



The Significance of Song Lyrics in Braga MGNDW's Album Kembara Jiwa: A Semiotic Study by Michael Riffaterre

Wahyudistira Moki^{1*}, Sitti Rachmi Masie², Zilfa Achmad Bagtayan³

¹²³Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia

*E-mail: wahyudistira1999@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the significance of nine song lyrics in Braga MGNDW's album Kembara Jiwa through heuristic and hermeneutic readings and to formulate the central matrix that binds the album as a whole. The study was conducted in Gorontalo in 2026 using a qualitative descriptive approach. The corpus comprises Senandung Pembuka Jalan, Jalan Hidup, Nasib dan Takdir, Kembar Jiwa, Sedih Akan Pergi, Kelana, Subuh, Pulang yang Paling Pulang, and Rayakan. The researcher and data cards functioned as research instruments by recording lexical elements, indirect expressions, hypograms, variants, models, matrices, and significance. Data were collected through careful listening, transcription, documentation, and lyric verification with the band. The analysis proceeded through heuristic reading, hermeneutic reading, identification of actual and potential hypograms, and formulation of variants, models, and matrices. The heuristic findings show that the lyrics employ diction related to journeys, wounds, hope, longing, home, mother, light, and acceptance, supported by metaphor, personification, natural symbols, and semantic oppositions. Hermeneutically, the album constructs a progressive narrative of departure, self-formation, struggle with fate, relational harmony, transformation of suffering, perseverance, contemplation, homecoming, and acceptance of life. The individual matrices converge into a central matrix: the existential dimensions of human life. Kembara Jiwa therefore positions local song lyrics as poetic texts that represent the inner journey through which human beings understand, confront, and give meaning to their lives.

Keywords: significance, song lyrics, album kembara jiwa, semiotic study

Signifikansi Lirik Lagu dalam Album Kembara Jiwa Karya Braga MGNDW: Kajian Semiotika Michael Riffaterre

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan signifikansi sembilan lirik lagu dalam album Kembara Jiwa karya Braga MGNDW melalui pembacaan heuristik dan hermeneutik serta merumuskan inti matriks yang mengikat keseluruhan album. Penelitian dilaksanakan di Gorontalo pada 2026 dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Korpus penelitian terdiri atas lirik lagu Senandung Pembuka Jalan, Jalan Hidup, Nasib dan Takdir, Kembar Jiwa, Sedih Akan Pergi, Kelana, Subuh, Pulang yang Paling Pulang, dan Rayakan. Instrumen penelitian adalah peneliti dan kartu data yang memuat unsur leksikal, ketidaklangsungan ekspresi, hipogram, varian, model, matriks, dan signifikansi. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyimakan, transkripsi, dokumentasi, serta verifikasi lirik kepada pihak band. Analisis dilakukan secara bertahap melalui pembacaan heuristik, pembacaan hermeneutik, penelusuran hipogram aktual dan potensial, serta perumusan varian, model, dan matriks. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa secara heuristik kesembilan lagu menggunakan diksi perjalanan, luka, harapan, rindu, rumah, ibu, terang, dan penerimaan dengan metafora, personifikasi, simbol alam, serta oposisi makna. Secara hermeneutik, album membentuk narasi progresif tentang keberangkatan, pembentukan diri, pergulatan dengan nasib, keselarasan relasi, transformasi penderitaan, keteguhan, kontemplasi, kepulangan, dan penerimaan hidup. Matriks setiap lagu bergerak menuju satu matriks utama, yaitu dimensi eksistensial manusia. Album Kembara Jiwa dengan demikian memosisikan lirik lagu lokal sebagai teks puitik yang merepresentasikan perjalanan batin manusia dalam memahami, menghadapi, dan memaknai kehidupannya.

Kata kunci: signifikansi, lirik lagu, album kembara jiwa, kajian semiotika

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PENDAHULUAN

The development of contemporary music shows that songs are no longer merely understood as entertainment enjoyed through sound, rhythm, and melody. Lyrics within songs serve as a crucial platform for songwriters to convey experiences, feelings, anxieties, criticisms, hopes, and outlooks on life. Contemporary song lyrics, particularly those of independent musicians, often display a close affinity with poetry. This closeness is evident in the use of dense diction, accompanied by elements of metaphor, symbolism, imagery, repetition of sounds, and expressions that are not always readily understood. Therefore, songs can be heard not only as musical works but also as texts with profound meaning.

The closeness of song lyrics to poetry lies in the use of language as the primary medium for conveying inner experiences. Poetry condenses experiences through word choice and the arrangement of signs, while lyrics combine this compression of language with musical elements. Luxemburg et al. (1986) define lyrics as texts that can contain structure and meaning, similar to literary works. Teeuw (1984:56) also links songs to the oral literary tradition because they contain rhythm, rhyme, and symbolic meaning. Therefore, lyrics can be read not as a complement to music, but as poetic texts with layers of meaning.

The development of independent music expands these possibilities. Independent musicians have relatively more freedom to explore themes of everyday experiences, spirituality, local identity, collective memory, and the anxieties of the younger generation without completely following mainstream industry patterns. This freedom often leads to more personal and experimental language in independent music lyrics. Within them, local experiences can become universal issues, as simple events such as walking, getting hurt, missing home, remembering one's mother, or celebrating an achievement are transformed into signs of human existence.

Braga MGNDW is an independent music group from Bolaang Mongondow, North Sulawesi, that exemplifies this tendency. The group emerged

from the friendships of its members and grew through alternative spaces in Kotamobagu. The name MGNDW emphasizes their connection to Mongondow, while their works reconcile regional cultural experiences with broader spiritual issues. The album "Kembara Jiwa," released in 2024, consists of nine songs: *Senandung Pembuka Jalan* (Opening the Way), *Jalan Hidup* (Life Path), *Fate and Destiny* (Fate and Destiny), *Kembar Jiwa* (Sadness to Go), *Kelana* (Travel), *Subuh* (Dawn), *Pulang yang Paling Pulang* (Homecoming), and *Celebrate* (Celebrate). These nine songs are not simply a collection of works placed on one album, but demonstrate the continuity of the theme of life's journey.

The title "Kembara Jiwa" (Soul's Wanderer) hints from the outset that the journey discussed is not solely geographical. The word "wandera" refers to movement, displacement, and search, while "jiwa" (soul) directs this movement into the inner space. This is evident through the use of signs such as "road," "storm," "darkness," "light," "wound," "dream," "dawn," "home," "longing," "mother," "homecoming," and "celebrate." These signs have literal meanings, but at the same time, they reveal connotative meanings. "Road" can indicate the trajectory of life, a storm can symbolize trials, dawn can be a space of transition, home can signify a source of acceptance, and "homecoming" can be read as a return to one's most fundamental identity and love.

The problem is, interpretations of the lyrics often stop at general moral messages. Songs about travel are easily interpreted as calls to struggle, songs about sadness are seen as merely comforting the wounded, while songs about returning home are understood simply as longing for one's place of origin. Such readings fail to explain how poetic language transforms literal meaning into significance, how one sign relates to another, and how the nine songs form a single center of meaning. Therefore, an approach is needed that can read the structure of language while simultaneously investigating intertextual relationships and transformations of meaning.



Michael Riffaterre's semiotics was chosen because it was specifically formulated for reading poetic texts. Riffaterre (1978:1) states that poetry says one thing but means another. The difference between what is said and what is meant arises through indirectness of expression, namely substitution, distortion, and creation of meaning. Readers first use linguistic competence through heuristic reading, then reread retroactively or hermeneutically using literary competence. Through this process, readers explore hypograms, variants, models, and matrices as centers of significance formation.

Several studies have applied Riffaterre's semiotics to poetry and song lyrics. Saputra (2020) examined four lyrics from Aimer's album Penny Rain and found rain symbols associated with despair, sadness, and unfulfilled desires. Fitri (2017) read Mukuchina Lion's lyrics through the concepts of *honne* and *tatemae* and identified a conflict between personal feelings and social attitudes. Syafethi (2016) used heuristic, hermeneutic, model, matrix, variant, and hypogram readings to uncover affection as the central meaning of the poem "An die Freude." Muchti (2017) demonstrated that heuristic and hermeneutic readings can distinguish linguistic meaning from poetic meaning in Chairil Anwar's poetry.

These studies demonstrate the accuracy of Riffaterre's theory in uncovering the meaning of poetic texts, but generally focus on one or several texts analyzed in parallel. This study offers a different perspective by reading all the songs in a single album as an interconnected narrative structure. The novelty of this research lies not only in the object, the local musical work of Mongondow, but also in the effort to synthesize the matrix of each song into the album's main matrix. Thus, the album is understood as a whole, progressively moving sign, not simply a collection of songs that coincidentally share a similar theme.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated in two questions. First, how is the significance of the nine song lyrics on the

album "Kembara Jiwa" examined through heuristic and hermeneutic readings? Second, what is the significance of the core matrix formed by all the songs on the album?

This study aims to describe the significance at the linguistic and semiotic levels and to formulate the main matrix that binds the nine songs. Theoretically, the research findings are expected to expand the application of Riffaterre's semiotics to album structure. Practically, this research is expected to encourage critical reading of local music lyrics and demonstrate that the works of regional musicians are worthy of being objects of literary study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Song Lyrics as Poetic Texts

Song lyrics are the verbal part of a musical work. Although bound by tempo, melody, and musical pattern, lyrics are still shaped through language choices. The words in the lyrics function not only to convey information but also to construct atmosphere, lyrical sound, emotional connections, and imaginative worlds. Ratna (2009:118) emphasizes that lyrics are worthy of being read as literary texts because they have expressive, representative, and ideological dimensions. In this sense, lyrics can represent experiences while simultaneously shaping the listener's perspective on them.

The poetics of lyrics is not determined by the abundance of figurative language alone, but by the way language shifts everyday meanings toward more complex ones. The phrases "the path of life," "the wandering of the soul," "the storm is crashing," "the homecoming is the homecoming," or "the bright soul is the sun" are still linguistically recognizable, but the relationships between the words create incongruities when read literally. This incongruity, in fact, becomes the entry point for interpretation. In this context, lyrics intersect with poetry because both require readers who are able to connect word meaning, text structure, literary conventions, and cultural knowledge.

Michael Riffaterre's Semiotics

Semiotics studies signs, the signifying process, and the relationship between the form they represent and what they refer to. Saussure laid the foundation through the relationship between signifier and signified, Peirce explained the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant, while Barthes developed the levels of denotation and connotation. However, Riffaterre focused specifically on the production of meaning in poetry. According to Riffaterre (1978), poetic language is indirect because the surface meaning is not identical to the significance of the text.

This indirectness of expression is formed through three mechanisms. First, meaning displacement occurs when a sign shifts from a literal to a figurative meaning, particularly through metaphor and metonymy. Second, meaning distortion occurs in ambiguity, contradiction, or seemingly illogical expressions. Third, meaning creation occurs when sound arrangement, repetition, typography, parallelism, or structural relationships produce meanings not available in individual words (Lantowaet al., 2017:9). These three mechanisms create ungrammaticality, forcing readers to abandon mimetic reading.

Heuristic reading is the first stage of reading based on linguistic conventions. Words, phrases, and sentences are returned to their grammatical structure to understand the surface meaning. In this process, readers can add clarifying words, rearrange inversions, or choose appropriate lexical meanings. Pradopo (1999:76-84) explains that heuristic reading moves according to normative grammar and produces diffuse meanings.

Hermeneutic or retroactive reading is the second stage of reading. The reader returns to the beginning of the text, bringing with them an understanding gained from the overall structure. Signs that initially appeared separate are then read as transformations from a common center of meaning. At this stage, meaning is no longer the sum of word meanings, but rather a unity of significance. Relationships between light and dark, wound and healing, going and returning, or sadness and happiness, for example, not only indicate

opposition but can also form patterns of inner change.

A hypogram is the setting that allows poetic signs to acquire meaning. A potential hypogram is not necessarily a specific text but can take the form of presuppositions, clichés, value systems, cultural experiences, or collective knowledge. An actual hypogram refers to texts that can be concretely recognized as intertextual. Exploring hypograms is not intended to suggest that one work copies another, but rather to discern how a text enters a broader network of meaning. Santosa, as quoted by Maulana & Akbar (2025:7771), emphasizes that literary works are read through their relationship to texts that precede, are contemporary with, or follow them.

Variants, models, and matrices describe the movement from concrete forms to semantic cores. Variants are the development of various signs within a text. Models are the most representative actualizations of matrices and usually appear in the form of more concrete words, phrases, or sentences. The matrix is an abstract core that is not always written directly, but gives rise to all the transformations in the text. In this study, this concept is carefully expanded: the matrix for each song is first formulated, then the relationships between matrices are examined to discover the album's main matrix.

Relevant Research and Research Position

The research by Saputra (2020), Fitri (2017), and Syafethi (2016) shares methodological similarities because they all utilize Riffaterre's stages. The differences lie in the object and breadth of the synthesis. Saputra examines a Japanese album but emphasizes four lyrics and the symbol of rain. Fitri relates one song to Japanese socio-cultural concepts. Syafethi examines a classical poem and finds sincere affection as a matrix. All three reinforce the importance of the relationship between linguistic meaning, the indirectness of expression, and intertextual context.

This study places nine lyrics by Braga MGNDW as a single corpus. Each song remains analyzed as a text with its own structure, but the



results do not stop at partial conclusions. The matrix of transformation, self-formation, reflection, harmony, steadfastness, contemplation, return, and acceptance are read as stages in a single journey. This position allows the discussion to move from the microstructure of signs to the macrostructure of the album. In addition to expanding the use of theory, the study also provides academic space for local music from Eastern Indonesia, which has not been widely discussed in literary research.

METODE

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Yuliani (2018:85), Razak (2017:176) stated that qualitative methods are commonly used in social research such as literature. This approach was chosen because the research data consists of words, phrases, lines, stanzas, and relationships between signs that require interpretation, not statistical measurement. The focus of the research is the process of establishing significance in texts. Therefore, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, determining data units, conducting repeated readings, connecting signs, and testing the consistency of interpretations.

The research was conducted in Gorontalo in 2026. The research corpus includes all lyrics from the album "Kembara Jiwa" by Braga MGNDW. The nine songs were selected in total, rather than through sampling, because the album demonstrates thematic continuity and narrative sequence. The primary data source consisted of authentic lyric documents obtained and verified with the band. Song recordings were used as supporting sources to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions, line repetitions, and stanza boundaries. Secondary sources consisted of books and articles on semiotics, poetry, intertextuality, and existentialism, which were used to strengthen the interpretation.

Data collection was conducted through documentation. The first stage was careful listening to the nine songs to gain a general understanding of the album's themes and continuity. The second

stage was to transcribe the lyrics as heard. The third stage was to compare the transcription results with the lyrics document from Braga MGNDW to minimize word errors, omitted lines, or differences in verse order. The fourth stage was to mark words, phrases, lines, and verses containing dominant diction, metaphors, personification, natural symbols, repetition, contradictions, and other forms of indirectness.

Supporting instruments consisted of data cards containing song codes, data numbers, limited quotations, heuristic reading results, hermeneutic reading results, potential and actual hypograms, variants, models, matrices, and significance. The coding used the abbreviations SPJ for Senandung Pembuka Jalan (Opening the Path), JH for Jalan Hidup (Life Path), NDT for Fate and Destiny (Fate and Destiny), KJ for Kembar Jiwa (Seven Souls), SAP for Sedih Akan Pergi (Sad to Go), KLN for Kelana (Wanderer), SBH for Subuh (Dawn), PPP for Pulang yang Paling Pulang (Homecoming Most Coming Home), and RYK for Celebrate. HRS codes were used for heuristic data, HRM for hermeneutics, HP&HA for hypograms, and V, MD, and MT for variants, models, and matrices.

Data analysis was conducted in five stages. First, a heuristic reading was conducted by interpreting lexical meanings and normalizing sentence structures. At this stage, findings were grouped into lexical, aesthetic, ideological, and cultural elements so that surface meanings were recorded not only as word definitions but also as linguistic tendencies. Second, a hermeneutic reading was conducted retroactively by reviewing the relationships between verses and the song as a whole. Third, potential hypograms were explored through collective value systems and knowledge, while actual hypograms were selected based on their congruence with other relevant texts. Fourth, dominant signs were organized as variants, then reduced to a model and matrix. Fifth, a matrix of the nine songs was synthesized to test the existence of the album's central meaning.

The validity of interpretation is maintained through diligent reading, re-examination of the authentic text, consistency between data and

conclusions, and theoretical triangulation. A matrix is ??acceptable if it can explain all major variants without leaving out equally strong competing centers of meaning. At the album level, the main matrix is ??not determined solely based on vocabulary similarities, but on the progression of relationships between matrices. This procedure limits interpretation so that it does not rely solely on the researcher's subjective impressions.

RESULTS

1. Significance of Heuristic and Hermeneutic Reading

The results show that heuristic reading produces a series of meanings centered on the human journey, while hermeneutic reading transforms this series into stages of an inner journey. The dictionaries "jalan," "jalan," "jalan," "jalan," "jalan," "jalan," "rumah," "ujung," "buruang," "buruh," and "upstream" form the semantic field of movement. The dictionaries "luka," "sorrow," "daring," "daring," "dalam," "damai," "dalam," "dalam," "damai," "hidup" (wound), "damai," "dalam," "dalam," "harapan" (dark), "harapan," "damai," "dalam," "dalam," "dalam," "dalam," "lestar" (sorrow), "harapan" (silence), "dalam," and "tired" form the semantic field of crisis. Meanwhile, "harapan," "merah," "rumah," "bahagia," and "lestarikan" form the semantic field of recovery. The relationship between these three semantic fields is not random, but develops from departure to acceptance.

1.1 Opening the Path

Heuristically, the song "Senandung Pembuka Jalan" (Opening the Path) contains an invitation to wander and discover life. The journey is accompanied by stories, mantras, prayers, darkness, light, wind, constellations, birth, hope, obstacles, storms, and the sun. The literal meaning depicts a person who must move through contradictory conditions. Natural elements serve as both guides and illustrations of challenges. The repetition of the invitation forms positions the lyrical voice as a source of encouragement to those about to embark on a journey.

Hermeneutically, wandering does not refer solely to physical movement, but to the process of entering life with a willingness to face unknown experiences. Darkness and light serve as oppositions that govern the entire text; darkness represents wounds, confusion, and trials, while light represents the awareness achieved through these processes. The song's model is formulated as a life journey toward inner enlightenment. The variations of movement, guidance, hope, obstacles, healing, and light are reduced to a matrix of human inner transformation toward awareness.

1.2 The Path of Life

A heuristic reading of "Jalan Hidup" depicts humans walking, wandering, climbing mountains, crossing oceans, working, creating, forging friendships, and remembering their parents' prayers. Life is literally depicted as a long, winding journey. Glory is said to be temporary, while work, friendship, and inherited values take on greater importance. These signs indicate that the lyrical subject does not walk alone, but is supported by social and spiritual relationships.

A hermeneutic reading transforms the journey into a process of self-formation. Natural challenges mark tests that broaden experience, friends signify social support, and parents' prayers serve as a moral foundation. The song's model is the human journey through struggle, togetherness, and life's values. All variations point to the matrix of the process of human self-formation through the journey of life experienced and lived. The self does not exist as something finished from the beginning, but is shaped by work, relationships, failures, successes, and an awareness of mortality.

1.3 Fate and Destiny

Heuristically, Fate and Destiny evokes silence, dreams, memories, chaotic thoughts, unfulfilled desires, and the anxiety of seeing life slipping away from one's grasp. In the final section, the lyrical subject expresses a rejection of a life that resembles death and asserts that life is in one's hands. The superficial meaning reveals the conflict between



accepted limitations and the will to maintain direction.

Hermeneutically, fate and destiny are not two concepts that render humans completely passive. They serve as existential boundaries that provoke reflection on the parts of life that cannot be controlled and those that can still be fought for. The song's model is formulated as a human's inner struggle to understand life's journey between hope and destiny. The matrix is ??a human's inner reflection through the struggle with fate and destiny in defining life. The phrase "live" in both hands marks the point of change from urgency to agency.

1.4 Twin Souls

Heuristically, *Twin Souls* depicts the encounter of two people who navigate narrow and open times, days, dark nights, wounds, searches, moonlight, serenity, love, loyalty, and gratitude. Relationships exist as a space for healing wounds and illuminating the path. The expression of an expansive heart and twin souls creates an oddity when read literally because the heart has no physical size and the soul does not actually have a twin.

A hermeneutic reading suggests that twin souls are a sign of relationships that help humans recognize themselves. Relationships are not only a source of happiness, but also a field of testing, solitude, searching, and acceptance. The song's model is a journey of inner relationships that develop through experience, are tested by suffering, find harmony of soul, and culminate in acceptance of life. Its matrix is ??inner harmony as a result of the process of understanding life. Thus, wholeness is not achieved in isolation, but through relationships that allow wounds to be acknowledged and love to be received.

1.5 Sadness Will Go

Heuristically, *Sadness Will Go* constructs the oppositions of brokenness and growth, rise and fall, darkness and light, sadness and happiness, storm and brightness, and wounds and

hope. The world is depicted as vibrant, but within it lies a miserable human being. The lines about suffering becoming a story and grief giving meaning demonstrate the changing function of negative experiences. The surface meaning contains the urge to ignite faith, broaden the heart, and wait for change.

Hermeneutically, sadness is not understood as a state that automatically disappears with time. Sadness becomes meaningful when humans process it through awareness, hope, and acceptance. The song's model is an inner journey from the dynamics of life and suffering to meaning, recovery, and happiness. The matrix is ??the meaning of life as a process of inner transformation. The opposition in the text does not divide experiences into absolute good and bad, but rather shows that suffering can be material for the formation of consciousness.

1.6 Kelana

A heuristic reading of *Kelana* depicts a journey in the open field, the seeds of dreams, shifting tracks, winding times, steep roads, a tired soul, complaints, heat, rain, friends who turn away, a cart, night, morning, and a stock of stories. The subject does not know the end of the journey, but is still asked to be patient and make an effort. Literally, the song depicts a wanderer who has lost certainty of direction and some of his companions.

Hermeneutically, uncertainty is a fundamental condition of life, not a temporary disruption that must be completely eliminated. Pauses are understood as a way of maintaining resilience, while the tracks and carts signify the continuity of movement. The song's model is a life journey faced with the determination to move forward amidst hardship, loss, and uncertainty. The matrix is ??the steadfastness of continuing life amidst uncertainty. Its significance lies not in the certainty of arrival, but in the ability to maintain movement and hope.

1.7 Dawn

Heuristically, *Dawn* presents dimness, a dazed body, longing, cold, a lost soul, a long journey, a river without a headwater, fog, the moon, silent time, stones crumbling to ash, a mother's hand, and a storm of the soul. The literal meaning establishes a silent

atmosphere as night transitions into morning. The subject is in a state of confusion and intense longing, then finds peace through the light and touch of a mother.

A hermeneutic reading positions Dawn as a threshold space between darkness and light. Silence allows humans to listen to their inner selves, while rivers without headwaters and fog mark the experience of losing their origin and purpose. Stones turning to ashes signify the decay of ego violence. The song's theme is a contemplative process that begins with silence and confusion, leading to awareness, ego dissolution, recovery, and serenity. The matrix is ??inner awareness through self-contemplation.

1.8 The Most Homecoming

In a heuristic reading, the song "Pulang yang Paling Pulang" presents roars, doubts, the wilderness of time, the jungle of life, longing, wounded steps, stepping aside, promises of return, whispers of the heart, journeys, home, and a mother's smile. The lyrics greet Puan and Tuan, who have traveled far, reminding them to return. Literally, "going home" appears as a journey to the home where mother awaits.

Hermeneutically, the most homecoming transcends spatial displacement. The wilderness and jungle signify human alienation within the complexities of life, while longing serves as a force that guides humans back to their center. The song's theme is an inner journey from anxiety and alienation through reflection to finding home as a return to the source of love. The matrix is ??the human inner tendency to return to the source of love as the center of life's meaning. The mother becomes a concrete symbol of unconditional acceptance, origin, and wholeness.

1.9 Celebrate

Heuristically, Celebrate contains an invitation to celebrate life, even the smallest achievements, the journey, growth, and good days. Humans are asked to let go of shackles, pause, let fatigue subside, continue growing, and smile. The diction of singing and toasting adds a collective nuance.

The superficial meaning suggests celebration not only for major successes, but also for small, often overlooked processes.

A hermeneutic reading shows that celebration is an inner attitude, not merely a ceremony. Humans can celebrate after acknowledging the burden, giving space for rest, and accepting the unfinished journey. The song's model is the awareness to accept, appreciate, and celebrate achievements, journeys, and growth as part of the meaning of life. The matrix is ??the meaning of life through acceptance of the entire process of life. The song closes the album with the affirmation that the value of existence does not depend solely on the final outcome.

2. Indirect Expression Patterns and Hypograms

The indirect expression in the nine songs is primarily formed through the substitution of meaning. The metaphor of the journey is the most dominant pattern: life is treated as a path, the soul as a wanderer, dreams as seeds, trials as storms, and consciousness as light. This substitution of meaning transforms objects and natural events into signs of inner experience. Wandering, which literally means moving from one region to another, transforms into a process of self-discovery. Storms, which are weather symptoms, transform into life's pressures. The sun and rainbows, which are literally natural phenomena, become signs of enlightenment and hope. This dominance of metaphors demonstrates that the existential experiences in the album are not explained conceptually, but presented through imagery close to the reader's sensory experience.

The divergence of meaning is present through ambiguity and contradiction. The words "fate," "home," "longing," "upstream," and "home" can refer to more than one referent. "Home" can mean returning to one's home, returning to one's mother, returning to one's identity, or returning to inner peace. Contradictions emerge when the text juxtaposes narrowness with spaciousness, darkness with light, brokenness with growth, collapse with awakening, sadness with happiness, and a long journey with a return. This contradiction does not



invalidate meaning, but rather indicates that life is composed of contradictory experiences. Ambiguity also prevents the reader from hastily assigning a single meaning. They must test the meaning of each sign against other verses and the song's position within the album.

Meaning is created through repetition, parallelism, song sequence, and the relationship between symbols. The repetition of the word "Celebrate" transforms a simple command into a collective affirmation. The repetition of the diction "jalan," "hidup," "jiwa," "tinggal," and "pulang" from one song to the next builds the album's cohesion. The parallelism of dark and light and sad and happy emphasizes the movement of change, while the song sequence generates meanings that neither text possesses individually. "Senandung Pembuka Jalan" (Singing Opener of the Road) functions as an opening not only because of its title, but also because its variations introduce the path, hope, obstacles, and light that are then developed by subsequent songs. Thus, meaning creation occurs at the level of the lines, songs, and album.

The potential hypogram of the nine songs is rooted in the cultural assumption that life is a journey. This assumption gives rise to a number of presuppositions: the living must move; the journey presents obstacles; the wounded need healing; Humans need relationships with others; those far away harbor longing; and returning home leads to a place of acceptance. These presuppositions are not expressed as theories in the lyrics, but rather become shared knowledge that allows the signs to be understood. Family values ??also form a potential hypogram through the prayers of parents, the hands of a mother, the home, and the smile of a mother. In this context, family is not merely present as a social setting, but as a source of values and inner orientation.

Another potential hypogram relates to spiritual notions of prayer, light, silence, and acceptance. The mantras and prayers in the opening song indicate that the journey requires a transcendent dimension. Dawn represents a time culturally and religiously associated with silence, worship, and new beginnings. Moonlight, sun, and morning

connect the change of time with a shift in consciousness. While the album does not directly convey religious doctrine, the vocabulary activates the reader's understanding of the relationship between silence, reflection, hope, and help that transcends individual strength.

Actual hypograms are used selectively to test and expand interpretations. Texts addressing struggle, dreams, ease after hardship, self-discovery, relationships, and homecoming demonstrate similarities with the lyrics. This connection does not mean that Braga MGNDW adopts a particular structure directly from a single work. Actual hypograms function as a space for dialogue: the similarity of ideas indicates that the experiences expressed in the album are within a broader tradition of meaning. Therefore, intertextual exploration always returns to the lyrical structure. A comparative text is only relevant if it helps explain the actual variations and does not force the song to follow the flow of another work.

In *Senandung Pembuka Jalan* (Opening the Road) and *Jalan Hidup* (Life Path), the hypograms of journey and struggle reinforce the meaning of courage to begin and the process of self-formation. In *Nasib and Takdir* (Fate and Destiny), the hypograms of freedom and limitations clarify the conflict between what is accepted and what is pursued. *Kembar Jiwa* (Soul Twins) activates the hypogram of relationship as a space for mutual recognition. *Sedih Akan Pergi* (Sadness Will Go) and *Kelana* (Swan) relate to collective knowledge of suffering, hope, and endurance. *Subuh* (Fall) activates the hypograms of silence and self-reflection. *Pulang yang Paling Pulang* utilizes the hypograms of migration and maternal love, while *Celebrate* relates to the collective tradition of honoring journeys and achievements.

The hypogram findings demonstrate that the album's significance arises from the intersection of internal structure and the reader's knowledge. Internal structure provides the repetition of signs and the sequence of transformations, while the hypogram provides the horizon that makes those transformations comprehensible. Without internal structure, interpretation risks being too free-

flowing; without the hypogram, the meaning of the lyrics stops at literal references. The two work together in a retroactive process. The reader moves from the words to the entire song, from the song to the album, and then returns to the words with a renewed understanding.

3. The Core Matrix

The matrix of each song demonstrates a different focus, but these differences form a sequence that develops each other. *Senandung Pembuka Jalan* initiates the movement of transformation toward awareness. *Jalan Hidup* shows the formation of the self after humans embark on a journey. *Fate and Destiny* present boundaries and the tension between determination and will. *Kembar Jiwa* demonstrates that this process involves relationships. "*Sedih Akan Pergi*" transforms suffering into meaning, while "*Kelana*" maintains movement when direction is uncertain. *Subuh* presents reflection, *Pulang yang Paling Pulang* directs reflection to the source of love, and *Celebrate* transforms all experiences into acceptance.

This synthesis produces a central matrix: the existential dimension of humanity. The term "existential dimension" is not used to directly attach a specific philosophy to the lyrics, but rather to convey that the entire album speaks to the way humans exist in life. The human being in the album is not depicted as a finished subject. He moves, is shaped by experience, confronts limitations, needs others, is wounded, endures, reflects, returns, and accepts. This sequence allows the album to unfold and live as a complete inner narrative.

DISCUSSION

The Movement from Literal Meaning to Significance

The difference between heuristic and hermeneutic reading lies in the transformation of the sign's status, where symbols such as road, storm, and mother evolve from literal referents into structural metaphors for the process of existence (Riffaterre, 1978). This change is triggered by ungrammatical semantic clashes, such as the

phrase "going home most likely," which pushes the reader beyond denotative meaning and moves from linguistic competence to literary competence to discover the text's significance. This process of meaning-making is further strengthened by patterns of meaning oppositions, such as light and darkness, and going home and returning, which form a pattern of inner transformation, where acceptance arises from a complete recognition of the entire dynamics of preceding suffering. Ultimately, heuristic and hermeneutic reading are complementary: heuristic provides the linguistic foundation for anchoring interpretation in the text, while hermeneutic unites these meanings into a deeper, existential unity.

The Album as a Narrative of an Existential Journey

The existential matrix in this album is constructed sequentially through the inner development of each song, forming a circular yet progressive plot that transforms the subject's consciousness. The journey begins with "*Senandung Pembuka Jalan*" (Opening the Road) and "*Path of Life*," which position humans as active beings shaped by concrete actions. Existential tension then emerges in "*Fate and Destiny*," through the clash between freedom of response and the limitations of destiny, before being fleshed out by "*Kembar Jiwa*," which emphasizes that the search for meaning always requires a dialectical relationship with others.

Suffering is then transformed into sustained resilience through "*Sedih Akan Pergi*" (Sad to Go) and "*Kelana*," and then precipitated in the contemplative silence of "*Subuh*" (Summer), a song that restores the soul. The journey then finds its culmination in "*Pulang yang Paling Pulang*," which positions the mother figure and love as the root of identity and the most fundamental place of return. This entire chapter concludes fully with "*Celebrate*," through an active acceptance of life's limitations without losing joy. Ultimately, the return at the end of the album is not simply a return to the geographical starting point, but rather a transformation of consciousness in which humans



find themselves having evolved after giving meaning to every inch of their journey.

Hypograms, Intertextuality, and Collective Experience

The album's potential hypograms stem from the collective experience of life as a journey. The phrases "the path of life," "the storms of life," "the light of hope," "returning home," and "mother's love" have long been woven into language and culture. Braga MGNDW doesn't simply repeat these clichés but places them in new relationships. "The road" doesn't stand alone, but moves alongside the wanderings of the soul, fate, wandering, dawn, homecoming, and celebration. This network gives common expressions a distinctive album structure.

The actual hypograms in the research serve to reinforce possible meanings, not to determine a single, final interpretation. Religious texts about ease after hardship, literary works about struggle and dreams, and philosophical ideas about freedom and existence all resonate with a number of lyrics. These parallels help us understand the journey within the album as connected to a broader narrative tradition. However, the uniqueness of "Kembara Jiwa" lies in the way these experiences are articulated through the sensibilities of local musicians and the album's sequence.

Intertextuality also explains why the symbol of the mother carries such powerful emotional power. In many Indonesian cultural texts, the mother symbolizes origin, protection, sacrifice, and acceptance. In the album, this symbol appears primarily in "Dawn" (Sunrise) and "Pulang yang Paling Pulang" (Homecoming), connecting contemplation with homecoming. The symbol of the mother does not need to be explained in detail in the lyrics because the reader already brings cultural knowledge.

This finding broadens the reading of local music. Local identity is not only present through the use of regional vocabulary or place names. It also appears through the creator's social position, community experiences, family values, and the way the work circulates in independent spaces.

Braga MGNDW originates from Mongondow, but the album's themes transcend regional boundaries because local experiences are transformed into universal signs. The power of local works lies in their ability to speak from a specific place without losing their connection to the broader human experience.

Natural Symbols as an Architecture of Inner Change

Nature in "Kembara Jiwa" (Soul Traveler), nature functions as an active sign system that reflects the realities of life, both as a guide and a tester of resilience through its various dynamics and obstacles. This role is enhanced by the cycle of changing time from darkness to light, where the moment of dawn serves as a reflective pause after the struggle to trigger inner awareness. Through metaphors of organic growth, such as seeds, roots, and blooming flowers, the album emphasizes that spiritual maturity and self-acceptance are gradual processes that aren't always linear. This use of natural imagery successfully concretizes abstract existential ideas into a sensory experience close to memory, while simultaneously bridging Braga MGNDW's personal discourse with the collective experience of their listeners.

Home, Mother, and the Ethics of Return

Toward the end of the album, home and mother transform into emotional centers that emphasize the essence of return. Home is no longer understood simply as a physical structure or the end of a journey, but rather as a space of connection and inner acceptance, where longing bridges the distance to peace. The figure of the mother, who washes away the storms of the soul in "Dawn" and waits at the end of the road in "Pulang yang Paling Pulang," appears as a concrete manifestation of unconditional love. This symbolic presence forms an ethics of return: humans return not merely to end their wanderings, but to acknowledge and honor the roots of the relationships that have sustained their lives. However, the call to return does not necessarily reject the existence of the outside world.

Between departure and return, a complementary dialectic exists; humans need to explore, experience doubt, and confront alienation in order to understand the true value of home. External travel is necessary for the process of growth, while return is necessary to prevent that growth from losing direction and orientation. Although grounded in a cultural context familiar with the tradition of migration, this album successfully expands its message into a universal message that the need for acceptance, recognizing one's origins, and achieving inner wholeness are intrinsic experiences shared by every human being.

Contribution to Literary Studies and Learning

This research demonstrates that independent music albums can be read as complete textual entities, enabling literary studies to move beyond simply identifying figures of speech toward understanding the architecture of meaning. In a learning context, this work is effective in training students' critical reading skills through distinguishing between literal and deeper meanings, reading sign structures, and intertextual analysis that bridges literary theory with their everyday experiences. The use of local music also demonstrates that regional works possess academic complexity equivalent to national canonical works, thus fostering an appreciation of local culture while still adhering to copyright norms. Practically, this research offers a multi-level analysis model, starting from the heuristic level to the formation of a flexible matrix adapted to educational levels to ensure that each interpretation remains open, creative, and linguistically sound.

Existentiality as a Result of Text Reading

The use of the term existential in this study serves as an interpretive category born from the structure of the text, not as a claim of direct influence from specific philosophical figures. This existentiality is manifested in several interrelated primary dimensions. The dimension of freedom affirms that although humans are bound by destiny and unparalleled limitations, they remain fully responsible for determining concrete responses to

their circumstances. In this process, suffering is not seen as valuable in itself, but rather gains significance when reflection transforms painful experiences into a narrative of the self.

This existential reading also avoids crude individualism, as the dimension of connectedness positions relationships such as family and friendship as the primary pillars of inner integrity and human resilience. This dynamic is further strengthened by the dimension of time, which places humans between a reinterpreted past, a present being lived, and a future sown with hope. This entire sequence culminates in a form of active acceptance, namely the awareness of embracing limitations without losing the power to act, ultimately uniting freedom, relationships, time, and meaning into a unified whole.

Album Title and Coherence of Song Sequence

The title "Kembara Jiwa" (Soul Wanderer) serves as the album's main framework, where the word "kembara" represents the dynamics of physical journey and "soul" encompasses the spectrum of inner dynamics. These two words are interconnected, from the geographical journey in the lyrics to a means of spiritual transformation, while the soul becomes the center that gives meaning to the journey. The nine songs are arranged linearly to depict the inner development of the implicit subject, moving sequentially from the invitation to depart, social and relational conflict, suffering, contemplation, and finally concluding with a return and acceptance.

Changing the order of these songs would disrupt the flow of emotional dynamics and their meaningful power, as this order is the primary principle of meaning creation. The strength of this album lies in its coherence, which is not the result of repetitive messages, but rather a complementary relationship. Each song exists to complement and resolve the issues raised by the previous song. The album "Kembara Jiwa" operates as a narrative composition that exists somewhere between a collection of poems and a musical composition. While each song can stand alone, listening to it as



a whole album brings new meanings that cannot be reduced to a single song.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strengths of this study lie in the use of all the lyrics on the album and the verification process with the band. The use of a total corpus reduces the risk of conclusions being drawn solely from the songs that best align with initial assumptions. Multilevel analysis also allows findings to be traced from lexical meaning to the matrix. Furthermore, the synthesis between the matrices suggests that the album has an organization of meaning that goes beyond recurring themes.

A limitation of this research is the primary focus on verbal aspects. The music, arrangement, tempo, vocal timbre, pitch sequence, cover design, and performance context have not been analyzed as sign systems. However, changes in musical dynamics can reinforce or even negotiate the meaning of the lyrics. Exploring actual hypograms also cannot guarantee direct influence, as equivalence between texts can emerge from shared collective knowledge. Further research could combine poetic semiotics with music semiotics, ethnomusicology, audience reception studies, or cultural studies to more comprehensively understand the relationship between text, sound, community, and local identity.

CONCLUSION

A heuristic reading of the nine song lyrics on the album "Kembara Jiwa" reveals literal meanings about humans traveling, struggling, facing wounds, maintaining hope, building relationships, longing for home, remembering mothers, and celebrating life. These meanings are constructed through the dictional fields of journey, crisis, and recovery. The lyrical language remains communicative, but gains poetic flair through metaphor, personification, natural symbols, repetition, and oppositions such as light and dark, wound and healing, sadness and happiness, and going and returning.

A hermeneutic reading reveals that the nine songs form an existential journey. "Senandung

Pembuka Jalan" (Opening the Road) initiates a transformation toward awareness; "Path of Life" depicts self-formation; "Fate and Destiny" presents a reflection on limitations; "Kembar Jiwa" (Twin Souls) positions relationships as a path to harmony; "Sedih Akan Pergi" (Sad to Go) transforms suffering into meaning; "Kelana" (Surviving the Dawn) affirms steadfastness; "Subuh" (Family Dawn) offers contemplation; "Pulang yang Paling Pulang" (Homecoming) directs humanity to the source of love; and "Celebrate" (Celebrate) expresses acceptance of the entire process of life. The different matrices in each song converge on the primary matrix of the existential dimension of humanity. The album depicts humans as subjects in constant development, not as finished subjects. Wholeness is not achieved by avoiding pain or uncertainty, but through the ability to give meaning to experience, open oneself to relationships, return to the source of love, and embrace the journey as a whole. Thus, Kembara Jiwa proves that local music lyrics can function as poetic texts that contain complex meaning structures and are worthy of being placed in literary studies.

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