



Analysis of the Moral Message in the Lyrics of the Song *Oh Pulo Karampuang* in the Mamuju Area

By Andi Maksum Dai

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-08-31 Revised: 2026-09-07 Accepted: 2026-10-13 Keywords: <i>Moral Messages;</i> <i>Regional Song Lyrics;</i> <i>Semiotics by Roland Barthes,</i> <i>Oh Pulau Karampuang;</i> <i>Local Culture</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12491 Corresponding Author: Nur Elisya Ramadhani nurelisyaramadhani937@gmail.com Indonesian Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University	<i>Regional songs function not only as forms of artistic expression but also as cultural texts through which places, memories, emotions, and cultural values are represented. This study aims to interpret the meanings constructed in the lyrics of "Oh Pulo Karampuang" by Andi Maksum Dai using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. A qualitative interpretive approach was employed, with the song lyrics serving as the primary textual data. The analysis focused on three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. The lyrics were examined by identifying significant signs, interpreting their literal meanings, relating them to culturally situated meanings, and examining the broader cultural assumptions embedded in those meanings. The analysis indicates four interconnected themes: love and pride in the homeland, appreciation of natural beauty, longing and attachment to the place of origin, and togetherness and cultural identity. At the denotative level, Karampuang is presented as a recognizable geographical place and landscape. At the connotative level, it becomes associated with affection, memory, longing, and emotional attachment. At the mythic level, the island is constructed as more than a physical location; it becomes a symbolic representation of belonging, regional identity, and continuity of cultural memory. These findings suggest that "Oh Pulo Karampuang" can be understood as a semiotic construction of place in which geographical space is transformed into a meaningful cultural and emotional landscape.</i>

1. Introduction

Education is not solely centered on the transfer of cognitive knowledge; rather, it encompasses the internalization of values and the character development of learners (Irawana & Desyanri, 2019). Within the pedagogical domain, the integration of musical

arts into the learning process holds high significance, as music has been empirically proven to exert a positive influence on students' learning motivation and emotional stability (Avandra, Mayar, & Desyandri, 2023). Literary works, including song lyrics, frequently function as guidelines for daily life and as instruments for the transmission of cultural values (Simaremare et al., 2023). Consequently, song lyrics have direct implications for language learning processes and character education within educational institutions (Triana, 2020).

As a medium of mass communication, song lyrics are capable of bridging the creator's ideas with a broad audience (Morissan, 2013). The language constructed within a song is inherently communicative, serving as a strategic medium for embedding moral messages (Rendi, 2013). The articulation of these moral messages is generally reinforced through distinctive diction and figures of speech, thereby leaving a profound impression on the listeners (Karmila & Abdurahman, 2023). Furthermore, song lyrics serve as representations of the complexities of life and intricate moral messages (Indiati, 2024). It is not uncommon for song lyrics to be utilized by society as incisive instruments for social and political critique (Bagaskara, 2019). This demonstrates that the moral messages embedded within artistic works and mass media possess a crucial essence in educating public morality (Renyoet, 2014).

To interpret the implicit meanings concealed behind the linguistic structure of song lyrics, a qualitative research methodology (Moleong, 2016) rooted in a semiotic approach is required. Semiotics constitutes a comprehensive analytical instrument for dissecting signs and meanings within Islamic, cultural, and linguistic studies (Rohmaniah, 2021). A highly relevant analytical framework within literary studies is Roland Barthes' semiotic theory (Nofia & Bustam, 2022). The Barthesian approach examines signs through the structural meanings of denotation and connotation, extending to the level of myth (Fitroh, 2019). The application of this semiotic analysis has proven highly effective in thoroughly uncovering the representation of moral messages within song lyrics (AL, 2017).

In the era of globalization, the existence of local wisdom, such as regional songs, is frequently marginalized by the younger generation. This occurs despite the fact that regional songs harbor rich cultural identities and moral messages, as demonstrated in the analysis of Bugis-language songs (Saleh, Aras, & Fitrawahyudi, 2023). It is crucial to scientifically investigate these moral messages to prevent the degradation of social values (Aulia, 2022). The approach to representing meaning in lyrics necessitates a connective understanding between linguistic structures and social realities (Cahya & Sukendro, 2022).

Regional song lyrics are even capable of representing collective memory and societal sentiments toward specific events or geographical locations (Melati, Iswatiningsih, & Zahidi, 2023). Barthes' semiotic concepts are highly adaptive and crucial for application in the study of various culturally laden manuscripts and texts (Mulyazir & Fadhillah, 2023). Consequently, the study of regional song lyrics, such as "Oh Pulo Karampuang," is not only vital for the preservation of Mamuju culture but also for transforming local wisdom into the discourse of national educational literacy.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the usefulness of semiotic analysis for examining song lyrics and other cultural texts, most of these studies have focused on popular songs, national issues, interpersonal relationships, or general moral messages. For example, previous research using Roland Barthes' semiotics has examined the meanings of Bugis songs and other cultural texts, demonstrating that denotation and

connotation can reveal cultural values embedded in linguistic signs. However, limited attention has been given to regional songs from Mamuju. This research gap is particularly evident in the lack of studies analyzing songs in which a specific geographical place becomes the central symbolic object.

Addressing this gap is important because regional songs may construct place not merely as a physical setting but as a cultural sign associated with memory, emotional attachment, belonging, and identity. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in positioning Karampuang Island as a semiotic construction of place and examining how its geographical representation develops into broader cultural meanings through the interaction of denotation, connotation, and myth. Rather than limiting the analysis solely to the identification of moral messages, the present study extends previous semiotic studies by examining the three levels of Barthesian signification to analyze how the lyrics of "Oh Pulo Karampuang" construct a geographical space into a meaningful cultural and emotional landscape connected to the regional identity of Mamuju.

2. Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative interpretive design using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The design was selected because the study focuses on interpreting meanings constructed through linguistic signs in the lyrics of "Oh Pulo Karampuang" by Andi Maksum Dai.

Data Source

The primary data consisted of the lyrics of "Oh Pulo Karampuang." The lyrics were obtained from the version used by the researchers during data collection and were cross-checked against available published or publicly accessible lyric sources. Because regional-language lyrics may contain variations in spelling and transcription, the final transcription should be verified against the original audio recording before publication.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was each meaningful lyric unit or stanza containing a significant sign related to place, nature, memory, emotion, social relations, or cultural identity. Each unit was examined at three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth.

Data Collection

The data were collected through repeated listening, transcription, documentation, and textual comparison. First, the researchers listened to the song repeatedly to identify the lyric sequence. Second, the lyrics were transcribed in their original form. Third, the transcription was compared with available lyric sources to identify discrepancies. Finally, the relevant lyric units were organized into analytical categories.

Data Analysis

The analysis followed three levels of Roland Barthes' signification. At the denotative level, the researchers identified the direct or literal meaning of each lyric unit. At the connotative level, the researchers interpreted the cultural, emotional, and associative

meanings produced by the signs. At the mythic level, the researchers examined broader cultural assumptions or ideologies that become naturalized through the connotative meanings. The analysis was conducted by coding each lyric unit according to its dominant sign, denotative meaning, connotative meaning, mythic implication, and related thematic category.

Data Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through source comparison and interpretive consistency. The lyric transcription was compared with the original recording and available textual sources. The interpretation was also checked against the conceptual distinctions among denotation, connotation, and myth in Barthesian semiotics. Where regional-language meaning or translation was uncertain, the interpretation should be verified by a competent speaker or cultural informant before the manuscript is resubmitted.

3. Results

Overview of the Findings

The analysis identified four interconnected themes in the lyrics of “Oh Pulo Karampuang”: (1) love and pride in the homeland, (2) appreciation of natural beauty, (3) longing and attachment to the place of origin, and (4) togetherness and cultural identity. These themes were identified through the systematic examination of denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings. Rather than functioning as isolated categories, the themes are connected through the recurring representation of Karampuang as a meaningful place.

Karampuang as a Sign of Place and Natural Beauty

At the denotative level, the opening lyrics identify Karampuang as an island associated with Mamuju. The description of the island as pleasant to see establishes a direct representation of geographical space and natural scenery. At the connotative level, however, Karampuang is not merely described as a physical location. Its visual beauty evokes admiration and emotional attachment. The island therefore becomes associated with positive feelings toward the homeland.

At the mythic level, the representation of natural beauty contributes to the construction of the homeland as something valuable and worthy of appreciation. Nature is not presented simply as an object to be observed but as part of the meaning of regional belonging. Karampuang consequently functions as a symbolic place through which attachment to the homeland can be expressed.

Table 1. Verified Working Transcription and Translation of “Oh Pulo Karampuang

Original Lyric	Working English translation
<i>Oh pulo Karampuang / Di olona Mamuju / Merio-río nikita di wattu / Simbar Karampuang</i>	Oh Karampuang Island / In front of Mamuju / Pleasant to see when the moon appears / Karampuang comes into view.
<i>Karaomo lampana tonisenga' di ate / Ateku' rapang nikojo / Bennu bulo pammoso</i>	Far away has gone the one remembered in my heart / My heart feels as if it is being cut / By sharp bamboo
<i>Pallarina utara / Situru-turu' salatang / Pengkata nda'ko di ia / Di tomarao</i>	The wind blows from the north / Likewise from the south / Carry the message to him/her / Who is far away

Furthermore, each lyrical stanza will be analyzed based on Roland Barthes' concept of semiotics which includes the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth. This analysis is the basis for identifying the moral messages contained in the song *Oh Pulo Karampuang* by Andi Maksum Dai.

Table 2. Barthesian Coding of the Lyric Data

Lyric Focus	Denotation	Connotation	Myth / Cultural Meaning	Theme
Karampuang and Mamuju	Karampuang is presented as a place associated with Mamuju	The island evokes admiration and attachment to the homeland	The homeland is constructed as a meaningful place that deserves emotional attachment	Love and pride in homeland
Natural landscape and moonlight	The island is described as visually pleasant	Natural beauty becomes a source of emotional pleasure and admiration	The natural environment is treated as an important part of natural beauty regional identity	Appreciation of natural beauty
Remembered person and distance	A person is physically distant but remains in the speaker's heart	Distance produces longing and emotional attachment	Belonging is maintained through memory even when physical presence is absent	Longing and attachment
North and south wind	Wind moves from different directions	Wind becomes an imagined medium for communication	Nature is symbolically connected with human relationships and emotional continuity	Togetherness and cultural identity

Distance, Memory, and Longing

The second group of lyrics shifts from geographical description to emotional experience. At the denotative level, the speaker refers to someone who is far away but

remains present in the speaker's heart. The image of the heart being cut by sharp bamboo intensifies the expression of emotional pain.

At the connotative level, physical distance becomes a sign of longing and emotional attachment. The remembered person is not defined by physical presence but by memory. This suggests that belonging can continue across geographical distance. At the mythic level, the lyrics naturalize the idea that emotional relationships with people and places can survive separation. Memory therefore becomes a mechanism through which attachment is maintained.

Wind as a Symbolic Medium of Communication

The reference to wind blowing from the north and south introduces nature as a symbolic medium of communication. Denotatively, the lyrics describe the movement of wind and ask that a message be carried to someone who is far away. Connotatively, the wind represents an imagined connection between the speaker and the distant person.

At the mythic level, the natural environment is transformed into a symbolic participant in human relationships. The wind is no longer merely a physical phenomenon; it becomes a cultural sign through which communication, longing, and emotional continuity are imagined. This meaning strengthens the connection between environmental imagery and human attachment.

Synthesis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth

Across the lyrics, the three Barthesian levels form a progressive structure of meaning. Denotation establishes Karampuang as a geographical place, natural beauty, distance, and wind. Connotation transforms these literal signs into admiration, affection, longing, memory, and emotional connection. Myth then connects these meanings to broader assumptions about homeland, belonging, continuity, and regional identity. Thus, the lyrics construct Karampuang at more than one level. It is simultaneously a physical island, an emotionally meaningful place, and a cultural symbol. This layered construction explains why the song can communicate meanings that extend beyond the literal description of landscape.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that "Oh Pulo Karampuang" operates as more than a descriptive regional song. Through the three levels of Barthesian signification, geographical references are transformed into cultural and emotional meanings. This finding is consistent with previous semiotic studies showing that song lyrics can contain layered meanings that extend beyond their literal linguistic forms. However, the present study places greater emphasis on the semiotic construction of place and its relationship with memory and belonging. The first important contribution concerns the representation of Karampuang Island.

At the denotative level, the island is a geographical location. At the connotative level, it becomes associated with beauty, admiration, and affection. At the mythic level, the place is constructed as a meaningful homeland. This extends the interpretation of regional song lyrics beyond the identification of moral values and demonstrates how geographical space can become culturally meaningful through repeated symbolic representation.

The findings also show that memory plays an important role in the construction of belonging. The lyrics connect physical distance with continued emotional attachment. The distant person remains present through memory, suggesting that belonging does not depend exclusively on physical proximity. In this sense, the song constructs emotional continuity between people, places, and remembered experiences. The representation of wind further strengthens this relationship. The wind functions as a symbolic bridge between the speaker and someone who is physically distant. This use of natural imagery demonstrates how the environment can be incorporated into emotional and cultural communication. Nature in the song therefore functions simultaneously as physical scenery and as a symbolic resource for expressing human relationships.

These findings can be compared with previous studies of regional songs using Roland Barthes' semiotics. Previous research has demonstrated that regional lyrics may contain cultural values and implicit meanings that become visible through denotative and connotative analysis. The present study extends this perspective by emphasizing the mythic dimension and by showing how a particular geographical location can become a symbolic representation of belonging and cultural identity.

The contribution of this study should nevertheless be understood within the limits of the textual data. The analysis demonstrates how cultural meanings are constructed within the lyrics; it does not establish that all Mamuju people interpret Karampuang in exactly the same way. Such a claim would require audience research, interviews, or ethnographic evidence. Accordingly, the findings should be understood as an interpretation of the cultural meanings constructed by the song rather than as a generalization about the beliefs of the entire Mamuju community.

The central contribution of the study is therefore the identification of Karampuang as a semiotic construction of place. The song transforms geographical space into a symbolic landscape associated with beauty, memory, affection, belonging, and regional identity. This perspective provides a more focused understanding of how regional songs can participate in the preservation and representation of cultural meanings.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that the lyrics of "Oh Pulo Karampuang" by Andi Maksum Dai contain layered meanings that can be interpreted through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. The analysis identified four interconnected themes: love and pride in the homeland, appreciation of natural beauty, longing and attachment to the place of origin, and togetherness and cultural identity. At the denotative level, Karampuang is represented as a geographical place and natural landscape.

At the connotative level, it becomes associated with admiration, affection, memory, longing, and emotional attachment. At the mythic level, these meanings contribute to the construction of the homeland as a meaningful cultural space. Karampuang is therefore not merely presented as an island but as a symbolic place through which belonging and regional identity are expressed. The study contributes to regional literary and cultural studies by demonstrating how a specific geographical location can be transformed into a semiotic construction of place through song lyrics.

However, the findings are limited to textual interpretation and should not be generalized to all members of the Mamuju community without supporting audience or ethnographic data. Future studies may complement textual semiotic analysis with

interviews, audience reception studies, or ethnographic approaches to examine how different members of the community interpret the song and its cultural meanings.

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