

The meaning of Palestinians sacrifice in the lyric of the song “We Will Not Go Down”: Semiotic analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure

Amanda Arichah Zakiyah

Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang;
e-mail: 210302110005@student.uin-malang.ac.id

Keywords:

Palestinians; sacrifice; We Will Not Go Down; semiotic; Ferdinand de Saussure

ABSTRACT

Music is the science or art of arranging tones or sounds in order, combination, and temporal relationships to produce sound compositions that have unity and continuity. In making music, a composer must master the basic knowledge of tone and rhythm. In addition, the composer must also be adept at choosing words that will be poured into songs. Usually, a song is made based on an event and experience either happy or sad. This discussion focuses on the sad events experienced by the Palestinians in Michael Heart's "We Will Not Go Down". To obtain information related to the meaning of the Palestinian people's sacrifice in the song, researchers used qualitative methods and Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory. Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic concept is based on the object of study in the form of a sign.

Introduction

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), music is the science or art of arranging tones or sounds in order, combination, and temporal relationships to produce sound compositions that have unity and continuity. In the process of making music, a composer (music creator) must be proficient in choosing a word (diction) which is then written to form song lyrics. In addition, another ability that must be mastered by composers is the basic knowledge of tone and rhythm. The goal is that the message content of a song conveyed by the composer in the form of rhythm and intonation can be understood by the listener (Nanda, 2023). In general, the message conveyed in a song comes from the life experiences of the author or other people and a certain event.

Both experiences and events expressed in a song with appropriate musical accompaniment will be easily accepted by the listener. Music can have an impact on human thoughts and feelings because it has a certain melody, rhythm and timbre that can help the mind and body work together (Maringka et al., 2021). Therefore, the majority of people when experiencing stress for some reason will listen to music with a soft tempo to feel relaxed. The reason is because when someone listens to music it will reduce the release of the hormone cortisol which causes stress (Alodokter, 2024). Apart



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license.

Copyright © 2023 by Author. Published by Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

from being a stress reducer, music also functions as encouragement or motivation through the words written in the song. The words in a song contain a very deep meaning about something pleasant or sad.

In this research, the topic of discussion is themed about sacrifice that is full of sadness and suffering with the title "The Meaning of the Palestinian People's Sacrifice in the Lyrics of the Song 'We Will Not Go Down': A Ferdinand De Saussure Semiotic Analysis." As most people know, Palestine has been colonized by Israel since 1948 until now. The conflict between Palestine and Israel occurred because the Israeli Jews tried to seize Palestinian territory. According to some experts, the reason why Jews want to establish a state in Palestine is because they feel they have a connection with the old history known as historic right or historic (Muchsin, 2015). The Jews assume that Palestine is their ancestral home and the place where the Messiah (Dajjal) will appear to be their savior at the end of time. Therefore, they feel they have the right to expel the Palestinians from the region.

Under this pretext, the Jews seized the Palestinian territories gradually until only two areas remained, namely the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The Jews with their Zionist movement did not hesitate to kill Palestinian civilians from babies, children, teenagers, and adults. The bitter life of Palestinians that has been experienced for decades makes people almost all over the world saddened until some of them make various kinds of poems. One of the poems that will be studied in this discussion is the lyrics of the song entitled "We Will Not Go Down" by Michael Heart. In each verse, it clearly illustrates how the Palestinians are very steadfast and resilient in facing trials. In addition, the song lyrics also contain satire addressed to world leaders, especially leaders of Arab countries. Palestinians feel disappointed with some leaders of Arab countries because they are silent (helpless) and too busy with world affairs. In addition, one of the current realities is that Islamic countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and others are weak and divisive so that Palestine is getting worse when dealing with Jews (Muchsin, 2015).

The conflict about Palestine expressed in the song "We Will Not Go Down" has also been studied in previous research. There are about four previous studies on this song. First, in a thesis entitled War As Represented In Michael Heart's "We Will Not Go Down" by Gunawan in 2013. Second, there is a thesis entitled A Study of Deixis Used in Michael Heart's Song Lyric Entitled "We Will Not Go Down" by Dian Sylviana Putri in 2015. Third, there is a journal article entitled Discourse Analysis of a Song Lyric Entitled "We Will Not Go Down" by Faizal Risdianto in 2016. Fourth, there is a thesis entitled Violence Represented in Michael Heart's "We Will Not Go Down" And The Cranberries' 'Zombie' Song Lyrics by Diniar Rizal Abdi Saifulloh in 2017. Meanwhile, in this discussion, researchers use qualitative methods and Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory to be different from previous research (Darma et al., 2022).

Method

The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) explains that a method is a regular way used to carry out a job so that it is achieved as desired. In analyzing a research object, it is very important to pay attention to the accuracy of the method so that the data obtained is

accurate and can be accounted for. Therefore, in analyzing this linguistic topic, the right method to use is qualitative. Qualitative research is research on research that is descriptive and uses analysis (Mappasere et al, 2019). Qualitative research data is usually in the form of text, audio, and images.

Furthermore, qualitative data collection usually uses several techniques, including: interviews, observation, documentation, and focus group discussions (Rahardjo, 2011). In this discussion, the technique used to obtain research data is observation. Researchers focus on analyzing data in the form of song lyrics carefully and deeply. Meanwhile, the theory used is Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotics. Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory focuses on signs which are divided into signifier and signified. The use of semiotic theory is expected to provide a detailed description of the object of study.

Finding and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis that has been done, researchers took several stanzas in the song lyrics to identify the signifier and then interpreted. Each stanza explains how hard the Palestinians struggle for their lives and the great sacrifices they have made for their country. The words in the lyrics of the song "We Will Not Go Down" also illustrate that Palestinians are willing to represent Muslims around the world to protect the land blessed by Allah SWT.

Stanza 1

Signifier

*A blinding flash of white light
Lit up the sky over Gaza tonight
People running for cover
Not knowing whether they're dead or alive*

Signified

In this stanza, a blinding white flash of light is interpreted as an Israeli missile or rocket launching into Palestine. The missile or rocket looks shiny because it was launched when the sky was dark. As a result, many Palestinians tried to save themselves. However, they are actually not too worried about death. The reason is because they want to die in a state of martyrdom (fighting in the way of Allah SWT).

Stanza 2

Signifier

*They came with their tanks and their planes
With ravaging fiery flames
And nothing remains
Just a voice rising up in the smoky haze*

Signified

Israeli troops came to Palestine complete with war equipment. They tried to destroy everything in Palestine including its people until there was nothing left. Despite the screams and cries of the Palestinians, they did not care.

Stanza 3**Signifier**

We will not go down

In the night, without a fight

You can burn up our mosques and our homes and our schools

But our spirit will never die

We will not go down

In Gaza tonight

Signified

The people of Palestine uphold the dignity of their land. This is because the land is the home of several Prophets until they were buried there. In addition, there is a holy building site for Muslims, namely the Aqsa Mosque which became the place of Isra' Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. until he ascended to Sidratul Muntaha. The high sense of nationalism and courage possessed by the Palestinian people makes them willing to sacrifice to protect their territory even if they have to lose their lives.

Stanza 4**Signifier**

Women and children alike

Murdered and massacred night after night

While the so-called leaders of countries afar

Debated on who's wrong or right

Signified

Israel doesn't care about the safety of women or children who haven't even sinned yet. In fact, Israeli troops even do inappropriate things to women and then kill them. Along with this increasingly difficult situation also does not make some leaders of Arab countries participate in realizing real resistance to Israel. The majority of Arab leaders only condemn all forms of oppression committed by Israel against Palestine. They are too busy with the pleasures of the world and are afraid of losing it if they openly fight against Israel.

Stanza 5**Signifier**

But their powerless words were in vain

And the bombs fell down like acid rain
But through the tears and the blood and the pain
You can still hear that voice through the smoky haze

Signified

The Arab leaders' condemnation of Israel is likened to a passing wind. Bombs continue to be launched by Israel until the entire Palestinian territory is destroyed. The silence of Arab leaders is as if they never knew the Palestinian situation that is full of cries and blood. Until finally, it makes the Palestinian people disappointed and disrespectful to them.

Conclusion

Music is a medium or means used to convey a message contained in song lyrics. The message conveyed by the composer in the song lyrics will be easily accepted by the listeners if it is in accordance with their circumstances. Usually, listeners will feel relaxed if the tempo of the music is soft and the phrases in a song have a deep meaning and are related to life experiences. Whether the experience is sad or pleasant, if the music and song are balanced, it will be liked by many people.

An example that can be taken is found in Michael Heart's "We Will Not Go Down". The song managed to touch many people because it contains life in Palestine which is full of suffering. Therefore, researchers tried to study it through Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory. From the analysis of the song lyrics, the researcher found that the Palestinians are willing to sacrifice even if their lives are lost. In addition, the lyrics of the song also imply the disappointment of the Palestinians towards the Arab leaders who are less assertive in defending them.

References

Ahmad, M. I. (2021). Representasi semiotika Roland Barthes dalam syair "Ahinnu Ila Khubzi Ummi" Karya Mahmoud Darwish. *An-Nahdah Al-'Arabiyah*, 1(2), 247-267.

Alodokter. (2024). 10 Manfaat musik bagi kesehatan fisik dan mental. <https://www.alodokter.com>.

Barzah, A. Z. D. A., & Al Anshory, A. M. (2022). Makna cinta dalam lirik lagu Bismillah Cinta karya Sigit Purnomo: Analisis semiotika Ferdinand De Saussure. *Hasta Wiyata*, 5(2), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.hastawiyata.2022.005.02.07.MAKNA>

Darma, S., Sahri, G., Hasibuan, A., Wirta, I. W., Silitonga, I. D. B., Sianipar, V. M. B., Khoiriah, M., Rayhaniah, S. A., Purba, N. A., Supriadi, Jinan, A., & Jinan, A. (2022). Pengantar teori semiotika. CV. *Media Sains Indonesia*, 23(4), 1–10.

Fawad, D. H., Muassomah, M., & Syaifuddin, H. (2022). Misyari Rasyid Alafasyi's "Qolbi Muhammad" song lyrics: Michael Riffaterre's semiotic study. *Journal of Arabic Literature (JaLi)*, 4(1), 65-84.

Gunawan. (2013). War as represented in Michael Hearts “We Will Not Go Down”.
Undergraduate thesis, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Of Yogyakarta.
<https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/9524/>

Kurniawati, E. (2019). Video musik Sabyan Gambus “Atouna El Toufoule” studi analisis semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce. *Al-Munzir*, 12(1), 97.
<https://doi.org/10.31332/am.v12i1.1281>

Mappasere, S. A., & Suyuti, N. (2019). Pengertian penelitian pendekatan kualitatif. *Metode Penelitian Sosial*, 33.

Maringka, R. C., Khoirunnita, A., Maringka, R., Utami, E., & Kusnawi, K. (2021). Analisa perkembangan musik pada spotify menggunakan Structured Query Language (SQL). *CogITO Smart Journal*, 7(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.31154/cogito.v7i1.287.1-14>

Muchsin, M. A. (2015). Palestina dan Israel: Sejarah, konflik dan masa depan. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 39(2), 390-406.

Nugraha, R. P. (2016). Konstruksi nilai-nilai nasionalisme dalam lirik lagu: Analisis semiotika Ferdinand de Saussure pada lirik lagu “Bendera”. *Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi dan Sosial*, 5(3), 290–303. <https://www.neliti.com/publications/237541/konstruksi-nilai-nilai-nasionalisme-dalam-lirik-lagu-analisis-semiotika-ferdinan>

Rahardjo, M. (2011). Metode pengumpulan data penelitian kualitatif.
<http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/1123/>