

Reading the Meaning of Song Lyrics using Roland Barthes' Symiotic Theory in Theater Performance with the Song Lyrics *Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa*

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Abstract. Music plays a very important role in theater performances and has a significant impact on the audience experience. Music helps to create an atmosphere that matches the mood and emotions that the theater performance is trying to express. For example, dramatic music can increase the tension in a tense scene, while upbeat music can increase the cheerful atmosphere in a joyful scene. Music in theater performances can also be used to communicate the meaning and message of the performance. We often find that song lyrics or melodies directly reflect important conflicts, characters or themes in the story. Reading the meaning of the lyrics with the title "Knitting The Dimensions Of Time" is the result of the interpretation of the events of the contract laborers of Java Deli North Sumatra. In addition, music is also managed through several instruments to support the creation of the atmosphere of the theater performance. The research process in reading the meaning of the lyrics of the song knitting the dimensions of time uses qualitative research. Finding data and conducting interviews (informants) and documentation as material in the preparation of the desired narrative (meaning). Theater performances with the play script "Knitting The Dimensions Of Time" require actors to be able to play acting and also be able to process vocals as a musical instrument of the show. Based on the description above, the researcher will examine the lyrics of the song "Knitting The Dimensions Of Time" using Roland Barthes' symbiotic study. This study will be conducted by analyzing the meaning of song lyrics through five main codes (Lexia).

Keywords: Roland Barthes, Simiotics, Meaning of Song Lyrics, Knitting the Story of the Time Dimension

1 Introduction

Through the stage of theater performances through music, researchers read the meaning of the lyrics of the song "Knitting The Dimensions Of Time" as a space for reflection on Roland Barthes' semiotic study. Semiotics is the science of signs. Semiotics is a science or method of analysis to study signs. Signs are the tools used in trying to find a way in this world, in the midst of humans and together with humans. Semiotics basically wants to study how humanity interprets things. Meaning in this case cannot be confused with communicating. Meaning means that objects not only carry information, in terms of which they are intended to communicate, but also constitute a structured system of signs. The study of signs and everything related to them, how they function, their relationship with other signs, their transmission and their reception by those who use them. Semiotics studies the systems, rules,

conventions that enable signs to have meaning (meaning) [9]. Roland Barthes' semiotics is actually a derivative of de Saussure's semiology. In his theory, Roland Barthes adapted de Saussure's signifiant-signifie theory, but used the term expression for signifiant and content for signifie. Saussure focused on sentence formation and how to determine meaning in sentences. Roland Barthes, on the other hand, continued the idea by focusing more on the interaction of the text with personal experience and the culture that uses it. This idea is known as the "order of signification", an idea that focuses on two stages of signification in semiotics, namely denotation and connotation. Then connotation cannot be separated from the operation of ideology called myth [1].

As a performance, this study focuses more on the observation of music in creating a performance atmosphere. Music is an art form that involves a series of sounds, melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and sometimes lyrics to produce an aesthetic experience that is enjoyed by the listener. Music is a universal language that can communicate human emotions, ideas and feelings. Music involves the use of sound as its basic element. This can be the sound of musical instruments, vocals, or nature sounds integrated into a composition. Melodically, it is the series of notes that form the core of music. So that through melody it can be easily recognized and sung. The series of creative work of music creation must certainly be able to reach harmony. A combination of several notes that are played or sung together to create a harmonious whole. Harmony can give depth and richness to music. Psychologically, music is also able to build imaginary spaces for everyone who listens. Music psychology studies how humans hear, identify and interpret various musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre. This includes understanding how we recognize different melodies and why some sounds sound more harmonious than others. It is also able to explore how musical preferences can shape a person's social identity and how music can be used to build and strengthen social bonds within groups. Music psychology helps us understand the complexity of the interaction between humans and music, as well as the far-reaching impact that music has on our lives. This knowledge can be used in various fields such as music education, music therapy, and the music industry to create better musical experiences and understand the role of music in human life more deeply. Based on this context, the music in the lyrics of the performance song *Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time* tries to build a relationship between humans in the historical space of the past.

This can be seen as a source of ideas for song creation. The lyrics of the song "*Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time*" can be seen universally from the performance. The performance tells the story of the Sumatran Contract Koeli laborers. The story of contract koeli workers in Sumatra is an important part of Indonesian history related to the exploitation of laborers during Dutch colonialism. Koeli kontrak workers were laborers employed under forced labor contracts by the Dutch colonial government in the Sumatra region in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The practice of forced labor contracts was first introduced by the Dutch colonial government in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) in the mid-19th century. The main purpose of this practice was to meet the need for labor in plantations and infrastructure projects managed by the Dutch. In Sumatra, the practice of forced labor contracts was mainly applied in plantations that grew products such as coffee, tobacco and rubber. Indentured servants are employed under extremely harsh conditions, often with very low or no wages. The lives of indentured koeli workers are often placed in very poor conditions. They are separated from their families and live in overcrowded barracks. Workers' health is often neglected, and many suffer from illness and malnutrition. Despite living in difficult conditions, indentured servants were not passive. There were various forms of resistance and protests against poor working conditions, including strikes and other actions. Abolishing the

Practice of Contract Labor: The practice of forced labor contracts was increasingly criticized by various groups, including social and political activists. After the Second World War and Indonesian independence in 1945, the newly formed Indonesian government began to abolish the contract labor system. The history of indentured *coeli* labor in Sumatra illustrates one aspect of the exploitation and oppression experienced by the Indonesian population during colonialism. The story of indentured servitude is a clear example of how colonialism led to the economic and social exploitation of the indigenous population. It is also an important part of Indonesia's historical struggle for independence and better labor rights.

Based on the description above, the researcher will examine the lyrics of the song "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa" using Roland Barthes' semiotic study. This study will be done by analyzing the meaning through five main codes (Lexia). The five types of codes include hermeneutic codes, semic codes, symbolic codes, proairetic codes, and cultural codes. Through this work, of course, researchers get information, meaning and thoughts that want to be conveyed through the expression of the song lyrics sung.

2 Research Methods

Research methods are the most important work in finding field data. This research process aims to find the desired data in complexity. The research process uses descriptive qualitative methods. Bogdan and Taylor as quoted by Moeleong, define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words or from policy actions [2]. Performing arts research seeks to describe artistic activities that are usually in the form of performing arts, both *Pedalangan*, *Karawitan* and *Dance* as part of an effort to gain knowledge. The approach used is qualitative which has descriptive characteristics. The data collected is first directly from the source, the researcher becomes part of the main instrument of analysis, secondly the data is in the form of words in sentences or images that have meaning [4]. This process is carried out by making the director the object of the informant of the script that he also wrote. By presenting the director, this research will certainly be relevant to be studied as a performance text. The data collection steps to obtain data are observation, interviews, and documentation. This research process is carried out in order to be able to create a narrative in each performance result. The study of meaning is certainly an artist's effort to express his philosophical thoughts into the dimension of performance (music). The method of finding meaning will be realized through Roland Barthes' semiotic study steps. It will approach the hermeneutic code, semic code, symbolic code, proairetic code, and cultural code. The hermeneutic code is a unit of storytelling text that functions to articulate the problem, its resolution, and various events that can formulate the problem, this code is a storytelling code with a narrative that can sharpen the problem, create tension and mystery, before providing a solution or answer (briefly this code is a flash in the story in the form of a puzzle). Meanwhile, the semic code is a code that utilizes cues, clues, or glimpses of meaning generated by these markers (in short, this code is a glimpse of meaning that implies or connotes) [6]. Meanwhile, the symbolic code is a grouping or configuration code that is easily recognizable because of its regular repeated appearance. While the proairetic code is a code in the form of action or the ability to determine the results or consequences of an action rationally. While the cultural code is a referential code in the form of an anonymous collective sourced from human experience that represents knowledge and wisdom that is continuously referred to by the text [8]. Through the series of work above, of

course, it can provide a complex meaning of the object under study.

3 Results And Discussion

Music with the title "Knitting The Dimensions Of Time" is the most important part of the singing theater performance directed by Frisdo Ekardo. This theater performance tells an event that has the idea of the Sumatra Contract Koeli Labor story. Researchers also conducted interviews with performers as well as composers in singing theater performances on behalf of Febe Febriyana Tambunan. This research was conducted on May 30, 2023 at Medan State University. Through field observations, researchers tried to observe the rehearsal process and the final results through video recordings. Listening and observing every lyric sung. This is done in order to be able to absorb the value that will be described in Roland Barthes' symbiotic study.



Fig. 1. Rehearsal Process With The Directo

This research also paid special attention by interviewing the composer in this case also an actor of the theater performance under study. From the interview, the researcher found an expression of the text written in the lyrics of the song "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa". These lyrics come alive with visual and tonal packaging that provides harmony.



Fig. 2. Chief Researcher and Composers as Well as an Actor

Based on interactive research, researchers found and obtained song lyrics in the form of block notes. This standard music notation is a beam notation that is based on a staff with symbols that indicate the duration and height of the tone. According to Suwanto, et al [11]. "Not beam is a music writing system using symbols or symbols of notes arranged or placed on blocks or lines of tone". Firmansyah [10]. states "Beam notes are music writing with a five-line structure based on the diatonic system". As a performer, besides being able to interpret, it is also necessary to activate the imagination to be able to interpret an object creatively. This is reinforced in Hasanudin's perspective in the book of Drama studies, history and analysis: The higher the imagination of interpreting dramatic texts for the purpose of being staged, it will usually produce creative staging concepts and rich dramatic practices. The possibilities of concretizing the author's ideas will be much more interesting when compared to interpretations that are low in visualization. Interpreting a text for performance purposes usually requires references to conceptualize the performance. The more references related to the problems in the text, the better. With various references related to the problems contained in the text, it will be easier for the interpreter to realize the concept of the performance. [6]. Research on the lyrics of the song "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa" found a meaning that can be seen from Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. The study was analyzed from the data of Not Balok created by a singing theater composer from the results of the peletian. In general, the researcher also found data that the performance tells the story of the Javanese people who live in the Deli Tobacco plantation. The story of the Sumatran contract coolies became the source of creative ideas for a theater performance using the lyrics "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa". The influx of Javanese people to East Sumatra was due to the implementation of ethical politics by the Dutch colonial government, one of which was migration, but this was misused by individuals who needed coolies to take care of the plantation. Finally, these Javanese people were sent as coolies to East Sumatra plantations as a cover for the ethical politics implemented. It was the abuse of this ethical political policy that made the Javanese enter East Sumatra as contract coolies. The first wave of the arrival of Javanese coolies to East Sumatra began in 1884 when the opening of plantations in East Sumatra began on a large scale, at that time there were 1,771 Javanese coolies working on plantations around East Sumatra, the number of coolies experienced a significant increase over time, even the most among other ethnicities. The tragic story of the Javanese community was poured into the creative space by an artist into song lyrics. Song lyrics were created as a critical effort and a form of concern for an artist in maintaining culture and reflecting on historical events to see the future of a nation for the better.

Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa

Lyric by Frisdo Ekardo
Music by Wandu Siahaan

Largo

ji-ka ku bi-sa me-ngu-bah-tak-dir a-kan ku u-pa-ya-kan per-
5 ja-la-nan-ma-suk da-lam me-sin wak-tu-ku mem-ba-wa ma-nu-sia ter-bang dan
9 da-mai ber-sa-ma ba-yang kan-lah ki-ta be-lum se-le-sai ki-ta
15 dan pen-ja-jah han-ya-ber be-da ram-but dan ca-ra bi-ca-ra-a du-nia-a
19 kan ber-hen-ti za-man kem-ba-li me-nye-ret-ki-ta ber-sa-ma lu-ka-dan
23 la-ra be-la-jar-lah be-la-jar lah a-gar ca-ha-ya me-ngi-si ru-ang-ba
27 tin-ge-ne-ra-si hen-ti-kan pem-bo-do-han dan hi-dup-ber-da-mai-lah da-lam su
32 ka dan cin-ta bang-kit-lah ne-gri-ku ki-ta ba-ngun dan ber-ja-lan ber-sa-ma

Fig. 3. Score

The results of the research with Roland Barthes' semiotic study helped researchers find the meaning of the song lyric text "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time". This study can be seen from the Leksia as a reading unit. Through Lexia, the researcher parses the text of the song "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time". to find meaning:

- a. Hermeneutic codes are units that in various ways serve to articulate a problem, its resolution, and various events that can formulate the problem, or that delay or even arrange a puzzle (enigma) and just give a signal for its resolution [6]. Hermeneutically, the title of the song "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa" tries to provide a dialog space to the audience (reader). The words that are arranged give a sense of a formulation of history that gives value critically. The title lyrics also have an attempt to ask philosophical questions. This can be seen from the lyrics "the story of the dimensions of time". Contextually, the lyrics try to reflect the condition of Indonesian society during the history of the Koeli Contract to the post-colonial era. There were social, cultural and economic developments. Based on this, this study finds the narrative of the song "merajut kisah dimensi masa" as a critical issue in the social and cultural development of post-colonial Indonesian society. The life of the people presented by the Javanese ethnic in tobacco plantations. This history is remembered as the Koeli Kontrak Sumatera event. With the text expressed through the title, the lyricist intentionally builds space abstractly to encourage listeners (readers) to find out the data that wants to be expressed through the next text. This reading is also emphasized in Syahputra's perspective in his journal:

The hermeneutic code is a code that contains sign units that together function to articulate in various ways the question-response dialectic, in which the process of answers or conclusions (stories) is suspended, giving rise to a kind of enigma (puzzle) or in other words the hermeneutic code is related to the puzzle in folklore.

- b. The code of semes or connotations is a code that utilizes cues, clues, or "glimpses of meaning" generated by certain signifiers. To some extent this connotative code is somewhat similar to what Anglo-American literary critics call "theme" or thematic structure". A thematic grouping [7]. As a study that tries to look deeply into meaning. Understanding the text as a means of communication. The communication conveyed will certainly provide interpretations for those who hear. The lyrics of the song "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time" have a conscious effort to contemplate for everyone who listens to the lyrics. Contemplation efforts occur because of the need for thought to be able to interpret a lyric from an imaginary device to a concrete device. In the audio of the lyrics sung from the video observed: researchers, see the emotionality of a lyricist poured through contemplative words that give birth to a connotation meaning. The connotation meaning can be observed in the lyrics "*We and the colonizers only have different hair and ways of talking, the world will stop and the times will drag us back together*" in the meaning of this lyric has the hope of reflecting to the listener to better interpret what has happened in the social and cultural space of Indonesia after independence. hope to reflect to listeners to better interpret what has happened in Indonesia's social and cultural space after independence.
- c. The symbolic code is a "grouping" code or configuration that is easily recognizable because of its regular recurrence through various means and textual means, for example in the form of a series of antitheses: life and death, outside and inside cold and heat and so on. This code provides the basis for a symbolic structure [7]. The symbolic code that is being built in the song text "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time" is by creating an antithesis of Indonesian civilization in the dimension of "Today and the past". Symbolically, of course, this provides an interpretation of the word that is believed to be a symbol in the communication media of a lyric text. In meaning, it can be explained how dangerous a nation that is unable to

learn from historical events. This can be seen from the lyrics *"If I Can Change Destiny, I Will Try to Travel in My Time Machine. Bringing Humans to Fly and Peace Together Imagine We Are Not Done We and the Colonizers Only Have Different Hair and Ways of Talking"*. The researcher interpreted the word "symbolically" that the text was trying to build awareness for the listener. How important a critical awareness is as an Indonesian citizen. This is intended so that generations do not enter a different dimension but are trapped psychologically by new-style colonization. Material losses certainly have similarities. If this is explored then the antithesis of "Life and Death".

- d. The proairetic code is an "action" code. This code is based on the concept of proairesis, which is the ability to determine the results or consequences of an action rationally. [7] implements the logic of human behavior: actions produce effects and each effect has its own generic name, a kind of title for the "sequence concerned. *The proairetic code can be studied in the text of the song "Learn, Learn So That Light Fills the Inner Space of the Generation Stop Dumbing Down And Live And Live Together In Love And Love Rise Up My Country"*. The basic lyrics of this song are certainly able to foster a sense of rationality. A condition that is aspired to in the space of independence. This lyric also has a moral message with the presence of a rational generation. A generation that never gives up, learns and struggles. Of course this provides an optimistic space for generational action in the spirit of optimism of a nation.
- e. The cultural code is also referred to as the referential code which manifests as a kind of anonymous and authoritative collective; sourced from human experience, which represents or speaks of something that it wants to confirm as "generally accepted" knowledge or wisdom. These can be codes of knowledge or wisdom that are continually referred to by the text, or that provide a basis of moral and scientific authority for a discourse [7]. Culturally, of course, this text is very relevant to the study of the social history of the Javanese community in Deli. Historically the spread through migration of Javanese people lived and even made the land of Sumatra a part of the history of their ancestors. Through this study, researchers also conducted topic essential relevance. This is done because the words that are arranged into sentences of song lyrics do not explain the place and event. However, this interpretation becomes complex by doing reinterpretation work from the observation of the performance dialog presented. Making the audience orientation. Observing and interpreting the actor's communication media into the space of meaning. So as to be able to see closely the relationship between text and context of a performance. This is emphasized in the role of audience studies in Rini Oktavia Sari's journal. Theater performances and audiences have a relationship, a failure and success of the performance depends on the appreciation of the audience. The performance will be said to fail when the appreciation power with the type of spectacle, and the audience is not able to understand the performance. Vice versa if the performance is successful when the audience's appreciation is sufficient and able to understand the performance. The audience's understanding of the performance has different interpretations from the author's (director's) view to the view of the audience.

As a researcher, I positioned myself as a spectator. With that, the researcher found the cultural code of each meaning communicated. In general, this lyric sees or also in relation to the performance is representing the post-colonial life of "contract labor" to its condition today. Based on that, the historical events of Sumatran contract laborers as a source of ideas for the

creation of the lyrics "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time". Based on the description of the exploration of the meaning space of the song lyrics "merajut kisah dimensi masa", the researcher found a space of thought at the level of signification by explaining narratively how myths and ideologies operate in the song text "merajut kisah dimensi masa" through signs. So that through that, a "myth" is created in a series of performances presented with musical instruments. Myth, in terms of symbiology, is a unique system that is constructed from the first symbiological system. The relationship between signifier and signified that produces a sign (signification) will eventually only become a signifier that will relate to the signifier in the second level semiological system. It is at this second layer of signification that myths exist. The material aspect of myth, namely the signifiers at the second level semiological system, can be referred to as rhetoric (connotation) which is formed from signs at the first level semiological system. Meanwhile, the signs, at the second level of the symbiological system, can be referred to as fragments of ideology. [7].

4 Conclusions

The lyrics of the song "Knitting The Story of The Dimensions of Time" is a musical accompaniment to a theater performance. Through the study of Roland Barthes' symbiosis, researchers found data in values (meaning). This study certainly has theoretical benefits as well as benefits in the essential value of a performance. Semiotic studies have significant benefits in understanding communication and meaning in various contexts. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, and the way they are used in various forms of communication. This has concrete benefits in research. In-depth Understanding of Signs and Symbols, Semiotics helps us understand how signs and symbols are used in communication. This includes verbal language, non-verbal language, images, symbols, icons, and many other elements used in various forms of communication. Semiotics helps uncover hidden messages or meanings that are not always explicit in communication (song text). It helps identify messages that might be conveyed by using certain codes or symbolic conventions. Semiotics helps understand the way symbols and signs are influenced by cultural context. It is useful in understanding how meanings can vary between cultures and even within the same context. In the study of the song lyric text "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa, semiotics helps reveal the meaning in the text and understand the symbolism used by the song lyricist. Thus, the study of semiotics has significant benefits in revealing meaning in various forms of communication and helps us understand how signs and symbols are used to convey messages. This is important in the context of culture, media, art, and many aspects of our daily lives. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the lyrics of "Merajut Kisah Dimensi Masa" reflect the life of the "Koeli Kontrak" labor community in living life after independence. Through this study, there is also a desire from the song lyric text to stimulate the listener's imagination in a critical space. Reading history and absorbing values are essential in building a critical generation that can create positive changes for the progress of a nation.

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