

THE POETICS OF GRIEF: ANALYZING THE NARRATIVE OF LOSS AND ADVOCACY IN THE 'CURHAT BANG' INTERVIEW WITH SHARON 'TIMOTHY MOTHER'

Bella Nabila

bella19nabila@gmail.com

English Literature, Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Jakarta-Indonesia

Jihan Azhari

jihanazhari364@gmail.com

English Literature, Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Jakarta-Indonesia

Yanti Rosalinah

yanti.yaa@bsi.ac.id

English Literature, Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Jakarta-Indonesia

Abstract

The focus of this article is an examination of the way grief and trauma are represented in the digital media landscape. More specifically, it delves into an interview with the mother of Timothy Anugerah Saputra, Sharon that was featured on an Indonesian podcast called Curhat Bang. Using Genette's narratology concepts as re-contextualized by contemporary narrative theorists, the study examines how personal testimonies of loss are framed, structured, and deployed rhetorically to evoke public emotion and demand justice. Qualitative findings reveal the interview employs disrupted chronology (analepsis) and a focalized first-person perspective, transforming a journalistic account into a tragic narrative. Strategically deploying pathos (emotional appeal) through the mother's voice elevates the personal account, turning it into a universal commentary on systemic injustice and the struggle for truth. This analysis sheds light on the intersection of grief narratives, media genres, and advocacy in contemporary Indonesian digital storytelling.

Keywords: *Grief Narrative, Narratology, Digital Storytelling, Rhetoric of Testimony, Focalization.*

Sari

Artikel ini mengeksplorasi pembentukan narasi tentang duka dan trauma di dalam dunia digital, dengan fokus khusus pada analisis wawancara seorang ibu Timothy Anugerah Saputra dalam *podcast* Indonesia "Curhat Bang." Dengan menerapkan ide-ide dari

Naratologi Genette, yang diulang konteksnya oleh teori naratif saat ini, studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana narasi pribadi mengenai kehilangan dibentuk, diatur, dan disampaikan secara retorik guna menarik perasaan publik dan memohon keadilan. Hasil kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa wawancara itu dengan sengaja mengadopsi waktu yang tidak linier (analepsis) dan sudut pandang orang pertama yang sangat terfokalisasi untuk mengubah laporan berita yang obyektif menjadi sebuah kisah tragedi yang mengharukan. Penggunaan pathos (daya tarik emosional) secara strategis lewat suara sang ibu membawa cerita pribadi ke dalam komentar yang lebih luas tentang ketidakadilan sistemik dan pencarian kebenaran. Analisis ini menambah wawasan tentang keterkaitan antara narasi duka, genre media, dan upaya advokasi.

Kata kunci: *Narasi Duka, Naratologi, Penceritaan Digital, Retorika Kesaksian, Fokalisasi.*

Received 2025/08/22

accepted 2025/12/20

published 2026/05/01

APA Citation: Nabila, B., Azhari, J., & Rosalinah, Y. (2026). The Poetics of Grief: Analyzing the Narrative of Loss and Advocacy in the “Curhat Bang” Interview with Sharon’s Timothy Mother”. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 9(2), pp. 157-168 <http://dx.doi.org/10.33603/rill.v9i2.11289>

Introduction

The evolving landscape of public discussion around tragedy and injustice is increasingly influenced by digital media, especially podcasts and video platforms, which enable the formation of intense, personalized narratives of testimony. This trend moves away from conventional news formats toward what Smith and Watson (2017) refer to as "performative self-narrating", where individuals use digital spaces to share their personal experiences. This phenomenon is embedded within the AWS ecosystem, utilizing services such as Abbott (2017) to compress images immediately after they are uploaded. The goal is to "*the representation of an event or a series of events*". When integrated into new media, this becomes Digital Storytelling, which Hantke (2022) describes as "*presentat complex social realities and emotional truths with a heightened sense of immediacy and intimacy*".

The specific content analyzed here belongs to the category of Grief Narrative or testimony. Attig (2017) defines grief not just as an emotion, but as "*the complex, active process of living with loss and finding ways to integrate the deceased into one's ongoing life*". When this process is made public, the resulting testimony becomes a powerful form of advocacy. Additionally, this advocacy relies heavily on rhetorical strategies, particularly Pathos. Kjeldsen (2018) defines the appeal to Pathos in contemporary rhetoric

as "*the art of persuasion through the skillful arousal of audience emotion*". In cases of perceived injustice, this emotional appeal is directed into a Rhetoric of Advocacy, a method by which the vulnerable seek moral authority and public support against systemic issues.

This study focuses on the interview with Timothy Anugerah Saputra's mother on the popular Indonesian podcast "*Curhat Bang*", treating it as a compelling textual artifact that intersects these concepts. The research objective is to analyze the narrative mechanisms used in this particular podcast episode. By applying Genette's Narratology (as re-contextualized by contemporary theorists), the article seeks to answer: How is the mother's testimony of grief structured, and what narrative strategies are employed to evoke public sympathy and frame the call for justice?

Methods

This study employs a narrative analysis along with a meticulous qualitative procedure. This decision was made because the objective is not just to provide information but also to investigate the creation of meaning and the persuasive use of language in the narrative framework (Lazar, 2022). The study utilizes the Narratological framework established by Gerard Genette, specifically focusing on two core aspects: (1) Order: Analysis of the relationship between the *story* time and the *discourse* time. We examine instances of analepsis (flashback), which Toolan (2017) defines as "*the telling of an event at a point in the narrative after the moment in time when it occurred*" (p. 98). The purpose is to determine how temporal manipulation enhances emotional effect, and (2) Mood (Focalization): The study focuses on internal focalization, which, according to De Weerd (2019), "*limits the narrative perspective to the consciousness, perception, and emotional state of a specific character*" (p. 267). This perspective is key to transmitting pathos (Kjeldsen, 2018).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The primary data source is the full-length YouTube video of the "*Curhat Bang*" podcast interview. The analysis procedure followed these steps: (1) Transcription and Segmentation: The entire interview was transcribed verbatim. Key segments related to the chronology of events, expressions of grief, and appeals for justice were segmented

and accurately translated into English to serve as textual evidence, (2) Narrative Mapping and Coding: The sequence of the narration (*récit*) was mapped against the actual story chronology (*histoire*). Codes were developed to label instances of Analepsis (A), Emotional Focalization (EF), and Rhetorical Appeal (RA), (3) and Rhetorical and Linguistic Analysis: The coded segments were analyzed for the strategic deployment of rhetorical figures (e.g., *anaphora*) and the linguistic expression of emotional states, verifying how the subjective perspective functions as a persuasive argument. Special attention was given to ensuring the translation retained the powerful emotional *nuance* of the original Indonesian testimony (Hogan, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Using the mother's testimony as the main rhetorical device, the research shows how the podcast interview deftly uses important narratological techniques to transform a personal tragedy into a widely captivating story of injustice.

The Strategic Use of Analepsis and Disrupted Narrative Order

The mother's testimony systematically avoids linear chronological order, opting instead for a structure built on emotional urgency and temporal dislocation. This is achieved through the pervasive use of **analepsis**.

In Media Res Opening and Establishing Ethos

The interview starts in media res, when the presenter directly addresses the external, non-familial narrative that predates the mother's arrival. This narrative is frequently emotionally charged and structured as a counter-claim to the mother's final testimony, rather than with the events leading up to the disaster.

Data Quote 1 (Membuka In Media Res): "Kasus Timothy ini bukan karena di katanya. Ini mungkin temannya ya lihat cerita kalau tidak ada kasus pembulian selama almarhum masih hidup... Menurut saksi orang-orang dan petugas kebersihan di kampus, Timot ini memiliki kebiasaan untuk menyakiti diri sendiri sejak lama... Ibunya sendiri sudah mengatakan kalau Timoti ini sejak SMP sudah mendapatkan penanganan psikologis dan terapi karena masalah kesehatan mental yang dia miliki." (00:00:00 - 00:00:37)

The host then immediately labels this entire preceding summary: "*Nah, itu tuh narasi yang ada di luaran.*" (00:00:46).

"The case of Timothy is not because of, they say... this is maybe his friend's story, there was no case of bullying while the deceased was alive. The bullying only happened after the deceased passed away. It seems to have happened after the incident. Well, according to witnesses, people, and cleaning staff on campus, Timot had a habit of self-harm for a long time. Like banging his head against the wall if he was hurt or frustrated. He also tried to jump off the cliff many times, but his intention always failed. His mother herself has said that Timoti has been receiving psychological treatment and therapy since junior high school due to mental health problems that he had." (00:00:00 - 00:00:37)."

According to Toolan (2017), this narrative decision avoids detached context setup by instantly drawing the spectator into the emotional climax. The mother immediately creates a moral ethos based on suffering by putting emotion ahead of time, which is a crucial stage in an advocacy discourse (Kjeldsen, 2018). The disturbance suggests that the enormity of the loss suffered takes precedence over the facts.

The Contrastive Function of Analepsis (Idealized Life Narrative)

The most common usage of analepsis is to break up the tragedy's story with romanticized recollections of Timothy's pre-event existence. This increases the severity of the loss and establishes the victim's deservingness. As an example, the mother frequently brings up a priceless memory when describing the trying times:

Data Quote 2 (Analepsis Kontras Mother recounting Timothy's kindness/dreams): Ibu Timothy: "Timi itu anak yang tidak pernah merepotkan. Dia selalu bilang, 'Ma, Timi mau jadi arsitek sukses dan bantu orang banyak.' Setiap kali saya lihat fotonya, saya ingat senyumnya yang tulus, bukan trauma yang menimpa dia."

Translate: "Timi was a child who never bothered anyone. He always said, 'Mom, Timi wants to be a successful architect and help many people.' Every time I look at his photo, I remember his genuine smile, not the trauma that befell him."

Contrastive analepses are the purpose of these flashbacks. The purpose of temporal displacement, according to **Kukkonen (2020)**, is *"to manipulate the audience's emotional experience by juxtaposing loss against former completeness."* Two claims are concurrently structurally reinforced by the Idealized Life Narrative: 1) the victim's innocence and deservingness, and 2) the catastrophic extent of the injustice that destroyed such potential. The pathos appeal is fueled by this contrast, which makes the injustice seem especially severe.

Analepsis in the Pursuit of Truth

Analepsis is also deployed to reveal previously hidden or forgotten details, acting as a narrative tool for investigation. The mother frequently returns to specific moments, re-examining them in light of new information.

*Data Quote 3 (Analepsis dalam Pencarian Kebenaran): Ibu Timothy: "Saya dapat kabar dia jatuh dari lantai dua, tapi ternyata dia [Timothy] bilang ke saya, 'Saya jatuh dari lantai empat, Ma.' Itu yang menjadi **clue** penting. Saat itu saya tidak berpikir untuk bertanya 'mengapa', tapi setelah itu, detail itu yang terus saya **putar kembali**."*

Translate: "I heard he fell from the second floor, but he [Timothy] told me, 'I fell from the fourth floor, Mom.' That was a big clue. At the time, I didn't think to ask 'why,' but afterward, that detail kept coming back to me."

This type of temporal return demonstrates how the mother's active *grief* process is transformed into a quest for the truth (Attig, 2017). According to Ricoeur (2013), rearranging chronological elements to make meaning of the loss is intrinsically connected to the creation of a trauma story. In this instance, the temporal breaks function as a textual illustration of the mother's ceaseless effort to piece together a cohesive, authentic narrative from a disjointed conversation.

Internal Focalization and the Poetics of Grief

The overwhelming reliance on **internal focalization** is the defining characteristic of this narrative, making the mother's emotional experience the central lens through which all events are interpreted.

The Subjectivity as Authority

This perspective, consistent with De Weerd's (2019) definition, limits the view to her inner world. In a public narrative that demands justice, this subjectivity gives the mother an ethos of authenticity; the audience is encouraged to believe her truth because it is inseparable from her pain. This intimate framing is greatly reinforced by the medium of podcasting.

*Data Quote 4 (Subjektivitas sebagai Otoritas): Sharon, Ibu Timothy: "Yang membuat saya kuat itu bukan karena saya hebat, tapi karena **rasa sakit ini yang menuntut kebenaran**. Saya harus mencari keadilan, bukan buat saya, tapi **buat anak saya**, dan itu didasari oleh **cinta seorang ibu**... Jadi, saya bicara ini bukan karena saya mau populer, tapi karena ini adalah **kebenaran versi saya** yang harus diungkapkan."*

Translate: "What makes me strong is not because I'm great, but because this pain demands the truth. I must seek justice, not for myself, but for my child, and it's based on a mother's love... So, I'm not speaking this because I want to be popular, but because this is my version of the truth that must be revealed.."

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Psycho-Narrative Intensity and Empathy Mobilization

The high degree of emotionality is where the *poetics* of grief resides—the articulation of raw sorrow into structured, persuasive language.

Data Quote 5 (Intensitas Psiko-Naratif): Ibu Timothy: "Setiap kali saya lihat foto dia [Timothy], saya hancur. Tapi kehancuran itu tidak boleh membuat saya diam. Saya harus bicara, karena saya tahu, kalau saya diam, keadilan untuk anak saya akan ikut terkubur. Saya tidak mau ini terjadi pada ibu lain. Ini bukan lagi soal penderitaan saya, ini soal suara yang harus didengar."

Translate: "Every time I see his [Timothy's] photo, I break down. But that devastation can't keep me silent. I have to speak out, because I know that if I do, justice for my son will be buried. I don't want this to happen to any other mother. This isn't about my suffering anymore; it's about my voice needing to be heard." (Said by Sharon, Timothy Anugerah's mother, while holding back her tears)

The intimate audio medium draws the audience into a simulated emotional experience (O'Donnell, 2021). This common emotion is essential. The importance of examining these internal states is validated by the scholarly focus on the psychological dimension, such as Gusthafo's (2024) analysis of character attachment and emotional depth in modern narrative. The audience's personal vulnerabilities are connected to the tragedy through the mother's grief, which becomes a universal access point.

Grief as Active Advocacy

The focalization shows that the mother's grief is an active, ongoing demand rather than a passive sadness. She does more than just cry; she expresses injustice via her tears and agony. According to Attig (2017), grief entails active reintegration; in this instance, the mother incorporates her son's memory into a public appeal for structural change.

Testimony as a Rhetoric of Advocacy (Pathos and Anaphora)

The structural organization of the testimony culminates in a forceful Rhetoric of Advocacy, powered by the emotional framework established by focalization and temporal manipulation.

The Role of Pathos in Persuasion

The primary rhetorical strategy is Pathos. The mother's pain is not merely a side effect; it is the central argumentative proof.

Data Quote 6 (Peran Pathos dalam Persuasi): Ibu Timothy: "Saya tidak mungkin mengarang cerita tentang anak saya yang sudah tiada. Untuk apa? Saya cuma punya dia. Ini adalah nyawa saya. Kalau orang bilang saya drama, saya terima. Tapi mereka tidak merasakan, setiap napas yang saya ambil sekarang adalah beban kehilangan. Saya hanya ingin keadilan itu setidaknya bisa menenangkan roh anak saya di sana."

Translate: "I can't possibly make up stories about my deceased son. Why? He's all I have. This is my life. If people say I'm being dramatic, I accept it. But they don't feel it; every breath I take now is the weight of loss. I just want justice to at least soothe my son's spirit there." (Said by Sharon, Timothy Anugerah's mother, with sadness)

According to Kjeldsen (2018), *pathos* works by establishing common ground for action. In this situation, any cool, dry, or bureaucratic narrative that aims to downplay the tragedy is undermined by the mother's emotional testimony. The legal/official truth is subordinated to the emotional truth.

Anaphora and Linguistic Reinforcement

The mother regularly uses rhetorical devices to reaffirm her main points. Conviction is produced through anaphora, which is the repeating of a word or phrase at the start of subsequent clauses.

Data Quote 7 (Penguatan Linguistik Anaphora): Ibu Timothy: "**Saya tahu** Timothy tidak mungkin melakukan itu. **Saya tahu** hati anak saya. **Saya tahu** siapa yang ada di sana saat itu. **Saya tahu** kebenaran akan terungkap cepat atau lambat."

Translate: "I know Timothy couldn't possibly do that. I know my son's heart. I know who was there at that moment. I know the truth will come out sooner or later." (Said by Sharon, Timothy Anugerah's mother, in a firm and confident tone).

This pattern of language serves as a moral drumbeat, indicating her steadfast stance and creating the sense of certainty that the story needs to overcome official ambiguity. As noted by Dahlan (2014), who examined how language becomes a weapon for taking a strong public stance, this use of rhetorical force is consistent with studies of empowerment and protest in local discourse. Additionally, the examination of illocutionary acts in public speech (Lestari & Sujarwo, 2021) demonstrates that the repeated utterances become moral obligations rather than merely statements.

Digital Advocacy and Counter-Narrative

The complete conversation serves as a refutation of alleged official inaction or insufficient inquiry. It is an excellent illustration of Digital Witnessing (Miller, 2016), which aims to go viral and inspire a community of concern. The podcast's success in attracting public attention supports the findings of Puspasari & Setyaningsih's (2020) examination of critical discourse in Indonesian media, which holds that a message's framing is essential to subverting prevailing power structures.

Conclusion & recommendation

The use of intense internal point of view, which focuses only on the mother's thoughts and feelings. This creates a strong emotional connection with the audience, giving the story authority and making people feel deeply for the case. This approach takes advantage of the close and personal nature of podcasts (as noted by Murray, 2022), helping to build empathy and encourage public attention. It makes the emotional truth more important than the official or legal facts.

The use of disruptive flashbacks. This isn't just a way to tell a story, but a powerful way to make a point. It brings back memories of the victim's good life and contrasts them with the terrible loss, making the tragedy even more moving (as discussed by Kukkonen, 2020). This technique turns the mother's sadness into a determined search for truth, making her grief into a powerful drive to uncover the real story. In this digital era, narrative structure and rhetoric are deeply intertwined, particularly in contexts of trauma and systemic injustice. The mother's voice, amplified through the intimate podcast format, becomes an ethical force, demonstrating that the organization of sorrow—what we term

the poetics of grief—is a crucial mechanism for demanding accountability in contemporary Indonesian society.

Acknowledgment

The author offers the family of Timothy Anugerah Saputra their sincere sympathies and sorrow for their terrible loss. It is hoped that this scholarly analysis will make a positive contribution to the larger conversation about justice and how sorrow should be portrayed in the media. Special recognition is given to the creators and producers of the podcast '*Curhat Bang*' for generating and disseminating fascinating, text-rich testimonies that are essential for this critical narrative analysis. Their contribution to public discourse by providing a platform for vulnerable voices is acknowledged and appreciated. Finally, the author acknowledges the sensitive and painful nature of the topic discussed in this study.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was reported.

About author

Bella Nabila is a student of English Literature at Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. She can be contacted bella19nabilaa@gmail.com.

Jihan Azhari is a student of English Literature at Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. She can be contacted jihanazhari364@gmail.com.

Yanti Rosalinah is a senior lecturer of English Literature Department at Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. She can be contacted at yanti.yaa@bsi.ac.id