

***Pancacuriga* as a Tool for Analyzing Texts and Social Phenomena**

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Abstract

Semiotics and discourse analysis are widely recognized as intellectual approaches for uncovering meanings that extend beyond the explicit content of texts, enabling deeper interpretation of underlying messages. Similarly, ***Pancacuriga***, an indigenous interpretive framework rooted in Sundanese culture, functions as a means of understanding implicit meanings, although its application has traditionally been associated with specific communities, particularly *wayang* puppeteers. Like semiotics and discourse analysis, *Pancacuriga* employs a systematic analytical structure to interpret texts and social realities. This study explores *Pancacuriga* as an Indonesian analytical framework for examining texts and social phenomena. A qualitative approach employing grounded theory was adopted to investigate its conceptual and methodological foundations. The findings indicate that *Pancacuriga* follows a cyclical analytical process based on five interrelated principles: ***Sindir***, ***Silib***, ***Siloka***, ***Simbul***, and ***Sasmita***. Together, these elements constitute not only a communication system but also an epistemological framework that reflects the distinctive Sundanese perspective on knowledge and interpretation. Fundamentally, *Pancacuriga* represents the application of scientific inquiry within the humanities and social sciences by emphasizing critical reflection and contextual understanding. Although semiotics, discourse analysis, and *Pancacuriga* share the common objective of revealing meanings beneath the surface, each differs in its historical origins, analytical structure, and underlying philosophical assumptions.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Discourse Analysis, Pancacuriga, Text Analysis System*

1. Introduction

The ruling class possesses substantial resources that enable it to control strategic institutions, particularly education and the mass media. Through these institutions, dominant groups generate and disseminate values, beliefs, and worldviews that shape public perception. As a consequence, the continuous circulation of such information reinforces the hegemony of the ruling class over society, including educational institutions and media audiences.

Hegemony does not operate primarily through violence or direct coercion but through more subtle and effective mechanisms of securing consent. According to Antonio Gramsci (Barker & Jane, 2016), hegemony refers to a process in which the dominant class—economically, politically, and culturally—not only exercises authority but also obtains the consent of subordinate

groups. Consequently, the dominant ideology, values, and perspectives become widely accepted as natural, normal, and legitimate within society. Gramsci (2013) further argues that this process encourages conformity by leading individuals to accept prevailing conditions without critical reflection, as the ideology promoted by dominant groups is internalized and taken for granted.

The operation of hegemony becomes increasingly evident through the continuous flow of information disseminated by the media into both public and private spheres (Surachman, 2022: 4.30). Over time, society unconsciously absorbs these values and beliefs, eventually adopting them as guiding principles in everyday life. In this situation, individuals often fail to recognize that what appears on the surface may conceal deeper meanings or ideological intentions

deliberately embedded within communication.

To reveal these hidden dimensions of meaning, scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Roland Barthes developed semiotics as a field of study concerned with the operation of signs and the production of meaning. Semiotics provides a theoretical framework for understanding sign systems and the realities they construct. Similarly, discourse analysis views language not as a neutral medium of communication but as an instrument of power that both shapes and is shaped by social structures, thereby contributing to the construction of social reality. As intellectual traditions originating in the West, semiotics and discourse analysis have been widely employed to examine how meaning is produced in cultural practices, advertising, literature, visual arts, and film through systems of signs and discourse.

Globally, including in Indonesia, semiotics and discourse analysis are acknowledged as powerful analytical approaches for uncovering meanings that extend beyond the surface of texts and social phenomena. Alongside these approaches, *Pancacuriga* functions as an indigenous interpretive framework for understanding implicit meanings. Although it is most commonly associated with *wayang* puppeteers and the performance tradition, *Pancacuriga* represents a broader body of Sundanese local wisdom. Within the context of *wayang*, it is employed to communicate philosophical and cultural values rooted in Sundanese society. As a result, *Pancacuriga* is often perceived merely as a medium for conveying moral or spiritual teachings. In reality, however, it constitutes a comprehensive interpretive system for revealing implicit meanings embedded in language, symbols, artistic expressions, and cultural practices.

Despite their different cultural and intellectual origins, semiotics, discourse analysis, and *Pancacuriga* each employ systematic analytical frameworks. Semiotics is structured around the relationship between the sign, signifier, and signified. Discourse analysis examines texts through macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. In contrast, *Pancacuriga* is organized around five interconnected principles: **Sindir**, **Silib**, **Siloka**, **Simbul**, and **Sasmita**. Based on these conceptual distinctions, this study investigates *Pancacuriga* as an indigenous Indonesian analytical framework for interpreting texts and understanding social phenomena.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a grounded theory design. Grounded theory is an inductive research methodology that seeks to generate concepts and theories directly from empirical data rather than testing predetermined hypotheses. According to Martin and Turner (as cited in Bado, 2021), grounded theory enables researchers to develop theoretical explanations of the general characteristics of a phenomenon through systematic analysis of empirical observations. In this approach, theory emerges from the data, allowing researchers to construct broader conceptual interpretations while remaining firmly grounded in the evidence collected. Accordingly, the primary objective of grounded theory is to formulate a conceptual framework capable of explaining the processes, actions, and interactions associated with the phenomenon under investigation.

3. Discussion

From the perspective of discourse analysis, a text is understood as a form of social practice rather than merely a linguistic product. Language is viewed not as a neutral medium of communication but

as an instrument of power that is shaped by and simultaneously reproduces social structures. Consequently, discourse does more than reflect reality; it actively constructs and legitimizes social reality. Van Dijk (2001) conceptualizes discourse analysis into three interconnected structural levels. The **macrostructure** focuses on thematic aspects, examining what is communicated and how ideas are expressed. The **superstructure** addresses the schematic organization of discourse and the stylistic choices employed in presenting ideas. Meanwhile, the **microstructure** investigates semantic aspects, namely the meanings emphasized within a text, as well as rhetorical strategies that strengthen or highlight those meanings (Sobur, 2017: 74).

In contrast, semiotics is founded on the assumption that meaning is generated through systems of codes and conventions operating within language and culture. Every text possesses an internal structure that can be examined objectively because reality is represented through interconnected systems of signs. The relationship between a sign and its referent may be conventional or arbitrary, depending on the cultural context in which it operates. One of the most influential semiotic frameworks is Charles Sanders Peirce's **triangle of meaning**, which consists of three interrelated components: the **sign**, the **object**, and the **interpretant**. A word functions as a sign, the object refers to the entity represented by that sign, and the interpretant denotes the mental concept or understanding formed by an individual regarding the relationship between the sign and its object (Sobur, 2017: 114-115).

Peirce's model further acknowledges that meaning is culturally situated, requiring interpretation at both denotative and connotative levels. **Denotation** refers to the direct and explicit relationship between the signifier and the signified, producing a literal and objective meaning. **Connotation**,

on the other hand, represents a secondary level of meaning that emerges through emotional, cultural, and experiential associations. At this level, meanings become more implicit, and myths begin to develop as products of connotative interpretation.

Within Barthes' semiotic framework, **myth** is understood not simply as a traditional legend but as a particular mode of signification through which ideological meanings are communicated. Myths function as messages whose validity is socially accepted even though they cannot be empirically verified. Accordingly, Barthes argues that myth should be regarded as a way of producing meaning rather than as a concept in itself (Sobur, 2017: 127-128). Therefore, the notion of myth in semiotics differs fundamentally from its everyday understanding as folklore or legendary narratives.

Barthes further explains that myth constitutes a **communication system that is itself a message**. It operates through a second-order signification process in which an existing sign becomes a new signifier capable of generating an additional signified, thereby producing a new meaning. In this framework, language functions as the first-order system of signification, whereas myth represents the second-order system. Barthes refers to this higher level of signification as **metalanguage** (Sartre, 1994: 70).

Within the *Pancacuriga* tradition, five interrelated principles constitute its analytical foundation: **Sindir**, **Silib**, **Siloka**, **Simbul**, and **Sasmita**. **Sindir** refers to the indirect communication of criticism through satire or insinuation, intended to remind, advise, or correct others without causing public embarrassment or confrontation (Rosidi, 2011). **Silib** denotes the concealment of intended meanings behind narratives, expressions, or parables, requiring readers or listeners to interpret

messages beyond their literal form. This principle encourages understanding "between the lines" rather than relying solely on explicit statements (Ekadjati, 1995).

Siloka conveys meaning through analogies and parables derived from nature, animals, or everyday experiences, enabling abstract ideas to become more concrete, understandable, and memorable (Rusyana, 1982). **Simbul** emphasizes the use of culturally recognized objects, figures, or signs to represent complex ideas and values in concise yet meaningful forms (Wessing, 1978). Finally, **Sasmita** represents the most subtle mode of communication, expressed through gestures, symbolic cues, body language, intuition, or implicit indications. Interpreting sasmita requires a high degree of sensitivity because the intended meaning is not explicitly articulated but must be perceived through contextual awareness. This concept closely aligns with the Sundanese philosophical notion of *rasa* (feeling), which occupies a central position in local philosophical thought (Setiawan, 2019).

Pancacuriga follows a systematic methodological cycle consisting of five interconnected stages. The first stage, **Confrontation with the Surface**, focuses on observing texts, discourses, or signs in their visible form. The second stage, **Systematic Peeling Activation**, applies the five principles of *Pancacuriga* through a dialectical analytical process. The third stage, **Excavation of Layers of Meaning**, seeks to uncover multiple layers of interpretation, including denotation, connotation, myth, ideology, and relations of power. The fourth stage, **Critical Interpretation**, aims to construct a deeper understanding of the underlying reality behind observable phenomena. Finally, **Reflexivity and Evaluation** encourages researchers to critically examine the limitations of their own interpretations

while remaining open to alternative or counter-interpretations.

The five principles of **Sindir**, **Silib**, **Siloka**, **Simbul**, and **Sasmita** collectively constitute both a communication system and an epistemological framework that reflects the Sundanese way of knowing and interpreting reality. This framework emphasizes four fundamental values. First, **depth**, which encourages continuous exploration of meanings beyond the visible surface. Second, **politeness**, which prioritizes respect for the dignity and feelings of others throughout the communicative process. Third, **sensitivity**, which cultivates intuition and emotional awareness as essential instruments for understanding reality. Fourth, **aesthetics**, which promotes the delivery of messages in an elegant, symbolic, and poetic manner. Consequently, *Pancacuriga* should not be interpreted as an invitation to excessive suspicion or paranoia, but rather as a form of wisdom that nurtures critical awareness, discernment, and prudence in interpreting reality and engaging with others. As such, *Pancacuriga* represents an important intellectual legacy that reflects the sophistication of Sundanese thought, communication, and cultural practice.

Beyond its communicative function, *Pancacuriga* also embodies several philosophical purposes. First, it serves as **Self-Benefit**, functioning as a non-physical mechanism of self-protection against deception, manipulation, and harmful influences. Second, it operates as a **Social Relationship Filter**, providing guidance in evaluating potential friends, future family members, or business partners through the assessment of the five principles. Third, it acts as a **Harmony Guard**, supporting the preservation of social order and communal harmony by encouraging individuals to avoid relationships that may generate conflict or negative consequences. Fourth, it functions as **Teachings for Introspection**,

motivating individuals to reflect upon their own character and avoid behaviors associated with these undesirable traits, thereby fostering continuous personal development.

Viewed through the interconnected principles of **Sindir**, **Silib**, **Siloka**, **Simbul**, and **Sasmita**, *Pancacuriga* offers a distinctive Sundanese epistemological framework that privileges indirect interpretation, contextual sensitivity, and depth of understanding over direct and positivistic conceptions of truth. These five principles extend beyond rhetorical devices, functioning instead as systematic instruments for investigating, interpreting, and validating knowledge about social reality.

Within this perspective, *Pancacuriga* provides a pathway for discovering truth in a world saturated with signs and symbolic representations. Rather than functioning merely as an interpretive technique, it constitutes a comprehensive paradigm for questioning appearances and examining the realities embedded within texts, language, symbols, and social practices. Whereas semiotics primarily contributes analytical depth in interpreting signs, *Pancacuriga* complements this approach by incorporating moral and spiritual dimensions that enrich the interpretive process.

Fundamentally, *Pancacuriga* represents the application of scientific inquiry within the humanities and social sciences. Similar to the scientific method, which advances through skepticism, observation, and continuous verification, *Pancacuriga* develops understanding through processes of deconstruction and critical examination. Accordingly, suspicion is not regarded as an end in itself but as an intellectual pathway leading toward deeper insight. Although this process may be demanding, it ultimately produces a more

reflective and comprehensive understanding of reality, enabling individuals to become not only more knowledgeable but also wiser in their judgments.

From this perspective, *Pancacuriga* can be understood as an **integrative critical paradigm** that combines epistemological and methodological dimensions to interrogate, question, and deconstruct the apparent neutrality of texts, discourses, symbols, images, and social practices. Rather than accepting reality as self-evident, this paradigm encourages continuous critical inquiry into the assumptions and ideologies underlying observable phenomena.

Consequently, *Pancacuriga* should not be regarded merely as a research method but as an epistemological orientation toward knowledge in a world increasingly shaped by representations. It positions productive skepticism as the starting point of understanding. Within the context of the digital and post-truth era, *Pancacuriga* provides a valuable framework for navigating the manipulation of meaning, not by claiming absolute truth but by fostering continuous critical reflection and dialogue regarding the realities constructed through communication.

In an era characterized by disinformation and simulated realities, *Pancacuriga* functions as both an analytical and restorative instrument. It not only dissects social realities to expose hidden meanings but also reconstructs understanding through the integration of local wisdom. In this sense, *Pancacuriga* serves simultaneously as a critical analytical tool and a means of cultural reflection, enabling society to identify the roots of social problems while offering wisdom as a pathway toward resolution.

Overall, semiotics, discourse analysis, and *Pancacuriga* share the common objective of uncovering meanings that lie beneath the surface of texts and social phenomena. Nevertheless, these approaches differ significantly in their historical origins, analytical structures, and philosophical orientations. While semiotics and discourse analysis are generally recognized as universal intellectual traditions, *Pancacuriga* represents an indigenous Sundanese critical paradigm that integrates intellectual inquiry with ethical and, in certain contexts, spiritual dimensions.

From the perspective of Barthes' semiotics, *Pancacuriga* operates simultaneously at denotative and connotative levels of meaning. At the denotative level, its historical and contextual specificity may become obscured as new ideological meanings are attached to its concepts. Consequently, *Pancacuriga* may also function as an ideology. At the connotative level, its meanings are shaped by cultural traditions, historical experiences, social contexts, and emotional associations rather than by universal principles. Through this process, *Pancacuriga* acquires the characteristics of myth, in which cultural meanings are continuously reproduced and reinforced within society.

However, within Barthes' theoretical framework, myth functions by emptying reality of its original historical and contextual content and replacing it with meanings constructed and legitimized by the dominant culture. From this perspective, *Pancacuriga*, when interpreted as an ideology, cannot simply be regarded as a scientific inheritance derived from ancestral knowledge. Instead, it may be understood as a cultural myth whose meanings are continuously reconstructed according to prevailing ideological interests rather than objective reality. This interpretation

highlights a significant challenge in positioning *Pancacuriga* as a methodological framework. Specifically, it raises the need to operationalize its concepts systematically so that *Pancacuriga* can engage in scholarly dialogue on an equal footing with established analytical traditions such as semiotics and discourse analysis.

4. Conclusions

Pancacuriga can be understood as an analytical framework comparable to semiotics and discourse analysis in its commitment to critical inquiry, skepticism, and iterative interpretation. Its analytical process is grounded in deconstruction and the systematic examination of texts, symbols, and social phenomena to uncover meanings that extend beyond their apparent forms. However, when examined through Barthes' semiotic perspective, *Pancacuriga* also functions at the level of connotation, where meanings are shaped by cultural and ideological contexts rather than by universal principles. Consequently, *Pancacuriga* may be interpreted not only as an analytical method but also as an ideological construct whose meanings are continuously reproduced within specific cultural settings, thereby acquiring the characteristics of myth. This condition presents an important theoretical and methodological challenge, namely the need to operationalize *Pancacuriga* into a systematic analytical framework capable of engaging in scholarly dialogue on an equal footing with established traditions of semiotics and discourse analysis.

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