

Moral Message Of Nature's Sustainability: Semiotic Analysis Of *Alam Menyapa* On Audio-Visual Music Composition

Junita Batubara^{1)*}, Emmi Simangunsong²⁾, Kamaluddin Galingging³⁾, Ance Juliet Panggabean⁴⁾

¹⁾²⁾³⁾⁴⁾ Music Art Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author

Email : junitabatubara@uhn.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Alam Menyapa is a musical composition which is a blend of Western and traditional music from various countries. The idea for *Alam Menyapa* came from the composition *Song of the Birds*, which was once used as therapeutic music for drug-affected patients, at the Mutiara Abadi Foundation in Binjai City. One of the uniqueness of *Alam Menyapa* is the adoption of natural sounds, such as the sounds of various birds, the sound of river water, the sound of wind blowing, and other animal sounds, which are then digitally combined with various musical instruments. The method used is descriptive qualitative, collecting data with literature, observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique used is interactive analysis from Milles and Hubermann. The results of this study indicate that *Alam Menyapa* has a simple musical concept which includes: 1) The musical instruments used are a blend of Western and traditional music through digital music, 2) Musical elements; playing rhythmic patterns that complement each other, simple melodies with simple dynamic signs 3) Forms of presentation through recordings of natural sounds included in digital music and audio-visual. 4) The symbolic meaning of balanced natural life, 5) The aesthetic expression of harmony and simple chords, and 6) The educational value contained is that the sounds of nature can be applied to digital music with simple melodies and harmonies. The theory of meaning or symbols used by the author in conducting research is the theory of Roland Barthes. The result of the research is an analysis of Indonesian music composition with the aim that more and more works by Indonesian composers will be introduced to the world through analysis.

KEYWORDS

Alam Menyapa
Composition,
Composer, Symbolic
meaning, Aesthetic
Expression.

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INTRODUCTION

Alam Menyapa's instrumental composition is entirely inspired by the composer's experiences with the environment around Tanjung Malim in Malaysia. When the composer first arrived in Tanjung Malim-Malaysia using rail transportation, the weather was rainy. The Tanjung Malim area is the end of Kuala Lumpur city if you take the train. The distance from Kuala Lumpur to Tanjung Malim ranges from 1.5 to 2 hours by train. The atmosphere of Tanjung Malim is like a small town that still has nature around it. Urban people from various regions in Malaysia dominate the people living in the Tanjung Malim area. The natives of Tanjung Malim are 'indigenous people' who have a Mexican appearance with reddish, curly hair, short stature and brown skin. Urban residents around Tanjung Malim are ethnic Chinese, Malays, Indians, and indigenous peoples. Life in the city of Tanjung Malim is not the same as in Kuala Lumpur, as this city is better known as a 'student town' with various colleges and universities, car manufacturers and Malaysia. The variety of life in that place exists as traders, teachers, lecturers, factory workers and students. The composer went to

Tanjung Malim to become an international lecturer at the Sultan Idris University of Education for two years.

The composition work *Alam Menyapa* is a creation based on the idea of the creator's personal experience while working at Tanjung Malim. The composer stated every day that passed, the composer always walked to the Sultan Idris Education University campus. When walking around, the composer often hears the sound of birds, other sounds of nature, and the 'frenetic' bustle of residents with their activities in the morning. The composer also said that people in the area have their own busy lives. However, the hustle and bustle of city activity can be seen in the morning only until 10 a.m (GMT+7). After 10 a.m (GMT+7), people's activities look 'quiet'; in other words not as busy as in the morning.

Through a combination of the composer's personal experience as part of the community in Tanjung Malim, where the composer is an international lecturer and has an obligation to conduct research that receives assistance from the Malaysian government, the composer created a collection of works of programmatic music composition with the big title "Living in Tanjung Malim". One of the collection of works is "Song of Birds". He stated:

'I composed the music for 'Live in Tanjung Malim' with a new culture where my background is from the interacting Batak culture with the Tanjung Malim community environment by having diversity culture and habits of life of different peoples. Because I am not Malaysians, my approach to composing music, is more than that for a personal experience and local Malaysian culture. It is like doing a 'composition tour' or expatriate composition'.

Then after completing the duties as an international lecturer, the composer joined Indonesian female composers. In 2021 the composer was asked to perform compositions that are digital music. The composer was bringing back his work "song of Birds" with a new format in which all of his work is digitized by combining natural sounds and audio-visuals. This work was renamed *Alam Salam* because the concept was different. The work also includes quotes from famous people about the universe. The goal is for the meaning and symbols of the work to be seen and felt by the audience. The audio-visual of *Alam Menyapa* can be seen on the youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JWTb2STAUU>.

The definition of meaning and symbol comes from English language, namely sense. Meaning is an inseparable part of semantics and is always attached to whatever we utter. In other words, meaning is (a) the intention of the speaker, (b) the influence of language units and understanding on human perception or behaviour, (c) the relationship in the sense of equivalence and imbalance, (d) how to use symbols (Kridalaksana, 2008:132-133). Meaning can be interpreted as the meaning of a word or thing. Meaning arises when language is used because the role of language is very important in communication and thought processes. Problem-solving is also very important to the meaning of a language, especially regarding how to identify, understand or believe. There are three types of meaning, namely (1) inferential meaning. Namely, the meaning of one word (symbol) is the object, thought, idea, or concept designated by the word. The process of the meaning of thought occurs when we connect symbols with the intended symbols; (2) meaning that shows the meaning (meaning) of a term related to other concepts; (3) inferential meaning, namely the meaning intended by the user of the symbol. So, meaning is an object, thought, idea, or concept referred to by a

word, which is associated with the intended symbol (J.Rakhmat in Aminuddin, 2001:49). Meanwhile, according to Alwi (2007:3), meaning is a word or group of words based on a broad relationship between language units and forms outside language such as people, things, places, properties, processes, and activities. According to Sobur (2013:258), the model of meaning offers a number of implications for human communication: a) Meaning exists within humans. Humans use words to approximate the meaning communicated, but they do not perfectly and completely describe the intended meaning, b) Change of meaning. Words are relatively static, but the meanings of words are constantly changing, and this is especially true for the emotional dimension of meaning. c) Meaning requires a reference. Although not all communication refers to the real world, communication only makes sense when it has something to do with the outside world or the environment, d) Excessive abbreviations will change the meaning. Closely related to the notion that meaning needs reference is the communication problem arising from redundant abbreviations without linking them to concrete, visual references and e) Meanings are unlimited in number. At any given moment, the number of words in a language is limited, but their meaning is unlimited. To examine or give meaning to a word or sentence, it must be in accordance with the agreement of its users. By knowing the meaning of a word, in communicating between speakers and listeners who use certain language system symbols and can understand each other, understand and believe about something they are talking about.

Each semiological system has its particular linguistic form, in which there is a visual substance, for example, the meaning imposed by duplication in the linguistic message as in advertisement. Affirmation of meaning by duplication (the process of marking the second level or connotation) can produce messages (Barthes, 1981:16). According to Barthes in Dianiya (2020:212) says that signs in the form of words, images, sounds, motion and objects of analysis are based on three things, namely the meaning of connotation, denotation and myth. In this case, Dianiya analyzed the film *Parasite*, where there were five main points resulting from the research: fashion, a life full of convenience, boundaries, body odour and colour. The analysis conducted by Dianiya is based on the scenes, props and cinematography in the film *Parasite*. Rahayu also used Barthes' theory in his research entitled *The Mythology of Career Women in Hijab Films*, in which Rahayu analyzes media texts from all languages and expressions of forms of communication in the film. This means that there are linguistic messages, iconic messages, and unclassified iconic messages (Rahayu, 2020:80). According to Siregar (2022:1) said that Barthes' theory was used in the research entitled *Semiotic Analysis in Betawi Traditional Marriage "Palang Pintu": The study of Semiotics Roland Barthes* which in the research is classified as interpretive research because it relies on text interpretation which can be related to context. Such as ideological, moral, cultural and spiritual values. Based from the three researchers above, the authors conclude that Barthes' theory is used to analyze symbols through images, text or words, ideological, moral, cultural, and spiritual values, and icons through fashion, body language, body language odour, body movement, and sound.

This research was conducted using Barthes' theory by analyzing the images contained in the video clip *Alama Menyapa*, the words of several philosophers and music as the sound they produce. The use of Barthes' theory in this study is to seek and find the meaning and purpose of each symbol used by the composer in his work.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study was qualitative descriptive research that aims to describe what is happening at the moment. In other words, this qualitative descriptive research aims to obtain information about the existing situation. The research design used in this study was a qualitative descriptive design. The researcher was only described "the symbolic meaning and expression of *Alam Menyapa's* music expressions" in this study. In applying this research design, the researcher collected the data, processed it, and then analyzed it objectively.

The data were analyzed through a qualitative descriptive approach by expressing an overview of the research results. After going through the process of analysis and observation, it becomes a study that can explain the object or problem of the study. Kriyanto (2012:196), argues that qualitative data analysis begins with an analysis of the various data collected by researchers. That data were collected and then classified into certain categories. Sugiyono (2013:334), argues that the activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and continuously until completion so that the data was complete. Activities in data analysis were based on several processes that take place interactively, namely 1) Editing or checking the data, 2) Data from interviews with informants were collected and re-identified, 3) Reducing data by making a core summary of existing data, 4) Translate symbols of objects contained in *sekarang kaeng* from kempo regional language into Indonesian, 5) Assess the symbols in the greeting nature song based on icons, indexes, meanings of symbols and musical expressions of greeting nature, 6) Data analysis results were analyzed then interpreted to achieve the purpose of this research.






RESULT AND DISCUSSION


The composition of instrumental music *Alam Menyapa* is a form of instrumental music composition that highlights cultural elements from Indonesia and is also part of nonverbal communication. To analyze the meaning of nonverbal symbolic messages in the composition of *Alam Menyapa* instrumental music, the researcher used Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis model, which investigates the relationship between the signified and the signifier in a sign.

In Barthes' semiotic analysis, there are two orders of signs. The first sequence is denotation which is the literal meaning of a word, terminology or object. The second order is connotation, the cultural meaning attached to a terminology. In the context of the composition of *Alam Menyapa's* instrumental music, the denotative meaning is the physical meaning of the nonverbal elements in *Alam Menyapa's* instrumental music, and the connotative meaning is the substantive meaning of these elements.

For more details, each form of non-verbal symbols in the composition of the instrumental music *Alam Menyapa* and the meanings can be seen in the following table:

Tabel 1. The Meaning of Symbolic Messages in the Composition of *Alam Menyapa* Instrumental Music

Nonverbal Symbol Category	Forms of Nonverbal Symbols	Meaning
Artefact	Image of flowing river water 	The flow of river water is interpreted as a picture of the identity the authenticity of nature which shows harmony between the original natural forests that have not been touched by human hands.
	The rocks beside the river 	It is interpreted as a container to hold back the flow of river water, a place to stand when setting foot in the flow of river water where the stones are not the same size.
	The birds were chirping. 	Birds are one of God's creatures that are believed to be able to balance the atmosphere of the universe with the sound of birds chirping around the original forest.
Kinesics (<i>Body Language</i>)	Bird Movement 	The movement of birds contained in the composition of the instrumental music <i>Alam Menyapa</i> is interpreted as a description of the daily activities of living things on earth. This movement is also interpreted as an expression of gratitude to God for what we can enjoy by preserving the universe.
	Wind breeze 	The wind blowing between the leaves symbolizes the movement of life in the universe.

	<p>Various wild plants around the native forest</p> 	<p>The plants among the rocks, and the wild nature around the flowing river water and on the banks of the river symbolize the many types of wild plants that surround the river but are able to overcome the natural atmosphere of heavy rains and other natural disasters.</p>
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Category of Nonverbal Symbols Form of Nonverbal Symbols Meaning of Artifacts The flow of river water is interpreted as an identical image of the authenticity of nature which shows harmony between native natural forests that have not been touched by human hands. This can be seen in the image below:



Figure 1. *Alam Menyapa* Video with flowing river water

From the picture above, between the music scores and the flow of river water, where the notations on trombone, viola, double bass and piano musical instruments, the sound produced describes the sound of flowing river water. It can also be noticed in the image above that the notation is written using the dots above the notation. This was also expressed by the composer that the composer wanted every musical instrument used in *Alam Menyapa* to produce and describe the sounds of nature and the sounds of birds. That is, the composer harmonizes the image with the sound produced in his work.

The rocks on the river banks are interpreted as a place to hold back the flow of river water, a foothold when stepping on river water where the size of the rocks is not the same. It can be seen in the following image:



Figure 2. Video of *Alam Menyapa* with Rocks

In figure 2, you can see the sentence: "By just looking at water, one can learn many things about calm which can drown at any time." Suppose we do not maintain natural balance properly, such as river water flow. In that case, the water flow can become a natural disaster, with floods everywhere and landslides caused by the destruction of environmental ecosystems. In this case, the composer uses a video of a calm river flowing with the intent and purpose of maintaining the calmness of the river water. The symbol found in the part of the image above is to give a 'flashback' of how the calm river water looks and its harmony with the surrounding nature so that nature can be maintained.

At this time, a lot of river flow is not maintained, as well as the surrounding nature, which damages the natural environment ecosystem. Like many landslides that occurred everywhere, one occurred in the Cianjur landslide and earthquake. In addition, there are many flooding occurrences everywhere, especially when the rainfall is more than usual. The water that should be calm can instantly turn into a flash flood that can drown and destroy the natural surroundings.

Birds are creatures created by God who are believed to be able to balance the atmosphere of the universe. Birds are vertebrates that have wings, feathers and legs. Birds have a body frame that supports the ability to fly, namely with a light frame and light muscles, but also have strength. Birds also have different sounds. The sound of birds is often referred to as birdsong. The relationship between nature and birds is very close, where birds are one of the creatures that play an important role in the ecosystem of life. Birds are considered to harmonize or balance life. The composer chose video clips of various birds with their songs

to illustrate the music he created. In the musical score, we can see the 'conversation' between birds in the morning when greeting nature. This can be seen in the images of the birds contained in the video by the instrumental music composition *Alam Menyapa*, which can be seen as follows:

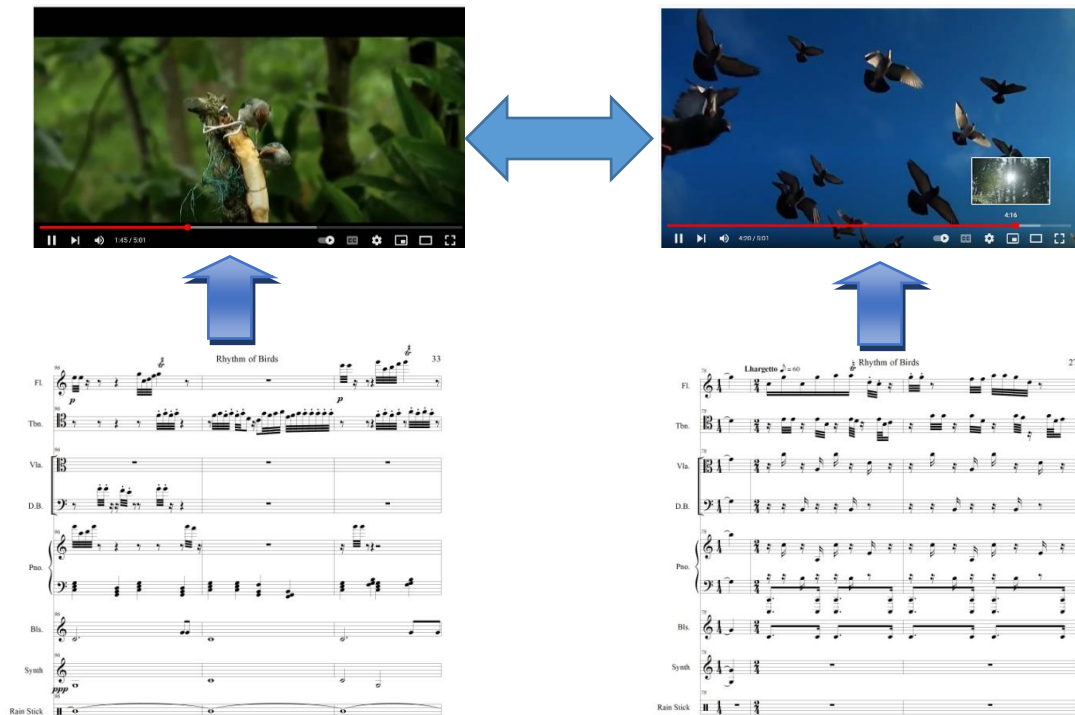


Figure 3. *Alam Menyapa* video to various types of birds

In the first picture above, several birds are cleaning their beaks while chirping at each other. We can see the sound of this song in the scores below, where bird songs are sung with melodies played by instruments such as flute, trombone, viola and piano. The image of a bird's song is a longing for a balanced natural atmosphere where birds can enjoy life in the wild.

In the second (next) image, various types of birds are flying together freely in the blue sky. By flapping its wings so that it can fly high as if showing the freedom to fly in wading through a neatly arranged life. This is also illustrated in the musical score below the image. Judging from the score, it describes the sound of birds chirping accompanied by melodic harmony. The symbol that can be interpreted is the yearning to live freely in the universe with the balance of nature so that birds can fly freely around the blue sky.

Kinesics (Body Language) in the movement of birds in the picture above is interpreted as the daily movements of the activities of living things on earth. The activities of living things on this earth are always different and not always the same. This is because the location or place is different, so the time is also different. Various body movements in the video or screenshots embedded in this article reflect the behaviour of living things on this earth, which needs attention for natural balance. 'Sense of care' for the environment and fellow living things must be carried out even with various challenges and obstacles that must be faced. With today's technological advances, it takes a 'power' mindset to keep creating a 'sense of care' so that harmony can be maintained.

In addition, composers always present words or sentences from several famous people with the aim that apart from listening to their musical works, the audience is also presented with constructive sentences. The presentation of these sentences aims to interpret the longing for an atmosphere of natural preservation. The author will discuss the words or sentences used by the compiler, which are displayed audio-visually, as can be seen in the image below:



Figure 4. Video of *Alam Menyapa* in various sentences

The first picture with writing from Gie: share time with nature; *berbagi waktu dengan alam kau akan tau siapa dirimu yang sebenarnya*. In this sentence, the visual image of a bird flying freely is interpreted as freedom of thought and not an obstacle to preserving the universe. 'Sense of care' for the environment is the main thing in preserving nature. This 'care' can be in the form of not littering, grouping waste, greening by planting lots of trees, saving energy, saving water use, choosing environmentally friendly means of transportation, and reducing the use of paper because the impact is reducing the cutting down of trees whose raw material is trees. Paper production, reducing chemicals, keeping animals alive and not burning waste. The connection between the ten activities from 'a sense of caring' and Gie's writing is that the ten activities or activities mentioned above interpret the sentence uttered by Gie, namely in the sentence about *berbagi waktu dengan alam*.

The next picture is of several birds perched on tree branches enjoying the wind blowing around the tree where they perch. The gestures or body language of this bird have the meaning of an expression of gratitude to God for what we can enjoy by preserving the universe. Gusts of wind indicate the ability of high-pressure air to move to low-pressure areas. Usually, a gust of wind can move the tree branches. Gusts of wind also cause leaves to touch the existing trees. The gusts of wind also produce sounds among the leaves and the sound of trees creaking. The wind blowing between the leaves symbolizes the movement of life in the universe. The resulting movements can help birds to make body movements fly from one tree branch to another. Gusts of wind can also activate the movement of the bird's wings to flap its wings so that it flies farther around the natural surroundings.

The musical notation produced by the composer can describe the sounds of nature where the composer's imagination about the balance of nature can be felt through the work *Alam Menyapa*. The musical notation in the section above is found in bar 32, where the melodies of each instrument reciprocate or are known as interlocking. The composer was inspired by the natural atmosphere in Tanjung Malim, where the surrounding natural atmosphere still looks 'pure'. This means that there is no 'touch' of human hands.

Next are various wild plants around the native forest. The plants among the rocks and the wild nature around the flowing river water and on the banks of the river symbolize the many wild plants that surround the river but can overcome the natural atmosphere of heavy rains and other natural disasters. In the composition of the instrumental music *Alam Menyapa*, the movement of water flowing in a river filled with rocks is a picture of the universe which has a natural balance that has not been touched by human hands, so its nature is very visible. It is conceivable that the river flows around urban areas are not even maintained, filled with wastewater from household waste and garbage from various places, resulting in the accumulation of waste in the river flow. This is due to the lack of awareness of urban communities to protect the natural surroundings. They carry out their daily activities for their own sake, so they do not think about how to maintain the balance of nature and preserve it. The symbol of gurgling sound of river water signifies a calm, peaceful atmosphere that can relax the human mind.

CONCLUSIONS

The representation of the meaning of nonverbal symbolic messages in the composition of *Alam Menyapa's* instrumental music consists of:

1) Artifacts where the flow of river water is interpreted as a picture of the identity of the authenticity of nature which shows the harmony between the original forest which is full of wild plants and the river water that flows calmly. The plants around the river symbolize the life that needs each other for survival. The rocks on the river banks are interpreted as containers to hold back the flow of river water, a foothold when setting foot in the flow of river water where the size of the rocks is not the same. Singing birds are birds that are God's creatures that are believed to balance the natural atmosphere. The universe with the sound of birdsong around the real forest.

2) Kinesic (Body Language) bird movements are interpreted as bird movements contained in the instrumental music composition *Alam Menyapa*, which is interpreted as a description of the daily activities of living things on earth. This movement is also interpreted as gratitude to God for what we can enjoy by preserving the universe. The movement of this gust of wind has life's meaning. The wind blowing between the leaves symbolizes the movement of life in the universe. Next are various wild plants around the native forest. The plants among the rocks and the wild nature around the flowing river water and on the banks of the river symbolize the many wild plants that surround the river but can overcome the natural atmosphere of heavy rains and other natural disasters. The composition of the instrumental music *Alam Menyapa* by adopting the sound of river water flowing calmly where around the river water, there are wild plants and rocks both on the banks of the river and in the middle of the river. From the whole meaning of the work of the instrumental music composition, *Alam Menyapa* has a moral message to living things, especially us as humans who reason to be able to preserve nature with various current scientific advances. There needs to be self-reflection that our lives cannot be separated from the universe.

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