

Semiotic Analysis Of Adam Johnson's Short Stories In Fortune Smiles

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Abstract

This research aimed to identify and analyse semiotic signs within Charles Sanders Peirce's triad (Icons, Indexes, and Symbols) in Adam Johnson's short story collection, Fortune Smiles. The objectives of the study were twofold: to describe the semiosis process of the signs and to classify them according to their subtypes. The study applied a descriptive-qualitative method with a semiotic approach, using Peirce's framework for data analysis and Arthur Asa Berger's classification to categorise symbols. The analysis revealed a total of 33 signs: 10 icon signs, 12 index signs, and 11 symbol signs. These signs were further classified into subtypes for a more detailed analysis. The 10 icon signs were divided into 7 topological, 1 diagrammatic, and 2 metaphorical icons. The 12 index signs included 8 symptoms, 3 tracks, and 1 designation index. The 11 symbol signs were categorised into 10 conventional and 1 universal symbol. Notably, no accidental symbols were identified, which aligned with their highly personal and character-specific nature. The use of Peirce's semiotic theory in this literary analysis provided more than just an explanation of the semiosis process where signs in a literary work were formed and acquired meaning. By further dividing these signs into subtypes, including the classification of symbols according to Arthur Asa Berger, the study offered a more in-depth explanation of sign types based on the relationship between the representamen and its object.

Keywords: Fortune Smiles, Literary Analysis, Pierce's Triad, Semiotics, Sign Classification



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1. INTRODUCTION

A short story, as a specific type of prose fiction, is relatively brief and provides a concise narrative. It offers a glimpse into a character's life, often filled with conflict, emotionally impactful events, and moments of joy, creating a lasting and memorable impression (Kosasih et al., in Tarsinih, 2018). The distinctive advantage of short stories lies in their ability to convey more implicitly, than what is simply told (Nurgiyantoro, 2002). Even though it's short, it doesn't lack deep meaning. In written literary works, authors communicate messages, such as ideas, emotions, or experiences to readers. Readers, in turn, interpret these messages through their reading, actively shaping meaning through interaction and reflection on their experiences. The successful embodiment of meaning in a literary work is achieved when the intended meaning communicated by the author is well understood by readers (Latifah, 2020).

The interpretation of meaning in literary works is often facilitated through the analysis of signs. A sign is simply anything that stands in for something else, it's how we communicate ideas, feelings, and information. Whether it's an event happening, a specific pattern in something, or even a simple habit, all of these can be read as signs (Mudjiyanto & Nur, 2013). To examine these signs properly, a study called semiotics is useful for analysis; semiotics is the study of how signs work and how they create meaning (Hoed in Nurgiyantoro, 2018).

One of the literary works rich in meaning and semiotic signs is Adam Johnson's collection of short stories titled Fortune Smiles, which won the National Book Award for Fiction in 2015. This collection contains six stories: Nirvana, Hurricanes Anonymous, Interesting Facts, George

Orwell Was a Friend of Mine, Dark Meadow, and the last one Fortune Smiles. These stories featured intricate plots, diverse settings, and historical and cultural depth, all of which explore complex human emotions. The book is rich with signs that reveal deeper meanings. For example, the main character's sleep problems in "Nirvana" act as a surface sign that helps explain the character's underlying issues.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, the writer would explain previous studies which have supported this research. There is also an explanation of the theoretical descriptions. In conducting this research. Several previous studies discussed Advertising mistakes.

2.1 Previous Studies

Semiotic Analysis on Flannery O'Connor's A Good Man is Hard to Find. Antari (2022). The purpose of this study was to analyse icons, indexes, and symbols in the short story A Good Man Is Hard to Find, focusing on three of the six signs described in "Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics" (Sebeok, Second Edition 2001). These three signs represent Charles Peirce's classification of signs: icons, indexes, and symbols. The data were in the form of words, so a qualitative method was used to present the information. The results of this study identified thirteen data: four icons, seven indexes, and two symbols.

Semiotic Analysis in The Short Story "The Storm" by Kate Chopin. Mulyani et al. (2023). This study aimed to identify and examine the signs in the short story The Storm by Kate Chopin, analysing them both denotatively and connotatively. Using Barthesian concepts, this descriptive research explored the signs within the story to uncover their meanings. The findings revealed various aspects of married life as represented by the signs in the narrative: the storm signifies lust, feet signify the lower class, horses signify the upper class, the sacque signifies pressure, dialects signify differences, the Chinaberry tree stands for morality and religion, marriage represents bonding, the sun symbolises happiness, and shrimp signify care and love.

Sign Of Gender Equality And The Adolescents' Identity In MOXIE! Movie Script. Chairunnisa et al. (2023). The aim of this research was to explore the interpretations of the signs presented in the movie script, as well as to examine how women overcome gender discrimination in the movie MOXIE!. The researchers applied a qualitative descriptive method, semiotics, and a liberal feminist approach to analyse the data. The data were gathered through reading, comprehension, collection, classification, identification, and interpretation of signs, along with an analysis of how women combat gender discrimination, drawing from Peirce and Saussure theories. The findings indicate that the MOXIE! movie script presented three types of triadic signs based on Peirce's classifications: (1) sign or representamen (encompassing qualisign and legisign), (2) object (comprising icon, index, and symbol), and (3) interpretant (including dicisign or decent signs, and argument). Additionally, four types of signs related to gender equality were identified: marginalisation, stereotypes, subordination, and violence. Furthermore, the liberal feminist perspective emphasised empowering women with full and individual opportunities.

After reviewing the results of the studies mentioned above, the previous studies' similarity was that they discussed semiotic signs and referenced several scholars in the field with various objects. The differences from these previous studies lay in their research objects, approaches, and the ways in which signs and interpretations emerged, which naturally varied. In this

research, the writer aimed to identify and analyse semiotic signs within the categories of Peirce's triadic based on how they relate to their objects: icons, indexes, and symbols. Specifically on Adam Johnson's short story collection, *Fortune Smiles*.

2.2 Related Theories

Semiotics, also known as semiology, is the study of signs and symbols, as well as how they are used or interpreted. According to Cobley and Jansz in Kaelan (2020), the term semiotics originates from the Greek word 'semeion' which means 'sign', or 'seme', which means the interpretation of signs. In the process of semiotic analysis, the Peircean triadic model can be used, which shows the three main elements that form a sign: representamen (something that represents something), object (something represented), and interpretant (someone's interpretation of the sign). Object is what the sign refers to or represents. It can be an actual physical entity, a concept, or an abstract idea. Peirce divided objects into three types: icon, index, and symbol. An icon is a sign designed to resemble, imitate, or replicate what it represents in some manner. An index is a type of sign that indicates or points to something based on its presence, location in time or space, or its relationship to other things or people. A symbol is a type of sign that represents its referent through an established, arbitrary convention rather than a direct resemblance or inherent connection (Sebeok, 2001).

Icons are divided into three: (1). Topological icons establish a relationship based on the similarity of form, with examples being maps and realistic paintings. (2). Diagrammatic icons establish their relationship from the similarity of stages or structure, much like diagrams. For example, the connection between military rank insignia and the corresponding military positions they signify. (3). Metaphorical icons establish partial similarity, where only certain aspects align. For instance, a rose and a girl might be seen as similar in terms of beauty or freshness, though their resemblance is not entirely comprehensive (Pierce in Zaimar, 2008).

3. METHOD

The study applied a descriptive-qualitative method combined with a semiotic approach for data analysis and classification. Unlike quantitative research, which typically analysed numerical data, qualitative research focused on analysing descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words. The primary data source was Adam Johnson's short story collection, *Fortune Smiles*, published by Random House Digital in 2015. Data were gathered through reading, identification of relevant information (focused on phrases, words, and sentences presenting semiotic signs), and analytical techniques. The primary analysis and classification of signs were based on Charles Sanders Peirce's framework, while the specific categorisation of identified symbols was based on Arthur Asa Berger's divisions.

4. RESULTS

Based on the objectives of this study, the writer divided the results into two parts as follows:

4.1. The Semiosis of Signs in Adam Johnson's *Fortune Smiles*

Based on the analysis of the short stories in *Fortune Smiles*, the writer identified several signs.

Icon Signs

Table 1. Icon Signs

No.	Data
1.	Data 1: Real quick, I snatch the drone out of the air and pull it inside. (...), then study the thing: its shell is made of black foil stretched over tiny struts, like the bones of a bat's wing. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 8)2
2.	Data 2: I set the iProjector in her lap. (...) Then I turn it on. Kurt Cobain appears before her, clad in a bathrobe and composed of soft blue light. (...) Kurt Cobain's hair is in his face. (...) "Are you really here?" she asks. "Here we are now," he sings. "Entertain us." His voice is rough and hard-lived. (Nirvana, 2015, pp. 36-37).
3.	Data 3: He turns to his son, who's strapped into a bouncy chair rigged from cargo hooks, and attempts to snag his cell from the boy, a two-and-a-half-year-old named Geronimo. (...) has puffy little-boy eyes, white nubby teeth and an unfortunate sunburn. (...) Nonc kneels down to Geronimo—perfect cheeks, wide-set teeth, eyes bayou black—going like one mile an hour on a chuck-wagon ride. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, pp. 41, 89).
4.	Data 4: Nonc downloads a new manifest to the DIAD, which diagrams the optimal route—right away, he sees that one of the stops is his own address, or his old one, the place on Kirkman Avenue he was evicted from. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 60).
5.	Data 5: Relle comes downstairs with a painting of a duck. It's floating above the water, breast high, wings out, ready to land. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 79).
6.	Data 6: When I got sick, our youngest child turned herself into a horse; mute and untamable, our horse-child now only whinnies and neighs. (Interesting Facts, 2015, p. 106).
7.	Data 7: Prinz and I watch it develop: slowly, a grainy image of my wife appears. She is reclined against a white sheet, and she is without clothing. Her eyes appear seductive, her face is not softened by liquor, and I know right away that I did not take this picture. (...) Her body is no longer youthful, but she is beautiful. The photographer, I believe, agrees. He has captured the elegance of how her hair falls, the way her breasts roll sweetly to the side. (George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine, 2015, pp. 153, 155).
8.	Data 8: "When you do, it's time to move again," he says, staring at the bookcase that houses my National Geographic magazines, the rows and rows of yellow spines. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 220).
9.	Data 9: From the porch, I can see the Tiger and the Cub have opened a lemonade stand. They've taken a table and two folding chairs into the parking lot and are sitting, waiting. They have some lemons, a sugar jar and a pitcher of ice water. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 224).
10.	Data 10: Sun-ho pointed at the sign depicting all the food. He pointed at the bulgogi burger set, then held up two fingers. (Fortune Smiles, 2015, p. 252).

Based on the table presented above, there were 10 icon signs identified. The icon signs in these short stories were further explained, with an emphasis on the semiosis process based on the relationship of similarity between the representamen and the object that formed the interpretant.

Nirvana

The description of the drone served as an icon. The comparative phrase "like the bones of a bat's wing" was the representamen (R), which stood for the object (O), the drone's struts. The interpretant (I) was the perceived analogy, where the drone's delicate structure was understood through its resemblance to a bat's wing. Similes were iconic because they conveyed resemblance

through imaginative comparison rather than direct form.

The hologram of Kurt Cobain served as an icon. The hologram itself was the representamen (R), its light projection and voice representing the object (O), Kurt Cobain. The interpretant (I) was the perceived resemblance between the hologram and its object, a similarity that faithfully conveyed his musical legacy. Like a photograph, the hologram was an icon because it shared a direct visual and auditory resemblance with its object.

Hurricanes Anonymous

The description of Geronimo served as an icon. The description of Geronimo in Data 3 was an icon because the descriptive words such as "puffy little-boy eyes" and "white nubby teeth" acted as the representamen (R), directly representing the object (O), Geronimo. The visualisation of the character's appearance was the interpretant (I), which was based on the perceived similarity between the words and the physical traits they described. Furthermore, similar iconic signs were also found referring to the depiction of Geronimo, such as wide-set teeth and bayou black eyes. Geronimo is the son of the main character in this story, Nonc. In this story, Geronimo is portrayed visually, as a two-and-a-half-year-old boy with puffy, "bayou black" eyes, white, wide-set, nubby teeth, perfect cheeks, and an unfortunate sunburn.

The manifest on the DIAD, which diagrammed the optimal route, served as an icon. The diagram was the representamen (R), representing the logical sequence of stops, which was the object (O). The interpretant (I) was the perceived structural analogy between the visual layout of the diagram and the optimal route it represented. This sign was effective because its structure visually resembled the functional order it stood for, much like military rank insignia structurally represented a hierarchy.

The painting of the duck served as an icon. The painting itself was the representamen (R), representing the object (O), an actual duck. The interpretant (I) was the perceived similarity between the painted image and the duck's posture. Like a photograph, the painting was an icon because it conveyed a direct visual resemblance to its object.

Interesting Facts

The "horse" (or "horse-child") served as an icon. The representamen [R] was the "horse" (or the descriptive phrase "horse-child," "whinnies and neighs"), which stood for its object [O], the youngest child's actual state and behaviour specifically, her mute and untameable condition. The interpretant [I] was the perceived similarity between the representamen and the object, where the metaphor of the horse represents the youngest child's transformation into a mute, untameable state following the narrator's illness. This icon reflects the child's behavioural and symbolic shift, capturing her change through the characteristics associated with horses.

George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine

The excerpt "a grainy image of my wife" served as an icon. The representamen [R] was the grainy image that stood for its object [O], the narrator's wife. The interpretant [I] was the perceived similarity between the representamen and the object, confirming the image as an icon. The image visually represented her, capturing her appearance as she reclined, unclothed, with seductive eyes. Furthermore, other iconic signs, such as the description "Her body is no longer youthful, but she is beautiful," also referred to the narrator's wife in the image. This icon closely mirrored the wife's actual look and presence in that moment.

Dark Meadow

The excerpt “the rows and rows of yellow spines” of National Geographic magazines served as an icon. The representamen [R] was the magazine spines that stood for its object [O], National Geographic. The interpretant [I] was the perceived similarity between the representamen and the object, leading to the understanding that these distinctive spines represent the magazine, thereby linking the physical description of the bookcase to National Geographic’s visual identity. National Geographic was renowned for its iconic yellow cover. This yellow frame has become the magazine's distinctive feature globally, ensuring its immediate recognisability.

The description of the makeshift lemonade stand served as an icon. The representamen [R] (the setup and supplies) stood for its object [O] (a lemonade stand). The interpretant [I] was the perceived similarity between the representamen and the object, and the understanding that this description effectively represented a lemonade stand by capturing its basic setup and purpose. Lemonade stands were sometimes associated with children as the sellers.

Fortune Smiles

Based on the passage, there were signs that could be seen as an icon, an index, and a symbol. The sign was depicting the bulgogi burger set served as an icon. The representamen [R] was the visual image of the burger on the sign, which stood for its object [O], the actual, bulgogi burger. The interpretant [I] was the understanding that, based on the perceived similarity between the representamen and the object, the image on the sign visually resembled the real food. The food menus at fast food restaurants are usually made in visual form. Visual menus at fast food restaurants were one of the most frequently encountered iconic examples in daily life.

Index Signs

Table 2. Index Signs

No.	Data
1.	Data 11: It’s late, and I can’t sleep. (...) My sleep problem is this: when I close my eyes, I keep visualizing my wife killing herself. More like the ways she might try to kill herself, since she’s paralyzed from the shoulders down. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 5).
2.	Data 12: She smokes again. Charlotte hates being stoned, but she says it quiets the inside of her. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 6).
3.	Data 13: I see the scar from the femoral stent. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 31).
4.	Data 14: One driver got drunk and ran his van into a ditch. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 60).
5.	Data 15: Sometimes, when she’s in a bad mood, she’ll stop him and make him put on a condom right in the middle. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 68).
6.	Data 16: “No one in Tokyo would wear a dead woman’s dress.” Then she apologized, worried that she might have accidentally insulted me. (Interesting Facts, 2015, p. 115).
7.	Data 17: Right away, the Horse-child screams that she is afraid of the water. (Interesting Facts, 2015, p. 127).
8.	Data 18: There is a knock at the door. It’s Megumi! (Interesting Facts, 2015, p. 129).
9.	Data 19: like the color-blind prisoner who was always in a panic because he couldn’t tell whether the security lights were flashing red or green. (George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine, 2015, p. 142).
10.	Data 20: He’s doing thirty-five in federal for the extended sexual abuse of a minor. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 213).

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11. **Data 21:** The troop I was in doesn't exist anymore. It disbanded after our troop leader took his life. He hiked up Topanga Canyon and hanged himself. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 221).
 12. **Data 22:** Sun-ho pointed at the sign depicting all the food. He pointed at the bulgogi burger set, then held up two fingers. (Fortune Smiles, 2015, p. 252).
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Based on the table presented above, there were 12 index signs identified. The index signs in these short stories were further explained, with an emphasis on the semiosis process based on the relationship of physical evidence, causality, and referential between the representamen and the object that formed the interpretant.

Nirvana

The inability to sleep served as an index. The representamen [R] was the inability to sleep, which indicated its object [O], the recurring mental image of his wife trying to kill herself. The interpretant [I] was the perceived causal link between the representamen and the object, with the sleep problem understood to have been directly caused by the distressing visualisations. This highlighted how the vivid mental images prevented him from achieving rest.

The phrase "She smokes again" served as an index. The representamen [R] was Charlotte's act of smoking, which indicated its object [O], her internal distress and need for relief. The interpretant [I] was the perceived direct causal link between the representamen and the object, with the smoking understood to be a direct consequence of her internal state, which she tried to alleviate despite disliking the feeling of being stoned.

The "scar" served as an index. The representamen [R] was the scar on the skin, which resulted from its object [O], the femoral stent procedure. The interpretant [I] was the perceived physical cause-and-effect relationship between the representamen and the object, understanding that the scar marked a past medical intervention involving a femoral stent.

Hurricanes Anonymous

The van in the ditch served as an index. The representamen [R] was the van in the ditch, which resulted from its object [O], the driver's act of getting drunk. The interpretant [I] was the perceived physical cause-and-effect relationship between the representamen and the object, that the van's accident was a direct result of the driver being drunk.

The action of Relle stopping him served as an index. The representamen [R] was Relle's action of stopping him and making him put on a condom, which indicated its object [O], her bad mood. The interpretant [I] was the perceived direct causal link between the representamen and the object, with the action understood as a direct result of her negative emotional state. Relle, the narrator's girlfriend, was described as stopping him in the middle of sex and making him put on a condom when she was in a bad mood.

Interesting Facts

The act of apologising served as an index. The representamen [R] was the act of apologising, which indicated its object [O], the concern about potentially offending someone. The interpretant [I] was the perceived direct causal link between the representamen and the object, with the apology understood to have directly reflected her worry about unintentionally causing offence. In the story, Megumi, one of the characters, commented on the narrator's dress, the vintage dress that used to belong to someone who has already passed away, and then she apologised, worried that she might have offended the narrator.

The screaming served as an index. The representamen [R] was the Horse-child's screaming, which indicated its object [O], her fear of the water. The interpretant [I] was the perceived direct causal link between the representamen and the object, with the scream understood to have been a direct behavioural result and manifestation of her internal fear. It was quite common for children to react to fears or anxieties with strong, immediate emotional responses such as screaming. Children often expressed their emotions more openly and vividly than adults.

The knock at the door served as an index. The representamen [R] was the sound of the knock, which indicated its object [O], the arrival of someone (Megumi). The interpretant [I] was the perceived cause-and-effect relationship between the representamen and the object, with the knock understood to be a direct sign that someone had arrived, specifically Megumi in this case.

George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine

The prisoner's panic served as an index. The representamen [R] was the prisoner's panic, which indicated its object [O], his confusion and anxiety. The interpretant [I] was the perceived direct causal link between the representamen and the object, with the panic understood to be a direct manifestation of his internal confusion and anxiety tied to his inability to interpret critical visual cues. It was quite common for individuals to feel distressed when they were unable to read critical signals in a high-stakes environment. A lack of clarity in such situations could lead to anxiety and fear. In this story, warning lights were used to make sure no prisoner accidentally encountered another.

Dark Meadow

The thirty-five-year federal sentence served as an index. The representamen [R] was the thirty-five-year federal sentence, which resulted from its object [O], the crime of extended sexual abuse of a minor. The interpretant [I] was the perceived cause-and-effect relationship between the representamen and the object, with the lengthy prison term understood to have marked the punishment for a past crime. In this index sign, the crime served as a cause, and the duration of the detention served as effect.

The disbanded troop served as an index. The representamen [R] was the troop's non-existence, which resulted from its object [O], the troop leader taking his life. The interpretant [I] was the perceived cause-and-effect relationship between the representamen and the object, that the troop's disbandment was a direct effect of that tragic event. The troop leader taking his life served as a cause, and the troop disbanded served as effect.

Fortune Smiles

The act of pointing served as an index. The representamen [R] was the physical gesture of pointing, which pointed to its object [O], the specific bulgogi burger set. The interpretant [I] was the perceived causal and referential relationship between the representamen and the object, where Sun-ho's pointing explained his intention to order that particular burger set. This indexical function was what allowed Sun-ho to communicate his intent and the server to understand what was being referred to. The causal relationship was that the act of pointing directly caused or triggered the receiver's understanding. In other words, the pointing gesture wasn't just a label; it was a physical action that directly caused the server to understand Sun-ho's intention.

Symbol Signs

Table 3. Symbol Signs

No.	Data
1.	Data 23: The title of the short story: <i>Nirvana</i> (Nirvana, 2015, p. 5).
2.	Data 24: “Look who’s Mr. Brightside,” she says. “You must have been talking to the president. Isn’t that why you talk to him, to get all inspired? To see the silver lining?”. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 16).
3.	Data 25: She rolls her eyes. “You got it wrong,” she says. But she smiles. (Nirvana, 2015, p. 19).
4.	Data 26: “Then this medal that I affix to your uniform is much more than a piece of silver. It is a symbol of how much you have given, not just in armed struggle and not just in service to your nation. It marks you forever as one who can be counted upon, as one who in times of need will lift up and carry those who have fallen.” (Nirvana, 2015, p. 29).
5.	Data 27: Through the window, Nonc can see her talking to some government types, guys with that carefree look that comes from being able to walk away. (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 52).
6.	Data 28: “Look, they think I was the person who delivered the stuff. Like I got all night to be driving eight balls of speed around. I’ve got a kid. I got responsibilities. I never even touched an eight ball.” (Hurricanes Anonymous, 2015, p. 87).
7.	Data 29: The truth is, though, that you don’t need to die to know what it’s like to be a ghost. (Interesting Facts, 2015, p. 115).
8.	Data 30: You knew what it meant when a blue Moskvitch curbed its wheels or a pair of white Trabants was working both sides of the street. (George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine, 2015, p. 156).
9.	Data 31: Without National Geographic, I wouldn’t have even figured out which rose varieties were which. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 208).
10.	Data 32: On the voyage over, he showed us girlie magazines and told us jokes about sailors and sharks and faggots and priests. (Dark Meadow, 2015, p. 225).
11.	Data 33: Sun-ho pointed at the sign depicting all the food. He pointed at the bulgogi burger set, then held up two fingers. (Fortune Smiles, 2015, p. 252).

Based on the table presented above, there were 11 data of the symbol signs discovered. The symbol signs in these short stories are further explained, emphasising the relationship on mutual agreement, arbitrary, between the representamen and the object that forms the interpretant.

Nirvana

Based on the short story's title, "Nirvana" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the title "Nirvana" itself, which signified its object [O], the central theme of the story. The interpretant [I] was the conventional relationship between the representamen and the object, with the title drawing on the culturally constructed meaning of "nirvana" from Buddhism. The title's symbolic nature was entirely conventional, as its meaning was not tied to resemblance or a direct physical link. Instead, it relied on the shared human understanding that the term "nirvana" represented a profound state of being, thereby embodying the story's core struggle to find release from suffering. In this short story, the narrator's concern for his wife regarding the concept of ending suffering was also described. This was reflected in the index in Data 11, the meaning of which was possibly interpreted differently by the wife. Furthermore, the word "Nirvana" in the story also referred to the famous band with Kurt Cobain as the vocalist, whose songs became an

escape for Charlotte from her life's conditions.

Based on the passage, the phrase "the silver lining" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the phrase "the silver lining" itself, which signified its object [O], the abstract concept of finding a positive or hopeful aspect in a difficult situation. The interpretant [I] was the conventional relationship between the representamen and the object, with the phrase drawing on its culturally constructed meaning as an idiom. The phrase's symbolic nature was entirely conventional, as its meaning was not tied to a physical resemblance or a direct causal link. Instead, it relied on the shared human understanding that the term "silver lining" represented a positive outcome in the face of adversity, thereby embodying the story's theme of finding hope despite negative circumstances.

The smile served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the physical act of smiling, which signified its object [O], the speaker's true feeling of amusement and a non-serious tone. The interpretant [I] was the universal relationship between the representamen and the object, with the smile drawing on the instinctively understood meaning of happiness. It explained that the speaker was happy or amused. This mental effect was not tied to culture or language; it was an instinctive interpretation that immediately revealed the speaker's true, positive feelings.

The medal served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the medal itself, which signified its object [O], the honour and recognition of the recipient's dedication and service. The interpretant [I] was the relationship of conventionality between the representamen and the object as a symbol, understanding that the medal represented not only the recipient's contributions in combat but also their broader commitment to supporting others. The medal conveyed a deeper meaning that went beyond its physical material. While the medal was made of silver, its true significance lay in what it represented: reliability, sacrifice, and the ability to uplift others in times of need, embodying hope and inspiration, reinforcing the idea that true valour lay in supporting and caring for others.

Hurricanes Anonymous

The phrase "government types" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the phrase itself, which signified its object [O], the abstract concept of privilege and power. The interpretant [I] was the relationship of conventionality between the representamen and the object as a symbol, understanding that the phrase represented not only individuals in positions of authority but also their broader detachment from personal consequence. The phrase "eight balls" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the phrase itself, which signified its object [O], the illegal drugs being trafficked. The interpretant [I] was the conventional understanding that "eight balls" referred to a specific quantity of drugs, typically an eighth of an ounce. The term's meaning was culturally constructed and recognised within certain communities, illustrating its symbolic nature.

Interesting Facts

The word "ghost" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the word "ghost" itself, which signified its object [O], the abstract feeling of being invisible, forgotten, or disconnected from the world. The interpretant [I] was the conventional relationship between the representamen and the object, with the word drawing on its culturally constructed meaning as a metaphor. The word's symbolic nature was entirely conventional, as its meaning was not tied to a physical resemblance or a direct causal link. It was not an icon because an icon worked through physical resemblance, and the word "ghost" did not physically look like or sound like the feeling of being lonely. Instead, it relied on the shared human understanding that the term "ghost" represented a

forgotten presence, thereby embodying the theme of loneliness and alienation in the story.

George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine

The phrase "a pair of white Trabants" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the phrase itself, which signified its object [O], the Stasi or state surveillance. The interpretant [I] was the conventional understanding that these specific cars, in that context, referred to a known pattern of observation by the authorities. The phrase's meaning was culturally constructed and recognised within certain communities.

Dark Meadow

The phrase "National Geographic" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the phrase "National Geographic" itself, which signified its object [O], the abstract concept of reliable and verifiable knowledge. The interpretant [I] was the conventional relationship between the representamen and the object, with the phrase drawing on its culturally constructed meaning as a trusted source. The phrase's symbolic nature was entirely conventional, as its meaning was not tied to a physical resemblance or a direct causal link. Instead, it relied on the shared human understanding that the term "National Geographic" represented authoritative information. National Geographic was widely recognised as a symbol of knowledge, particularly in the realms of geography, science, exploration, and conservation.

The term "faggot" served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the word "faggot," which signified its object [O], the stigmatisation and marginalisation of LGBTQ+ individuals. The interpretant [I] reflected the societal attitudes and prejudices associated with the term, where "faggot" was commonly understood as a derogatory label that reinforced negative stereotypes. This symbolic nature was conventional, as its usage was culturally embedded, often evoking reactions rooted in discrimination and bias within various communities.

Fortune Smiles

The gesture of holding up two fingers served as a symbol. The representamen [R] was the physical act of holding up two fingers, which signified the object [O], the abstract concept of the number two. The interpretant [I] was the conventional understanding that this gesture communicated the desire for a quantity of two. The sign's meaning was therefore conventional, based on shared cultural understanding rather than a physical link. The two-finger "V" gesture was a sign with multiple meanings, changing based on the situation and culture. It could symbolise peace, the number two, or be a rude insult.

4.2. The Subtypes of Signs in Adam Johnson's *Fortune Smiles*

The signs that were identified through the process of semiosis in the previous section were then classified according to their respective subtypes.

Subtypes of Icons

Table 4. Subtypes of Icons

Data	Subtypes of Icons		
	Topological	Diagrammatic	Metaphorical
Data 1			✓
Data 2	✓		
Data 3	✓		
Data 4		✓	

Data 5	✓	
Data 6		✓
Data 7	✓	
Data 8	✓	
Data 9	✓	
Data 10	✓	

Based on the table presented above, there were 7 topological icons, 1 diagrammatic icon, and 2 metaphorical icons identified. The icon signs in these short stories were further explained, with an emphasis on the relationship of similarity between the representamen and the object based on their subtypes.

Topological

All the provided examples demonstrated a topological icon, a sign that established a relationship with its object through a direct similarity of form, which visually reflected its appearance. Whether it was the hologram of Kurt Cobain replicating his looks and voice (Data 2), a painting of a duck faithfully representing its posture (Data 5), or a description of Geronimo creating a mental image (Data 3), the icon functioned by mirroring its original form. This principle also applied to visual cues like the yellow spines of magazines (Data 8), images of a burger (Data 10), and a grainy photo of a person (Data 7), all of which were recognised because they shared a direct resemblance with the object they stood for.

Diagrammatic

A diagrammatic icon shared a logical or structural similarity with its object. The visual layout of the sign mirrored a logical sequence or relationship. Based on data 4, the manifest on the DIAD was a diagrammatic icon because its visual layout mirrored the logical sequence of the optimal delivery route.

Metaphorical

A metaphorical icon established its relationship with an object through an imaginative comparison or analogy, sharing similar characteristics without being a literal representation. Based on the provided data, the drone's struts were classified as a metaphorical icon because their delicate structure was compared to a bat's wing (Data 1). Similarly, the "horse" was a metaphorical icon for the child's untameable state (Data 6), as her behaviour was compared to the qualities of a horse.

Subtypes of Indexes

Table 5. Subtypes of Indexes

Data	Subtypes of Indexes		
	Tracks	Symptoms	Designations
Data 11		✓	
Data 12		✓	
Data 13	✓		
Data 14		✓	
Data 15		✓	

Data 16	✓
Data 17	✓
Data 18	✓
Data 19	✓
Data 20	✓
Data 21	✓
Data 22	✓

Based on the table presented above, there were 3 track indexes, 8 symptom indexes, and 1 designation index identified. The index signs in these short stories were further explained, with an emphasis on the relationship of physical evidence, causality, and referential between the representamen and the object based on their subtypes.

Tracks

Track index established a relationship with its object through causality. The sign was a lasting effect or a permanent trace left behind by a past event. This relationship was shown across all three examples: the scar served as physical evidence of a past medical procedure (Data 13), the prison sentence was a legal consequence of a past criminal act (Data 20), and the disbanded troop was a permanent social change that resulted from a past suicide (Data 21).

Symptoms

Symptom index established a relationship with its object through simultaneity and a direct, co-occurring link. The sign was a real-time manifestation or a momentary physical signal of an inner state or event. This relationship was shown across all the examples: the inability to sleep was a concurrent sign of psychological distress (Data 11), smoking was a direct expression of emotional turmoil (Data 12), the van accident was an immediate consequence of the driver's intoxication (Data 14), a specific action during sex was a momentary signal of a bad mood (Data 15), the apology was a direct expression of worry (Data 16), screaming was a real-time behavioural manifestation of fear (Data 17), the knock was a concurrent sign of someone's presence (Data 18), and the prisoner's panic was an immediate reaction to his confusion and anxiety (Data 19).

Designation

The act of pointing at the bulgogi burger set (Data 22), was classified as a designation index. The gesture acted as a temporary label, specifically marking the bulgogi burger set and communicating Sun-ho's intention to order that particular item.

Subtypes of Symbols

Table 5. Subtypes of Symbols

Data	Subtypes of Symbols		
	Conventional	Accidental	Universal
Data 23	✓		
Data 24	✓		
Data 25			✓
Data 26	✓		

Data 27	✓
Data 28	✓
Data 29	✓
Data 30	✓
Data 31	✓
Data 32	✓
Data 33	✓

Based on the table presented above, there were 10 conventional symbols, 1 universal symbol identified. The symbol signs in these short stories were further explained, with an emphasis on the relationship of conventional accidental, and universal between the representamen and the object based on their subtypes. While accidental symbols could not be identified in these short stories, this was because the meaning of an accidental symbol was highly personal and unique to a single character, tied to their experiences and memories. The meaning of an accidental symbol was not conventional, so it could not be assumed without a detailed explanation.

Conventional

A conventional symbol established a relationship with its object through a culturally constructed understanding rather than an inherent, physical, or direct link. The meaning of the sign was entirely dependent on shared human knowledge and social agreement. This relationship was evident across all the examples: the word "Nirvana" signified spiritual liberation due to a shared understanding of Buddhism and the band (Data 23), "the silver lining" represented hope as a culturally agreed-upon idiom (Data 24), and a medal signified honour because society had collectively decided it did (Data 26). Similarly, phrases like "government types" (Data 27), "eight balls" (Data 28), and "a pair of white Trabants" (Data 30) carried meaning only within specific communities that shared an understanding of them. The term "ghost" functioned as a metaphor for being forgotten (Data 29), and "National Geographic" represented reliable knowledge because of its reputation as an authoritative source (Data 31). The word "faggot" evoked prejudice through its culturally embedded history (Data 32), and even a physical gesture like holding up two fingers represented an abstract number or concept solely through social agreement, with its meaning changing depending on cultural context (Data 33).

Universal

A universal symbol was a sign where the relationship between the sign itself (the representamen) and what it represents (the object) is not dependent on cultural context or shared agreement. Instead, its meaning was understood instinctively by all people, regardless of their background. In data 25, the connection between the physical act of smiling and the feeling of happiness was hardwired into human nature. Unlike a conventional symbol, whose meaning must be learned (e.g., a traffic light), the meaning of a universal symbol was inherent and recognised by everyone.

5. DISCUSSION

This section further discussed the research findings, addressing the primary objective: analysing the process of semiosis of signs within Adam Johnson's short story collection, *Fortune Smiles*. The signs identified throughout this process had been classified according to their specific subtypes.

5.1. The Semiosis of Signs in Adam Johnson's *Fortune Smiles*

This study identified a total of 33 signs based on Peirce's triad. These signs consisted of 10 icons, 12 indexes, and 11 symbols. Icons were signs that bear a resemblance to their objects, such as the hologram of Kurt Cobain or a metaphorical comparison. Indexes were signs with a direct physical or causal connection to their objects, like a scar or a scream that indicates fear. Meanwhile, symbols were signs whose meaning was based on conventional or cultural agreement, such as the name "Nirvana," the idiom "the silver lining," or a smile, which was universally understood as happiness.

5.2. The Subtypes of Signs in Adam Johnson's *Fortune Smiles*

The signs were further classified into subtypes. In total, 10 iconic signs were identified, with 7 being topological (mirroring a visual form), 1 being diagrammatic (sharing a logical structure), and 2 being metaphorical (using imaginative comparisons). The 12 indexical signs were also subcategorised: 3 were tracks (physical remnants of an event), 8 were symptoms (simultaneous manifestations of an internal state), and 1 was a designation (pointing to an object). Finally, the 11 symbolic signs were divided into 10 conventional symbols, whose meanings are culturally agreed upon, and 1 universal symbol, the smile, which is instinctively understood by all humans.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis revealed a total of 33 signs: 10 icon signs, 12 index signs, and 11 symbol signs. These signs were further classified into subtypes for a more detailed analysis. The 10 icon signs were divided into 7 topological, 1 diagrammatic, and 2 metaphorical icons. The 12 index signs included 8 symptoms, 3 tracks, and 1 designation index. The 11 symbol signs were categorised into 10 conventional and 1 universal symbol. Notably, no accidental symbols were identified, which aligned with their highly personal and character-specific nature. The use of Peirce's semiotic theory in this literary analysis provided more than just an explanation of the semiosis process where signs in a literary work were formed and acquired meaning. By further dividing these signs into subtypes, including the classification of symbols according to Arthur Asa Berger, the study offered a more in-depth explanation of sign types based on the relationship between the representamen and its object.

Based on the research findings, a key recommendation for future research is to broaden the scope of semiotic analysis. While this study provided a detailed look at one specific collection, future work should expand to compare Adam Johnson's use of signs across his entire body of work or with that of other contemporary authors. A broader comparative study would provide valuable context and deeper insights into how authors use semiotic strategies to construct meaning in modern literature. As is well-known, the power and purpose of semiotics for interpreting signs are not limited to textual literary works but also extend to other artistic mediums. Consequently, analysing literary works that are combined with other mediums such as poetry collections that integrate photography, is also highly recommended to enrich the field of semiotics.

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