised... while he, who collects, cannot arrive earlier than promised on time, or be late... because he has set four o'clock for you... As soon as the clock strikes four, he will come!

The above quote describes the function of collecting souls and scheduling their arrival, leading readers to interpret this as the angel of death. Researchers also found references stating that tax collectors had schedules that were as fixed as death, as follows:

المحصّل: (وهو ينفخ دخان سيجارته): ولا دقيقة! ... إني مقيد بمواعيد محدودة مثل الموت!

Meaning: Tax collector (exhaling cigarette smoke): No time! ... I'm bound by a schedule as strict as death!

⁵⁶Terjemahan dan Arti *حصّل* di *Kamus Istilah Semua Indonesia Arab*, Al-Maany Dictionary, n.d., <https://www.almaany.com/id/dict/ar-id/حصّل/>

b. حقيبة صغيرة سوداء (Small black bag)

The small black bag carried by the tax collector became a symbol that made Mahmud realize that the item was related to death. The color black is often associated with the concept of death because in Latin tradition, the term black or ater is associated with cruelty, brutality, and evil.⁵⁷ The following is a quote that shows how a small black bag is considered a concept of death:

ما تكاد «حميدة» تخطو نحو الباب ... حتى يظهر المحصل على العتبة حاملا حقيبة صغيرة سوداء من الجلد تحت إبطه

Meaning: Hamida had just stepped toward the door . . . when the tax collector appeared in the doorway carrying a small black leather bag under his arm.

Mahmud interpreted the bag as a sign that the guest was carrying something related to his death. The presence of the bag further reinforced the perception that death was not far from the character in the story.

c. قطع التيار (Cutting off the electricity)

Electricity plays a fundamental role in modern life as it serves as the main infrastructure that facilitates various human activities. Almost all aspects of daily activities depend on electricity, so its absence can disrupt vital functions in society.⁵⁸ The power outage in this story symbolizes the end of life. When the electricity is cut off, all activities stop and the house is plunged into darkness. This symbolizes the idea that death severs a person's connection to the world. This symbol shows the transition from life to emptiness after death.

d. الطبيب (Doctor)

In the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah, the character of the doctor functions as a symbolic sign formed through social agreement. Based on Pierce's semiotic framework, the doctor as a representamen is presented through his direct presence, his words, and the medical tools he uses. This sign refers to an object in the form of a health worker who is culturally regarded as a person and provides certainty about life or death. The main character (Mahmoud) believes that the doctor is his last hope in life. Initially, Mahmoud was diagnosed with only one week to live. The following excerpt shows the diagnosis:

محمود: قال لي: إنني سأموت في ظرف أسبوع، فعشت عشرة أعوام

Meaning: Mahmoud: He (the doctor) said I would die within a week, but I've been alive for ten years!

This quote explains that he can still survive for ten years after the verdict. This experience fosters a perception in Mahmoud that existence is no longer seen as a symbol of hope, but rather as

⁵⁷ Indonesia CNN, "Kenapa Hitam Identik dengan Kematian dan Berkabung?," CNN Indonesia, 2022. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20220919151630-277-849814/kenapa-hitam-identik-dengan-kematian-dan-berkabung>

⁵⁸ Team MyEco, "Listrik Punah, Apa Yang Terjadi?," MyEco, n.d., <https://myeco.id/listrik-punah-apa-yang-terjadi/>

a sign of uncertainty and error in interpreting the conditions of life and death. The presence of the doctor in the next scene further reinforces the symbolic meaning that has been established previously. When Hamida calls the doctor back to examine Mahmud, who is lying down, the doctor says that Mahmud's heart is healthy, strong, and regular, even guaranteeing that he can live for at least another ten years. The researcher found the following statement made by the doctor:

الطبيب: القلب؟! ... القلب سليم! ... منتظم! ... أستطيع أن أضمن بقاءه بهذه الحيوية والقوة والانتظام لا أقل من عشر سنوات!

This statement did not immediately calm Mahmud; on the contrary, he responded sarcastically and insisted that his death was near. The difference in interpretation between the doctor and Mahmud further reinforced the symbolism of doctors as a sign of the fragility of human certainty in the face of death, because for Mahmud, every medical assurance was considered the opposite of the reality he felt within himself.

e. حمادة ابني يموت (My child Hamadah died)

At the climax of Daqqat al-Sa'ah, news of Hamadah's death suddenly emerges through a conversation between the characters, as follows:

حميدة (كاملجنونة): حمادة؟! ... حضر؟! ... ماذا به؟! ... ماذا أصابه؟! ... ماذا أصابه؟

الخادم: أخبره البواب أن البك مريض، فقفز إلى السلم فسقط، واصطدم رأسه وتحطم على سن الرخام!

Meaning:

Hamida (frantic): "Hamada"? ... He came? ... What's wrong with him? ... What happened to him?! ... What happened to him?!

Servant: The doorkeeper told him that "Al-Bak" was sick, then he jumped on the stairs and fell, hitting his head and smashing it on the marble!

Hamida's emotional outburst over her son's death not only serves as information about a tragic event, but also becomes an explicit symbol of the presence of death in the story. Mahmud is also shocked by what has happened, saying that his son died young. Mahmud insists that it should have been him who died.

Based on Peirce's semiotic perspective, the representamen in the form of the statement "Hamadah has died" refers to the object of death that has occurred, then gives rise to the interpretant that death has indeed befallen one of Mahmud's family members. In the context of Arab-Islamic culture, this symbol illustrates that death is divine destiny that cannot be delayed or avoided. This incident also shows that death often occurs beyond human expectations, because from the beginning Mahmud believed that he would die within minutes, but reality showed that it was Hamadah who became the victim. Thus, this symbol of death reinforces the main message of the short story that humans have no power over life and death, and the process of semiosis of death reaches its most definitive point through Hamadah's real and final death.

B. Interpretation of Findings from a Pierce Semiotic Perspective

Each category of sign has a different role in helping readers understand the reality of the characters and themes presented in the literary text. The icons in (table 2, number 1) not only

represent auditory and visual realities, but also contribute to the reader's affective experience of the relentless pressure of time and the increasing tension in the story. This finding is in line with other literary semiotic studies which confirm that icons play an important role in reinforcing the visualization of meaning in narrative texts.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the index in (table 2, number 2) not only serves as an event marker, but also connects events in the text with the psychological responses of the characters. This is in line with the findings of narrative semiotics research, which views the index as an indicator of the cause-and-effect relationship between events in the story and the inner reactions of the characters.⁶⁰ The role of the index in linking signs to the character's internal experiences is also in line with other semiotic studies that emphasize that indices direct readers to understand internal relationships in narratives through traces of events that trigger the interpretation process.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the symbols in (table 2, number 3) contain more complex social and cultural meanings. Symbols in literary texts do not stop at literal meanings, but serve to represent abstract ideas such as destiny, the uncertainty of life, and the cultural forces that surround human life.⁶² A semiotic study of symbols in other literary texts also shows that symbols play a significant narrative role in conveying moral and cultural messages that transcend the surface of the story.⁶³ In this context, the integrated use of icons, indices, and symbols in the short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah reinforces the construction of the story's meaning and builds a narrative dynamic that encourages readers to interpret death as an existential concept.⁶⁴

The results of the study indicate that the icons, indices, and symbols in Daqqat al-Sa'ahSa'ah form the meaning of death gradually and interrelatedly. This finding is in line with previous studies, as all previous studies also prove that Peirce's analysis is effective for reading hidden meanings in texts or media. The similarity is that all studies use the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant to explain how signs work. The themes they researched focused more on morality, social issues, pedagogy, and structure. Therefore, this study fills the gap by providing a new reading that places death as the main focus, especially through the icons of time, sound indices, and religious symbols that appear in short stories.

When linked to Peirce's theory, the findings of this study are entirely consistent, as all data can be explained through triadic relationships and the process of semiosis. These findings also support Peirce's theory, as meaning in short stories is formed in layers and continues to evolve through interpretation. Thus, Peirce's theory is proven to be relevant and appropriate for analyzing the symbolism of death in literary texts.

⁵⁹ Legi Elfitra and Selly Rozaliya, "Analisis Semiotik Novel 121 Haru di Shimotsuma Kayra Boby Julian," GENTA BAHTERA: Jurnal Ilmiah Kebahasaan dan Kesastraan 6, no. 2 (21 Desember 2020): 174–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47269/gb.v6i2.125>

⁶⁰ Luthfyanthi Luthfyanthi, et al., "Kajian Semiotika dalam Novel Indonesia," Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar 10, no. 03 (30 Desember 2025): 274–85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i03.32900>

⁶¹ Zurrahma Zurrahmah, et al., "Semiotika Perice dalam Cerpem Harian Tempo Edisi Agustus-September 2020," KANDE: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia 2, no. 2 (7 Februari 2022): 259–65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29103/jk.v2i2.5471>

⁶² Tasya Nidea Putri and Sri Rahayu, "Novel Semiotics Analyst yang Telah Lama Pergi by Tere Liye," Jurnal Sastra Indonesia 14, no. 1 (25 Maret 2025): 93–109. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsi.v14i1.19877>

⁶³ Nia Kurniati, Lilia Putri Lestari, and Sabilinnisa Sakna, "Analisis Semiotika Simbol dalam Laskar Pelangi Karya Andrea Hirata," Jurnal EduTech 11, no. 1 (Maret 2025): 1–5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30596/edutech.v11i1.22318>

⁶⁴ Sekar Pratiwi and Prima Gusti Yanti, "Semiotic Analysis of Charles Sanders Pierce in the Novel 'Garis Waktu' By Fiersa Besari Besari," GERAM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Sastra 12, no. 2 (28 Desember 2024): 10–17. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25299/geram.2024.19191>

Closing

This study concludes that the representation of death in Taufiq al-Hakim's short story Daqqat al-Sa'ah is constructed through a structured relationship between icons, indices, and symbols based on Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic model. The results of the analysis show that death is not explicitly presented as a narrative event, but is progressively constructed through the appearance of recurring signs related to time, sound, authority, and destiny, giving rise to psychological, religious, and existential meanings. Unlike previous studies that emphasized social, moral, or pedagogical dimensions, this study places death at the center of the semiotic structure in the narrative, while filling a gap in literary semiotics studies. These findings reaffirm the significance of Peirce's semiotics in revealing the implicit meaning of literary texts and open up opportunities for its application in the study of existential themes in Arabic literature.

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