

## Love Expression in the Lyrics of “Ah W Noss” By Nancy Ajram: A Riffaterrean Semiotic Analysis

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### Abstract

Interpreting expressions of love in Arabic song lyrics is important because such texts often convey complex emotional meanings through symbolic and indirect language. In the context of the increasing popularity of Arabic songs in Indonesia, understanding these meanings becomes essential, particularly in representing women's emotional experiences. This study aims to analyze the expression of love in the lyrics of Ah W Noss performed by Nancy Ajram using the semiotic approach of Michael Riffaterre. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary data consist of the lyrics of Ah W Noss, while secondary data include relevant academic literature. Data were collected through listening and note-taking techniques and analyzed using Riffaterre's semiotic stages: identification of indirect expression, heuristic reading, hermeneutic reading, and the determination of matrix, model, and variants. The findings show that love in the song is expressed as a complex emotional experience involving patience, sacrifice, emotional protest, inner exhaustion, and resilience. These meanings are conveyed through figurative language such as metaphor, ambiguity, and hyperbole, reflecting the inner conflict and reflective awareness of the female lyrical subject. Love is therefore constructed not merely as a romantic feeling, but as a dynamic and critical emotional process shaped by imbalance and endurance. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Michael Riffaterre's semiotic approach is effective in uncovering layered meanings in song lyrics. The findings contribute to semiotic and literary studies, particularly in understanding emotional complexity and women's representation in Arabic popular songs.

**Keywords:** Riffaterre semiotics; Arabic song lyrics; Expression of love; Nancy ajram

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## INTRODUCTION

Songs can be understood as a form of oral literary work that has a strong ability to convey messages through the combination of language and musical elements (Riffaterre, 1978). Through lyrics, the songwriter expresses the experiences and emotions experienced, witnessed, or imagined by utilizing language and majas styles to produce aesthetic value (Tri Wulandari et al., 2024). Each song lyric contains a meaning that is not always conveyed directly, because the structure of language often holds a certain depth of meaning (Fadilah, Y., & AJI, 2018). In Arabic culture, songs not only function as entertainment, and philosophical meanings (Ahmad Amirul Kholid & Mas Tajuddin Ahmad, 2025) Therefore, songwriters use language styles to express emotions and influence the feelings of the listener (Haedariah et al., 2023), while musical elements such as rhythm and melody help build an emotional atmosphere (Fatiya et al., 2024). In

the study of literature and linguistics, song lyrics are an interesting object of research because they contain implicit symbolism and meaning that can be analyzed through various approaches, including semiotics (Chandler, 2002).

Songs share similarities with poetry in terms of their imaginative and aesthetic qualities, although they differ in their modes of delivery (Amir Karim, 2020). Song lyrics are composed of stanzas that contain aesthetic expressions intended to capture the listener's attention (Azizah et al., 2023). One of the most dominant themes in songs is love, due to its universal nature and its close connection to human experience. Romantic lyrics often portray the emotional dynamics within relationships between men and women (Erlangga et al., 2024) thereby establishing love as a primary source of inspiration in popular music (Mukminin, 2024). However, expressions of love in lyrics are not always conveyed directly; rather, they are often articulated through figurative language, symbolism, and emotional complexity.

In the modern era, the ease of access to digital platforms has contributed to the growing popularity of Arabic songs among Indonesian audiences. Not only Western and Indonesian music, but Arabic music is also increasingly appreciated due to its distinctive musicality and the simplicity of its lyrics, which are capable of conveying deep emotional nuances (Imron, 2018). The song *Ah W Noss*, popularized by Nancy Ajram, is one notable example. Written by Ayman Bahjat Amar and Tareq Madkour, the song was released through its official music video on April 14, 2004, and has garnered more than 159.4 million views on Nancy Ajram's YouTube channel. The song portrays the experience of a woman facing emotional tension in a romantic relationship. Despite experiencing emotional imbalance and dealing with an inconsistent partner, the female figure demonstrates patience and emotional resilience.

A number of previous studies have examined song lyrics as objects of semiotic and literary analysis. Research conducted by (Haq Aslama et al., 2025), entitled *Sensual Symbols and Social Confusion: Revealing the Expression of Love in "Qoddukal Mayyās" Lyrics through Riffaterre's Semiotic Lens*, reveals that expressions of love in classical Arabic songs are often misinterpreted as religious expressions, whereas semiotically they more accurately represent profane love conveyed through sensual symbols and figurative language. The study emphasizes that Michael Riffaterre's semiotic approach is effective in analyzing indirect expressions and uncovering layered meanings within song lyrics. Meanwhile, research by (Ratnaduhita et al., 2025), entitled *Representasi Cinta dalam Lirik Lagu Kupu-Kupu oleh Tiara Andini: Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes*, describes love as a feeling that influences both physical and emotional states, with symbols representing the freedom of love.

However, although these studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of semiotic approaches in uncovering symbolic meanings and expressions of love, research that specifically highlights indirect expression in constructing the meaning of love from a female perspective in modern popular Arabic songs remains limited. Most studies tend to focus on general symbolism or particular historical and cultural contexts, without thoroughly linking them to the emotional dynamics experienced by women in imbalanced relationships.

The selection of the song *Ah W Noss* as the material object of this study is based on the richness of meaning embedded in its lyrics. The song presents love not merely as a romantic feeling, but as a complex experience involving patience, sacrifice, emotional exhaustion, and relational tension. Furthermore, the use of figurative language and indirect expressions indicates the presence of ungrammaticality or indirectness of expression, as proposed by Michael Riffaterre, which requires a deeper interpretative reading. The song also offers a female perspective as an active and reflective subject, demonstrating emotional resilience within an imbalanced relationship. Based on the the

considerations, this study raises several key issues, namely implicit meaning, the use of figurative language, emotional imbalance in relationships, and the symbolic representation of women's emotional resilience. The novelty of this research lies in the application of Riffaterre's semiotics to reveal the indirectness of expression and the layered meanings in the lyrics of Ah W Noss, particularly in representing love from a female perspective.

Literary research is an in-depth effort to understand the meaning and context of a text. One commonly used approach is semiotic analysis, which enables researchers to explore the layers of meaning embedded within a text (Dira & Rohanda, 2024). In addition, this theory is also employed to identify the model, variants, matrix, and hypogram that underlie the formation of the song lyrics (Insani, 2021). Semiotics is a discipline that studies signs as well as social and cultural phenomena, including literary works that are viewed as systems of signs. In this concept, a sign consists of two main elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the formal form of the sign, while the signified is the meaning represented by that form (Pradopo, 1999). With this focus, semiotics becomes important to study and utilize as an analytical tool to uncover various hidden meanings (Lutfi et al., 2023). In interpreting the meaning of a sign, semiotic studies have a broad scope in understanding both signs and meanings contained in a song, as seen in facilitating comprehension of the scope of semiotics that focuses on the study of signs, particularly in literary works such as lyrics and poetry, as outlined in the work *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978) (Hajar et al., 2025). Therefore, in semiotic analysis, meaning is determined by first identifying the signifier and the signified. Several literary scholars have adopted the semiotic approach in their theoretical studies, one of whom is Michael Riffaterre (Aini, 2021).

Thus, the research question of this study is: how is the expression of love in the song Ah W Noss by Nancy Ajram analyzed through the semiotic approach of Michael Riffaterre? The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of semiotic and literary studies, particularly in understanding symbolic meanings in popular song lyrics as well as the representation of women's emotional experiences.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a text-based and interpretative design to analyze the expression of love in the lyrics of the song Ah W Noss, popularized by Nancy Ajram. This design is chosen because the research focuses on interpreting signs, symbols, and meanings within a literary text, rather than measuring variables quantitatively. The analysis is grounded in Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory, which emphasizes the indirectness of expression, symbolic structures, and layered meanings in literary works.

Riffaterre's semiotic approach is considered relevant because song lyrics contain figurative language, implicit meanings, and emotional complexity. These characteristics align with the concept that meaning in literary texts is not conveyed directly, but is constructed through linguistic deviations and symbolic systems. Therefore, this approach enables the researcher to uncover how the expression of love is indirectly represented through poetic language and symbolic patterns.

### Research Instrument and Data Collection

This study does not involve human participants but focuses on a textual object. The primary data consist of the complete Arabic lyrics of the song Ah W Noss, popularized by Nancy Ajram, written by Ayman Bahjat Amar and Tareq Madkour, and officially released in 2004. This song was selected because it represents Arabic popular music that portrays emotional relationships from a female perspective and contains rich symbolic

expressions. The analyzed lyrics consist of four main stanzas. Since the data are in Arabic, the researcher conducted a translation process into Indonesian through the following stages: (1) literal translation to preserve lexical meaning, (2) contextual adjustment to maintain emotional nuance, and (3) cross-checking by comparing reference sources and relevant interpretations to minimize meaning distortion.

Secondary data include academic literature sources, journal articles, and books relevant to semiotic studies, digital media, and literature related to the research topic (Inayah Amaliah Mutmainnah et al., 2025). Data collection was carried out using observation (*simak*) and note-taking techniques. The observation technique involved intensive reading and in-depth understanding of the text to identify expressions relevant to the theme of love. The note-taking technique involved recording lyric excerpts, categorizing data based on thematic groups, and organizing them systematically using data cards as a research instrument (Al-Falah et al., 2021). This process also included the selection and classification of relevant data (Dwi Andhini & Arifin, 2022).

### Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study uses Michael Riffaterre's semiotic framework as described in *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978). The stages of analysis include identifying indirect expressions, heuristic reading, hermeneutic reading, and determining matrices, models, and variants. These stages are applied systematically to reveal the meaning of love expressions contained in the text.

The first stage is identifying indirect expressions. In this stage, researchers identify linguistic deviations such as metaphors, hyperbole, and other figurative expressions that indicate meaning is not conveyed directly. These expressions are important because they suggest deeper meanings beyond the literal language used in the text. The second stage is heuristic reading. This first-level reading is conducted to understand the literal meaning and linguistic structure of the text. Through heuristic reading, the researcher focuses on the direct meaning of words, sentences, and grammatical structures before moving to deeper interpretation. The third stage is hermeneutic reading. This second-level reading aims to reveal symbolic meanings, emotional nuances, and deeper contextual interpretations. At this stage, the researcher interprets the implied meanings behind the text and connects them with broader emotional and cultural contexts.

The final stage is the determination of matrices, models, and variants. Matrices are identified as the core meaning of the text, models as the primary forms of representation, and variants as the different expressions that support the main meaning. Through these stages, the meaning of the expression of love is developed systematically based on textual data. This analysis is based on lyrical evidence and supported by relevant theoretical frameworks to ensure that the research findings remain objective and scientific (Rahman, 2022).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

This study found that the expression of love in the song *Ah W Noss* popularized by Nancy Ajram is built through several main emotional dimensions, namely patience, sacrifice, emotional protest, inner exhaustion, and resilience. These findings answer the research question by showing that love in songs is not conveyed directly, but rather through symbolic and indirect language that reflects the complexity of a woman's emotional experiences in an unbalanced relationship. Using Michael Riffaterre's semiotic framework, the analysis shows that song lyrics use various forms of indirect expression, such as metaphors, hyperbole, ambiguity, and rhetorical patterns. These linguistic elements create layered meanings that can only be fully understood through heuristic and hermeneutic readings. The findings of this study are limited to the analysis of this



particular song and are not intended to generalize all expressions of love in Arabic popular music.

The results of the analysis are presented systematically in the following table to illustrate the relationship between lyrical quotations, indirect expressions, and their semiotic interpretations:

Table 1. Riffaterre's semiotic analysis findings on the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss*

| No | Category                | Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Expression Impermanence | Three forms of indirect expression are identified: replace, distort, and create meaning. Metaphors such as "eyes" (تاخذ عيني كمان) symbolize total sacrifice; ambiguities such as "half-anger" (ازعل نص نص) indicate emotional negotiation; while the hyperbolic and rhetorical forms reinforce the emotional intensity. The dominant form is to create and distort meaning. |
| 2. | Heuristic Readings      | On a literal level, the lyrics describe an emotional interaction between two conflicted lovers. The female figure expresses irritation, invites reconciliation, and complains about her partner's behavior, while still maintaining her feelings of love.                                                                                                                    |
| 3. | Hermeneutic Readings    | On a deeper level of meaning, the lyrics represent a woman's emotional experience in an unbalanced relationship. Love is described as a struggle that involves a longing for stability, emotional exhaustion, an awareness of relational inequality, and the resilience to survive despite suffering.                                                                        |
| 4. | Matrix                  | The main matrix is "a love that endures in the midst of emotional imbalance and inner exhaustion."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 5. | Model                   | The main models include: patience (صبرت كم سنة), sacrifice (تاخذ عيني كمان), and emotional protest (expression of complaint and questioning tone). This model represents resilience, the totality of love, and an awareness of injustice.                                                                                                                                    |
| 6. | Varian                  | Variants that appear include time symbols (length of patience), emotional instability (anger and peace), and inner fatigue. These elements enrich the main meaning of love as a complex and exhausting emotional process.                                                                                                                                                    |

These findings suggest that the expression of love in *Ah W Noss* is constructed through a network of symbolic meanings that reflect emotional resilience. The female voice in the lyrics is not passive, but active in negotiating feelings of love, disappointment, and determination. Thus, this song presents love as a dynamic and layered emotional experience, not just a romantic feeling.

## Discussion

### The Expression of Love Represented in the Lyrics of the Song *Ah W Noss* through Riffaterre's Semiotic Analysis

Based on the results of the analysis, this study confirms that the expression of love in the song *Ah W Noss* is not represented as a simple emotion, but as a complex, ambivalent, and reflective experience. The love in this song involves patience, sacrifice, emotional protest, inner exhaustion, self-reflection, and women's emotional resilience in the face of an unbalanced relationship. This complexity is constructed through symbolic language and indirect expression, as described in Michael Riffaterre's theory of semiotics.

## The Form of Expression Indirectness in the Lyrics of the Song *Ah W Noss* by Nancy Ajram

In the theory of literary semiotics proposed by Michael Riffaterre, ungrammaticalities are the main mechanism that allows literary texts to convey meaning indirectly. Riffaterre states that literary language differs from everyday language because its meaning cannot be understood through literal reading alone. In contrast, literary texts hide meaning through various forms of language distortions that encourage the reader to engage in deeper interpretation.

This indirectness of expression generally appears in three main forms, namely displacing of meaning, distorting of meaning, and creating of meaning. Displacing occurs when a word or phrase is used to replace another meaning through metaphors or symbols. Distorting occurs when the literal meaning is distorted through irony, ambiguity, or contradiction. Meanwhile, creating of meaning arises when text forms new meanings through language play such as hyperbole, idioms, or symbolic associations that are not found in everyday language.

From a semiotic perspective, lyrics show the dominance of the indirectness of expression, especially creating and distorting meaning, which reinforces Riffaterre's theory that literary meaning arises through the distortion of language. The following table shows the form of expression indirectness:

Table 2. Analysis of Expression Impermanence per Verse in *Ah W Noss* Lyrics

| Bait | Arabic Lyrics                   | Types of Incontinence | Semiotic Analysis                                            | Symbolic Meaning                      |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1    | مفیش حاجة تیچی کده              | Displacing of Meaning | Love is represented as a process, not a spontaneous event    | Relationships require effort          |
| 1    | اهدا حبیبی کده وأرجع<br>زي زمان | Distorting of Meaning | A literal invitation that harbors emotional longing          | Desire for past stability             |
| 1    | تاخذ عینی کمان                  | Creating of Meaning   | Body hyperbole as an extreme symbol                          | Total sacrifice in love               |
| 2    | حبیبی قرب بص وبص<br>بص          | Displacing of Meaning | "Seeing" is interpreted as the need for inner attention      | Demands for emotional recognition     |
| 2    | ازعل نص نص                      | Distorting of Meaning | The ambiguity of anger is not intact                         | Compromise of feelings in conflict    |
| 2    | لأحسن هبعده، أبعد آه<br>ونص     | Creating of Meaning   | The formation of a new idiom about emotional distance        | Soft threats as a limit to patience   |
| 3    | لیه ده کل ده اخدت<br>علی کده؟   | Distorting of Meaning | A sarcastic rhetorical question                              | Protests against injustice            |
| 3    | تعبت یانا یانا لیالی<br>حیرانه  | Creating of Meaning   | Night as a metaphor for psychological anxiety                | Prolonged inner wounds                |
| 3    | اهدا بقی وكفاية حرام            | Distorting of Meaning | The shift in religious meaning to ethical-relational meaning | Awareness of the moral limits of love |
| 4    | دي حاجة متعبة اکمني             | Displacing of         | Kindness is                                                  | The irony of                          |

| Bait | Arabic Lyrics                | Types of Incontinence | Semiotic Analysis                             | Symbolic Meaning                       |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|      | طيبة                         | Meaning               | positioned as the cause of suffering          | women's patience                       |
| 4    | حبيبي شوف أنا صبرت<br>كم سنة | Distorting of Meaning | Patience as a symbol of life's time sacrifice | Steadfastness in unequal relationships |
| 4    | خدت وقت معايا كبير           | Creating of Meaning   | Time as a symbol of existential loss          | Love drains life                       |

Based on table 2, it can be concluded that the indirectness of expression in the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss* is dominated by the creation of meaning and distorting of meaning. The dominance of these two forms suggests that the song's text intensely constructs meaning through metaphors, hyperbole, ambiguity, and distortion of literal meaning. Thematically, the entire stanza depicts the steadfastness of a woman who survives in a relationship full of emotional conflicts. Despite facing disappointment, inner exhaustion, and injustice in relationships, the lyric characters still show the inner strength to love and maintain the relationship. Thus, love in this song is not only represented as a romantic feeling, but also as a struggle process that involves patience, sacrifice, and emotional resilience.

The structure of the indirectness of expression used in the lyrics of this song deepens the characterization of female characters while enriching the dimension of the meaning of the text. Through these language deviations, listeners not only understand relationship conflicts on the surface, but can also feel the psychological complexity experienced by the lyrical characters. This is in line with Riffaterre's view that poetic meaning in literary texts is formed through the process of interpretation of signs that deviate from literal language.

### Heuristic Reading and Hermeneutic Reading

In the framework of literary semiotics proposed by Michael Riffaterre, the process of interpreting literary texts is carried out through two stages of reading, namely heuristic reading and hermeneutic reading. Heuristic reading is the initial stage in understanding texts based on linguistic meanings that are literal or denotative. At this stage, the words are interpreted to understand the meaning of the text. The meaning obtained is mimetic, conveying information from the text to the reader, and is textual and referential in accordance with the language (Puspita Sari et al., 2024). The reader interprets the text according to the language system commonly used in everyday communication. In contrast, hermeneutic reading is a more in-depth stage of interpretation, in which the reader interprets the signs in the text to discover the symbolic meaning hidden behind the structure of the language. At the heuristic stage, the reader only captures the surface meaning of the text, while the actual understanding is obtained after a retroactive or hermeneutic reading (Raden Muhammad Ardiansyah Kurniawan et al., 2024).

In the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss* by Nancy Ajram, the two stages of reading show a shift in meaning from the level of simple emotional conversation to more complex psychological reflection. Heuristically, the lyrics of this song seem like an emotional dialogue between two lovers who are experiencing conflict in a relationship. However, when read hermeneutically, the text reveals the symbolic dimension of a woman's determination, disappointment, and self-reflection in the face of an unbalanced relationship.

Table 3. Heuristic to Hermeneutic Transformation in Every Stanza

| Bait | Main Lyrics                  | Heuristic Meaning                      | Hermeneutic Meaning                                |
|------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | اهدا حبيبي كده وأرجع زي زمان | Invitation to return to the way before | Longing for emotional stability that has been lost |
| 2    | ازعل نص نص                   | Half-hearted anger                     | Love that still endures despite conflict           |
| 3    | ليالي حيرانه                 | A confusing night                      | Symbols of loneliness and inner anguish            |
| 4    | خدت وقت معايا كبير           | Takes a long time                      | Existential loss and self-reflection               |

The transformation of meaning from a heuristic reading to a hermeneutic reading shows that each verse in the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss* undergoes a shift from literal meaning to more complex symbolic meaning. On a heuristic level, text appears to be an emotional conversation describing a conflict between two lovers. However, on a hermeneutic level, the text reveals a deeper psychological dimension of a woman's emotional experience in dealing with a strained relationship.

This movement of meaning shows that the relational conflicts depicted in the song are not only related to quarrels or differences of opinion, but also related to the process of self-reflection. The lyricist character gradually realizes his position in the relationship, including the sacrifices, patience, and time he has given. This process shows a transformation of consciousness from just an emotional reaction to a more reflective understanding of the meaning of the relationship itself. In addition, hermeneutic analysis also shows that the symbols used in the lyrics of this song such as nostalgia for the past, incomplete anger, confusing nights, and long periods of time form an emotional narrative about women's resilience and existential awareness. Thus, the lyrics of this song not only display sentimental romanticism, but also convey a subtle critique of unbalanced relationships.

Previous studies on the semiotics of Arabic song lyrics generally emphasize the use of romantic metaphors as a means of expressing feelings of love. However, the results of this analysis show that the symbolic structure in *Ah W Noss* does not only function as a romantic expression, but also as a medium of psychological reflection on complex love experiences. Therefore, a hermeneutic reading of the lyrics of this song reveals that the text contains an implicit criticism of unequal relationships while describing the process of self-awareness experienced by female characters in maintaining relationships.

### Matrix, Model, and Variants

In the approach to literary semiotics put forward by Michael Riffaterre, the structure of meaning in poetic texts is understood not only through linguistic elements that appear on the surface, but also through the relationships between matrices, models, and variants. These three elements form a system of signs that organize the entire meaning of the text.

Riffaterre explains that matrices are the essence of meaning that are abstract and do not always appear explicitly in the text. The matrix can be understood as a basic idea that is the center of gravity for all signs in literary works. Meanwhile, the model is the first concrete form that represents a matrix and usually appears in the form of a dominant expression or symbol in the text. Furthermore, variants are forms of



development of the model that emerge through various variations of expression in the text, thus enriching the structure of meaning constructed by the work.

In the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss* by Nancy Ajram, the relationship between the matrix, the model, and the variant shows that all signs in the text point to one center of meaning, namely love that persists despite emotional wounds and relationship inequality. This structure shows that the romanticism in the song not only expresses feelings of love sentimentally, but also depicts the psychological dynamics of a woman trying to maintain a relationship in the midst of conflict and emotional injustice.

Table 4. Matrix, Model, and Variants in *Ah W Noss Lyrics*

| Element         | Representative Lyrics         | Structural Function   | Meaning                |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Matrix          | (Implicit in the entire byte) | Basic idea            | True love yet painful  |
| Patience Model  | صبرت كم سنة                   | Main patterns         | Women's steadfastness  |
| Time Variant    | خدت وقت معايا كبير            | Model development     | Loss of life           |
| Sacrifice Model | تاخذ عيني كمان                | Half of the symbolism | The totality of love   |
| Protest Model   | ليه ده كل ده                  | Question pattern      | Awareness of injustice |

Analysis of the matrix, model, and variants shows that the semiotic structure in the lyrics of the song *Ah W Noss* forms a complex emotional narrative of a woman's love experience. A matrix centered on painful love generates various symbolic models such as patience, sacrifice, and protest. These models then develop into variants of meaning that reveal the dimensions of time, loss, and self-reflection.

This structure confirms that the love in the song is not portrayed as passive or idealistic romanticism. On the contrary, the text presents the female figure as a reflective subject and aware of the emotional dynamics in the relationship she is living. She is aware of the wounds and inequities in the relationship, but still maintains her emotional integrity through patience and perseverance. Thus, through a complex semiotic structure, *Ah W Noss* serves not only as a representation of popular music, but also as a space for the expression of the emotional experiences of modern women. The lyrics describe how women face relationship conflicts with strong self-awareness, so the song can be understood as a symbolic form of articulation of emotional resistance to unbalanced relationships.

### The Meaning of Love in the Song *Ah W Noss* as a Reflection of a Woman's Steadfastness

Based on the overall findings of the analysis, the meaning of love in the song *Ah W Noss* cannot be understood as a mere sentimental romantic expression, but rather as a complex and reflective emotional construction. Love in this song represents an ambivalent experience, which presents closeness as well as fatigue, loyalty as well as inequality, and hope that goes hand in hand with disappointment. This complexity suggests that love is not a static condition, but rather a dynamic process that involves continuous emotional negotiation.

In Michael Riffaterre's semiotic framework, the meaning is formed through the indirectness of expression that allows the text to convey a message symbolically. The figurative language, hyperbole, ambiguity, and metaphor that appear in the lyrics not only serve as aesthetic ornaments, but become the main mechanism in establishing the meaning of love as a psychological experience. Thus, the love in this song is not conveyed literally, but through the transformation of the sign that leads to a deeper meaning.

Interpretively, love in *Ah W Noss* can be understood through several main dimensions. First, love as patience, which is reflected in the resilience of female characters in facing recurring conflicts. Patience in this context not only indicates an attitude of acceptance, but also a form of emotional resilience that allows individuals to persist in non-ideal relationships. Second, love as a sacrifice, which is interpreted as the totality of self-giving, both emotionally and existentially. This sacrifice is not always positive, but it also contains consequences in the form of a slow loss of oneself. Third, love as an emotional protest, which shows that female characters are not completely passive, but rather have a critical awareness of injustice in relationships. Fourth, love as an inner fatigue, which indicates psychological pressure due to an unbalanced relationship. Finally, love as resilience, which is the ability to survive while reflecting on the experiences lived.

These five dimensions show that love in this song is not only a feeling, but also a process of self-reflection. Female characters are portrayed not only as experiencing emotions, but also interpreting, evaluating, and realizing their position in relationships. This signifies a transformation from emotional experience to existential awareness. In other words, love in this song serves as a space for the formation of self-meaning. From the perspective of literary and cultural studies, this representation has important implications for the construction of women in Arabic popular music. If in many popular narratives women are often placed as passive objects in love relationships, then this song actually presents women as active, reflective, and resilient subjects. He not only accepts the situation, but also articulates dissatisfaction, sets emotional boundaries, and shows awareness of the unbalanced dynamics of relationships. Thus, the steadfastness displayed is not a form of weakness, but rather an expression of complex inner strength.

This finding also expands on the results of previous research that tended to place song lyrics as a medium of expression of romance. In this study, love is understood as an ambivalent and multidimensional phenomenon. This shows that Riffaterre's semiotic approach is not only effective in uncovering symbolic meaning, but also able to explain the psychological dimension in popular literary texts, especially song lyrics. However, this study has limitations because it only focuses on one song. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the object of study, for example by comparing several songs by Nancy Ajram, examining listeners' reception of lyrics, or integrating lyric analysis with musical and visual elements such as melodies and music videos. This more comprehensive approach is expected to provide a broader understanding of the construction of meaning in popular music.

The song *Ah W Noss* represents love as an emotional experience that is not simple, but rather as a process full of conflict, reflection, and resilience. Through a complex semiotic structure, this song not only conveys a love story, but also presents a cultural reflection on women's emotional strength in dealing with relationship dynamics. Thus, this study confirms that the lyrics of popular songs can be a rich and relevant text to be studied in semiotics and literary perspectives.

## CONCLUSION

This research answers the formulation of the problem by showing that the expression of love in the song *Ah W Noss* by Nancy Ajram is constructed through the impermanence of expression and the layered semiotic structure. Through Michael Riffaterre's semiotic approach, the results of the study reveal that love is not conveyed literally, but through symbolic language dominated by the creation of meaning and distorting of meaning, such as metaphor, hyperbole, and ambiguity.

The analysis shows that through heuristic and hermeneutic readings, song lyrics evolve from emotional conversations on the surface to deeper psychological reflections

on women's experiences. Love in this song is represented as a complex emotional process that involves patience, sacrifice, emotional protest, inner exhaustion, and steadfastness in an unbalanced relationship. Analysis of matrices, models, and variants further confirms that the main meaning of the text centers on a love that persists despite being confronted with conflict and emotional inequality.

This research contributes to the study of literature and semiotics by showing that the Riffaterre framework is effective in revealing the layered meanings of popular song lyrics, especially in representing women as active and reflective subjects. However, this research was limited to one song. Therefore, further research is recommended to compare some of Nancy Ajram's songs, examine listeners' interpretations, or integrate analysis of musical and visual elements such as melodies and music videos to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

## THE STATEMENT OF USING AI TOOLS

The researcher acknowledges the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the process of academic writing, particularly for language improvement, grammar checking, paraphrasing, and organizing ideas. The use of AI was limited to assisting the writing process and did not replace the researcher's original analysis, interpretation, or critical thinking. All arguments, findings, and conclusions presented in this study remain the sole responsibility of the researcher. The researcher also ensured that the use of AI tools complied with academic integrity and ethical writing standards.

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