

Signs of Modernity Anxiety and Social Criticism in Nasida Ria's "Tahun 2000": A Peircean Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

The song "*Tahun 2000*," popularized by the modern qasidah group Nasida Ria in the late twentieth century, is not merely a form of entertainment but also a visionary manifesto of social criticism. This study aims to reveal the denotative and connotative meanings embedded in the song lyrics by employing Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic analysis. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study examines the lyrics as units of signs, namely representamen, which refer to literal objects and are interpreted as forms of social criticism through the interpretant. The findings show that the lyrics accurately project anxieties concerning technological dehumanization, land conversion, climate crisis, and structural unemployment. In 2026, the interpretation of these signs proves highly relevant, as past warnings have transformed into the objective realities of the present.

Keywords: *Peircean Semiotics, Nasida Ria, Social Criticism, Modernity, Environmental Degradation*

Introduction

The transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century was marked by the phenomenon of Y2K anxiety, or millennium anxiety, a period in which global society was haunted by fears of technological system collapse while simultaneously nurturing hopes for civilizational progress. In Indonesia, responses to this wave of modernization were not only expressed through academic discourse but also through popular media, one of which was music. Nasida Ria, as a pioneer of modern qasidah, has consistently used its lyrics as a medium of religious preaching as well as sharp social criticism (Cholifah & Cholifah, 2011, p. 2).

One of their most iconic works is the song "Tahun 2000." The lyrics of this song contain a narrative of warning about a future filled with challenges, ranging from the domination of machines and the shrinking of agricultural land to environmental degradation. This study aims to answer the research question: how do the linguistic signs in the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" represent anxiety about modernization and the degradation of humanity? Through a semiotic approach, this article seeks to uncover the layers of meaning embedded in the text (Anugrah et al., 2025).

Music does not merely function as a medium of entertainment but also as a space for the production of meaning that reflects the social, cultural, and ideological realities of a society. Through lyrics, music is able to convey criticism, hopes, anxieties, and even projections of the future that live within the collective consciousness of society. In this context, a song can be understood as a cultural text containing systems of signs and symbols that represent the creator's worldview regarding various social phenomena. Therefore, song lyrics constitute a relevant object of study from a semiotic perspective

because they enable researchers to reveal hidden meanings behind the linguistic structures used (Damayanti et al., 2024, p. 934).

At the end of the twentieth century, global society entered a phase of social transformation marked by the increasingly massive development of information technology, industrialization, urbanization, and globalization. These changes generated optimism about the progress of civilization while simultaneously creating various anxieties about the future of humanity. The phenomenon known as millennium anxiety developed in various parts of the world as a response to the acceleration of modernization, which was predicted to fundamentally transform patterns of social life. Such anxiety did not emerge only in academic and political discourses but was also expressed through various cultural products, including popular music (Frimpong, 2024).

In Indonesia, one work that represents anxiety about the future is the song “Tahun 2000,” popularized by Nasida Ria. As a modern qasidah group known for consistently raising social, moral, and religious themes, Nasida Ria does not merely present religious messages but also offers criticism of the various impacts of modernization. Through the lyrics of “Tahun 2000,” the group portrays a number of social changes projected to occur in the future, such as the domination of machines in human life, increasing unemployment due to automation, the shrinking of agricultural land, environmental degradation, and the weakening of human values. Interestingly, the projections conveyed in the song demonstrate strong relevance to contemporary social conditions marked by the development of artificial intelligence, the digitalization of life, the climate crisis, and the transformation of the global economic structure (Rifandi & Rizal, 2025).

Substantively, the lyrics of “Tahun 2000” do not merely depict technological advancement but also contain social criticism of the consequences of modernity. Modernity, which is often understood as a symbol of progress, in fact presents paradoxes in the form of dehumanization, ecological degradation, and social inequality. From the perspective of social theory, this condition is in line with critiques of modernity proposed by thinkers such as Max Weber, Herbert Marcuse, and Anthony Giddens, who argue that rationalization and technological development can produce new forms of human alienation. Thus, “Tahun 2000” can be viewed as a cultural text that represents the dialectic between hope for progress and anxiety about its social consequences (Andika, 2022, p. 134).

Studies of song lyrics as objects of semiotic analysis have been widely conducted by various researchers. Most studies have focused on the representation of cultural values, identity, ideology, religiosity, and social criticism contained in song texts. However, studies that specifically examine the lyrics of “Tahun 2000” by Nasida Ria from the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics remain relatively limited. Existing studies generally position songs as media of religious preaching or moral criticism without deeply elaborating the relationship between signs, objects, and interpretants that shape the construction of meaning in the text. In addition, few studies have connected the signs in the lyrics to contemporary contexts, so the social relevance of the messages conveyed has not yet been comprehensively described (Febrianty & Irawan, 2022, p. 141).

Although studies on song lyrics as objects of semiotic analysis have been widely conducted, most of them tend to focus on the identification of symbolic meanings, moral messages, identity, religiosity, or general forms of social criticism. Such studies often treat song lyrics as isolated textual objects without sufficiently connecting linguistic signs to broader historical, social, and ideological transformations. In the Indonesian context, studies on Nasida Ria and modern qasidah have generally positioned this musical genre as a medium of religious preaching, moral education, or Islamic entertainment. However,

its potential as a cultural text that articulates anxiety about modernization, technological domination, ecological degradation, and socio-economic transformation has not been adequately examined.

This gap becomes particularly significant in the case of Nasida Ria's "Tahun 2000," a song that does not merely convey religious or moral advice but also projects a critical vision of the future. The lyrics construct signs related to mechanization, land conversion, environmental pollution, and structural unemployment, all of which resonate strongly with contemporary issues such as artificial intelligence, climate crisis, urban expansion, and the transformation of labour. Previous studies have not sufficiently explained how these signs operate through the triadic relation of representamen, object, and interpretant, nor have they shown how modern qasidah can function as a cultural archive of Indonesian modernity anxiety.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by employing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework to examine "Tahun 2000" as a cultural text in which religious popular music, social criticism, and modernity anxiety intersect. Rather than merely identifying signs in the lyrics, this study analyses how the song constructs a semiotic network that links technological progress, ecological vulnerability, agrarian displacement, and the marginalization of human labour. In doing so, the article contributes to Indonesian humanities scholarship by demonstrating that modern qasidah is not only a form of religious musical expression but also a critical medium for reflecting on the paradoxes of modern development. In addition, Peirce's triadic model provides broader analytical space for explaining the relationship between song texts and the social realities to which they refer (Lestari et al., 2025).

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the representation of modernity anxiety and social criticism in the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" by Nasida Ria through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. The analysis focuses on identifying the representamen, object, and interpretant contained in the song lyrics in order to reveal how the text projects various social issues that later find their relevance in the realities of contemporary society. Through this study, a deeper understanding is expected to be obtained regarding the function of music as a medium of social criticism as well as a means of reflection on the dynamics of modernity that continue to develop in human life (Bagaskara & Bagaskara, 2023).

Semiotics is a discipline that studies signs and processes of meaning-making in human life. One of the figures who made a major contribution to the development of semiotics is Charles Sanders Peirce. Unlike Ferdinand de Saussure, who viewed signs as a dyadic relationship between the signifier and the signified, Peirce developed a triadic model consisting of the representamen, object, and interpretant. According to Peirce, a sign does not stand alone but always refers to something it represents, namely the object, and produces a particular meaning in the mind of the interpreter, namely the interpretant (Marlina, 2019, p. 47).

The representamen is the physical form of a sign, which may appear as a word, image, sound, or symbol. The object refers to the reality or concept represented by the sign. Meanwhile, the interpretant is the meaning that emerges from the relationship between the representamen and the object. The relationship among these three elements forms a dynamic and continuous process of semiosis ("Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce," 1935).

In addition to the triadic model, Peirce also classifies signs into icons, indexes, and symbols. An icon is a sign that bears a resemblance to the object it refers to. An index is a sign that has a causal or existential relationship with its object. A symbol is a sign whose

meaning is formed through social and cultural conventions. This classification is important in the present study because it enables the identification of the forms of representation of modernity and social criticism found in the lyrics of "Tahun 2000."

In the context of this study, song lyrics are viewed as representamens that refer to various social phenomena, such as technological development, environmental change, and economic transformation. Through the process of interpretation, these signs produce meanings that reflect anxiety about modernity and criticism of its social impacts (Ramadhani & Mansoor, 2026). Modernity is a social condition characterized by the development of science, technology, industrialization, urbanization, and the rationalization of life. According to Anthony Giddens (1990), modernity brings major changes to social structures through the acceleration of space and time, globalization, and the transformation of social institutions. On the one hand, modernity produces progress and efficiency; on the other hand, it also gives rise to various forms of uncertainty and risk.

The concept of risk society proposed by Ulrich Beck (Kusvianti et al., 2023) explains that technological advancement and industrialization actually create new risks that are difficult to control, such as environmental degradation, pollution, energy crises, and economic disruption. Modernity does not only produce progress but also generates collective anxiety about the future of humanity. From this perspective, the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" can be understood as a representation of modernity anxiety. Various signs that appear in the lyrics, such as the domination of machines, unemployment caused by automation, the shrinking of agricultural land, and environmental pollution, indicate concerns about the social consequences arising from technological development and industrialization.

Social criticism is a form of response to various inequalities, deviations, or problems that occur within society. It is often expressed through literary works, art, music, film, and various other forms of cultural production. In cultural studies, works of art are viewed not only as aesthetic products but also as media that reflect and critique social realities (Mufidah et al., 2025, p. 1009). According to Herbert Marcuse, modern society tends to become trapped in technological rationality that prioritizes efficiency and productivity, thereby potentially causing human beings to lose their freedom and critical dimension. Therefore, cultural works play an important role as spaces of resistance against the ideological domination of modernity (Ngafifi, 2014, p. 10).

In this study, the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" are understood as a form of social criticism of the various impacts of modernization. This criticism is evident in the representation of dehumanization caused by technological domination, environmental exploitation, the disappearance of agrarian space, and the increasing threat of unemployment. Thus, the song functions not merely as a medium of entertainment but also as a means of social reflection that invites society to reconsider the direction of development and technological progress (Fauziyah et al., 2025).

From the perspective of cultural studies, music is a social practice that contains systems of meaning and ideology. Song lyrics are not merely a sequence of words that create aesthetic beauty; rather, they constitute cultural texts that represent the social experiences, values, and worldview of a society (Harahap et al., 2024). According to Stuart Hall, representation is the process of producing meaning through language and various systems of signs. Through representation, social reality is not only depicted but also constructed. Therefore, song lyrics can be understood as an arena of meaning production that enables songwriters to convey their views, criticisms, and interpretations of various social phenomena (Pramitha et al., 2025). In this study, "Tahun 2000" is positioned as a

cultural text that produces representations of the future, modernization, and social change. Through Peirce's semiotic approach, this study seeks to reveal how the linguistic signs in the song lyrics construct meanings concerning modernity anxiety and social criticism that remain relevant to the conditions of contemporary society (Septiansyah & Duryatmo, 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its positioning of Nasida Ria's "Tahun 2000" as a cultural archive of Indonesian modernity anxiety. Unlike previous studies that tend to approach modern qasidah primarily as a medium of religious preaching or moral instruction, this article demonstrates that the song also functions as a critical cultural text that anticipates the paradoxes of technological progress, ecological degradation, agrarian displacement, and labour marginalization. By applying Peirce's triadic semiotics, this study does not merely classify signs into icons, indexes, and symbols, but examines how linguistic signs generate interpretants that reveal broader social criticism of modernization.

This study offers a new contribution to Indonesian humanities scholarship by showing that modern qasidah can be understood as a form of popular religious music that participates in debates on modernity, development, and the future of human values. Through the analysis of representamen, object, and interpretant, the article reveals how "Tahun 2000" transforms religious-popular lyrics into a semiotic space where technological, ecological, and socio-economic anxieties are articulated. Thus, the study contributes not only to Peircean semiotic analysis but also to the study of Indonesian popular culture, Islamic musical expression, and the critique of modern development.

Method

Type and Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretative method. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on revealing the meanings contained in the linguistic signs found in the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" by Nasida Ria. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research aims to understand and interpret social phenomena based on meanings constructed by individuals or groups. In the context of this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the representation of modernity anxiety and social criticism constructed through song lyrics.

The descriptive-interpretative method is used to describe the forms of signs found in the song text and subsequently interpret the meanings produced through the relationship among sign, object, and interpretant, as formulated in Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory.

Research Sources and Data

The primary data source of this study is the lyrics of "Tahun 2000," popularized by the modern qasidah group Nasida Ria. The lyrics were selected because they contain various representations of technological development, social change, environmental degradation, and the dynamics of human life projected to occur in the future.

The research data consist of linguistic units found in the song lyrics, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that contain semiotic signs related to the themes of modernity and social criticism. The data units were selected based on their relevance to the focus of the study, namely the representation of modernity anxiety, technological dehumanization, environmental degradation, and socio-economic transformation.

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected through documentation study. This technique was employed because the object of the research is a written document in the form of song lyrics. The data collection procedure was carried out through the following stages:

1. Collecting and transcribing the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" by Nasida Ria.
2. Reading and comprehending the entire text repeatedly to obtain contextual understanding.
3. Identifying words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that contain semiotic signs.
4. Classifying the data based on themes related to modernity and social criticism.
5. Organizing the data into Peirce's semiotic analysis format.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic model, which consists of the representamen, object, and interpretant. The analysis was carried out in several stages as follows:

Data Reduction

The researcher selected and grouped data relevant to the focus of the study, namely signs that represent modernity anxiety and social criticism.

Identification of the Triadic Structure

Each datum was analyzed based on the three main components of Peirce's semiotics:

- a. **Representamen**, namely the form of the sign that appears in the song lyrics.
- b. **Object**, namely the social, cultural, or environmental reality referred to by the sign.
- c. **Interpretant**, namely the meaning that emerges as a result of the relationship between the representamen and the object.

Classification of Sign Types

After the triadic structure was identified, the data were classified according to Peirce's categories of signs, which include:

1. **Icon**, namely a sign that has a resemblance to its object.
2. **Index**, namely a sign that has a causal relationship or existential proximity to its object.
3. **Symbol**, namely a sign whose meaning is obtained through social and cultural conventions.

Results

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis of the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" by Nasida Ria shows that the song text is constructed through a series of signs that represent social anxiety toward various consequences of modernity. Through the triadic relationship among the representamen, object, and interpretant, this analysis reveals that the meanings embedded in the lyrics do not merely describe future conditions imagined at the time the song was created, but also articulate criticism of social changes caused by technological development, industrialization, urbanization, and environmental exploitation.

Data 1:

"Wahai pemuda dan para remaja / Ayo siapkan dirimu / Siap ilmu, siap iman"

Semiotically, the phrase "siap ilmu, siap iman" does not merely function as a normative call; rather, it constitutes an ideological sign that represents the songwriter's worldview regarding the relationship between technological advancement and the

continuity of human values. From Peirce's perspective, this sign produces an interpretant in the form of the belief that knowledge and faith are two complementary instruments for facing the changing times.

The lexical choice "siap," which is repeated twice, forms a strategy of emphasis that indicates the urgency of preparing for the future. This repetition constructs the meaning that future challenges are not only technical in nature but also moral and spiritual. In other words, technological progress is understood not merely as a matter of mastering modern devices, but also as the ability to control their impacts on human life. In the social context of Indonesia at the end of the twentieth century, this lyric can be read as a response to the acceleration of modernization that began to transform patterns of social life. The lyric positions technology as a symbol of progress, while at the same time indicating its potential for dehumanization if it is not controlled by ethical values. Therefore, the sign "faith" functions as a symbol of moral control over the use of knowledge.

When linked to Kuntowijoyo's concept of Prophetic Social Science, the interpretant that emerges does not stop at a merely religious appeal. The phrase represents the dimension of transcendence, namely an effort to place the development of knowledge within the framework of divine values. In the prophetic paradigm, knowledge without morality has the potential to produce technological domination that neglects humanity, while morality without knowledge may lead to social backwardness. Therefore, the balance between the two becomes a prerequisite for the creation of a humanistic society.

Furthermore, from the perspective of social criticism, this lyric contains an implicit critique of a development paradigm that measures progress solely through material and technological indicators. Nasida Ria positions the younger generation as the main agents of social change who must possess two forms of capital at once: intellectual capital and moral capital. Thus, the sign "siap ilmu, siap iman" is not merely an educational slogan, but an ideological representation of the ideal human model capable of facing modernity without losing ethical and spiritual identity.

Semiotically, the phrase "siap ilmu, siap iman" functions as a symbol of the integration between rationality and spirituality. The resulting interpretant shows that the songwriter views technological advancement as a historical inevitability that must be responded to through the strengthening of intellectual competence as well as moral resilience. Therefore, this sign does not only signify individual preparedness, but also contains a critique of modernization that has the potential to erode human values if it is not balanced by ethical and spiritual awareness. This analysis shows that the lyric articulates a prophetic idea concerning the relationship among knowledge, morality, and the future of civilization.

Data 2:

"Tahun dua ribu kerja serba mesin"

Denotatively, the phrase "kerja serba mesin" refers to the use of machines in various sectors of work. Within Peirce's framework, this sign functions as a symbol because its meaning is understood through social conventions regarding machines as instruments of modern production. The object referred to is the process of mechanization and automation that has developed rapidly in the industrial world. However, the interpretant that emerges does not stop merely at technological advancement. This sign produces the meaning that economic efficiency has begun to displace the position of human beings as the center of productive activity. In other words, humans are no longer the primary agents but have become part of a larger technological system. This lyric

represents anxiety over the emergence of a technocratic society, namely a society that places technology as the primary measure of progress.

Data 3:

"Manusia Tidur Berkawan Mesin"

This phrase constitutes a particularly interesting sign in semiotic analysis because it contains a strong metaphorical meaning. Literally, human beings do not actually "befriend" machines. Therefore, this sign functions as a metaphorical symbol that depicts the closeness between humans and technology within the private sphere of their lives. The object referred to is the presence of technological devices that continuously accompany human beings, even during moments of rest. When this song was created, such a phenomenon was still predictive in nature. However, in the present context, the interpretant that emerges has become highly relevant through the existence of smartphones, computers, digital televisions, and various smart devices that are almost inseparable from human life.

Within Peirce's framework, the relationship between the representamen and the object produces an interpretant in the form of relational dehumanization, namely a condition in which human interaction with technology becomes more dominant than human interaction with one another. Sociologically, this sign contains a critique of the increasing individualism and social alienation resulting from dependence on digital technology.

Data 4:

"Makan dan Minum Dilayani Mesin"

At the denotative level, this phrase refers to the use of technology to assist human beings in fulfilling their daily needs. The object referred to is various forms of service automation, ranging from household appliances to service systems based on artificial intelligence. However, the interpretant that emerges is far broader. This sign indicates a fundamental transformation in the relationship between humans and their own life activities. Whereas humans previously carried out various basic activities directly, some of these activities can now be replaced by technology. From Peirce's perspective, this sign can be read as a symbol of cultural transformation from a society oriented toward physical labor to one dependent on technological systems. The criticism contained in this sign is not a rejection of technology, but rather a warning that excessive convenience may generate dependence that reduces human autonomy.

In Peircean terminology, the three representamens form an interconnected network of signs that lead to the same interpretant, namely a critique of technological domination in human life. These lyrics do not reject technological progress; instead, they warn that when technology shifts from being a tool to becoming a way of life, human beings may lose their autonomy, social interaction, and human values. Thus, semiotically, the phrases "kerja serba mesin," "tidur berkawan mesin," and "makan-minum dilayani mesin" constitute symbols of modernity that produce an interpretant in the form of criticism of the processes of dehumanization, technological dependence, and changing social relations in modern society. In the context of 2026, this interpretation becomes increasingly relevant because human life is becoming more deeply integrated with digital systems, automation, and artificial intelligence, which have entered almost every aspect of life.

Data 5:

"Penduduk makin banyak, sawah ladang menyempit"

This linguistic datum contains a strong causal relationship between population growth and changes in ecological space. From the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, the meaning of a sign does not lie merely in what is stated, but also in the relationship between the sign, or representamen, the object to which it refers, and the interpretation that emerges within social consciousness. The datum "penduduk semakin banyak" functions as a sign referring to a demographic phenomenon, while "sawah ladang menyempit" refers to the ecological and spatial changes that occur as its consequence. The relationship between these two elements is indexical because there is a real cause-and-effect relation: population growth creates an increasing demand for space, resulting in the reduction of agricultural land.

Within Peirce's framework, this sign does not only produce meaning about population growth but also constructs an interpretant in the form of awareness of the ecological crisis that is gradually developing in modern society. The shrinking of rice fields does not merely indicate a reduction in land area; it also represents the diminishing space for food production that serves as the foundation of community life. At a deeper level, the term "sawah ladang" carries important symbolic meaning in Indonesian culture. Rice fields are not only understood as economic spaces but also as symbols of life, sustainability, collective labor, and the agrarian identity of society. Therefore, the shrinking of rice fields can be interpreted as a symbol of agrarian values being increasingly pressured by the expansion of development and urbanization.

From the perspective of political ecology, this lyric contains a critique of a development model that tends to prioritize physical and economic growth over environmental sustainability. Population growth is indeed a natural phenomenon; however, when it is not balanced with sustainable spatial planning policies, its consequences include the reduction of productive land and increasing pressure on natural resources.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, the sign "sawah ladang menyempit" also represents a narrative of ecological degradation, or a story of ecological decline, which refers to the diminishing of natural living spaces as a result of the domination of human activities. This narrative builds awareness that environmental problems are not merely natural issues, but the outcomes of social, economic, and political decisions made by human beings.

Overall, the datum "Penduduk makin banyak, sawah ladang menyempit" is an indexical sign that connects population growth with the reduction of agrarian space. The interpretant produced is a critique of the imbalance between demographic development and environmental carrying capacity. Through this sign, the songwriter constructs an awareness that development which neglects the sustainability of agrarian space will have implications for the weakening of food security, the loss of agrarian cultural identity, and the increasing ecological vulnerability of society in the future. Thus, the lyric does not merely describe the physical transformation of space but also articulates an ecological critique of the direction of modern development.

Data 6:

"Sawah ditanami gedung dan gudang"

This datum is one of the most powerful signs in the lyrics of "Tahun 2000" because it presents a deliberately constructed contradiction of meaning. Linguistically, the word "ditanami" is commonly collocated with plants, rice, or vegetation that supports life. However, in this lyric, what is "planted" is instead buildings and warehouses. This semantic deviation creates a semiotic effect that produces profound social and ecological criticism. From the perspective of Peirce's semiotics, the phrase "sawah ditanami gedung

dan gudang” functions as a symbolic sign referring to spatial transformation caused by modernization. The object referred to is not merely physical development, but the process of land-use conversion from a space of food production into a space of capital production. Semiotically, there is an opposition of meaning between rice fields and buildings and warehouses. The encounter between these two symbols within a single sentence construction produces an interpretant in the form of conflict between ecological interests and economic interests. In other words, this lyric shows how a space that previously functioned to sustain community life gradually transforms into a space that serves the needs of development and the market. Furthermore, the use of the verb “ditanami” has a highly significant rhetorical function. Conventionally, the act of planting produces life and biological growth. However, when what is planted consists of buildings and warehouses, a semiotic paradox emerges, indicating that development has replaced the natural function of agricultural land. This paradox strengthens the critique of development practices that transform agrarian landscapes into industrial landscapes.

At a deeper level, this sign contains a critique of the ideology of developmentalism, namely the view that measures progress through physical and economic growth. Within this ideology, rice fields are regarded as assets that can be converted into spaces considered more economically productive. However, this lyric presents a different perspective. Rice fields are not positioned merely as commodities, but as part of a life-supporting system that sustains the continuity of society. Therefore, when rice fields are transformed into buildings and warehouses, what is lost is not only agricultural land, but also agrarian cultural identity, ecological wisdom, and the community’s capacity to fulfill its own food needs.

Within the framework of Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics, the phrase “sawah ditanami gedung dan gudang” is a symbolic sign that represents the process of land-use conversion caused by modernization and urbanization. The interpretant produced is a critique of a development paradigm that prioritizes capital accumulation and infrastructure expansion over ecological sustainability. Through the paradoxical construction of the word “ditanami,” the songwriter shows that a space that once produced life has now become a space serving economic interests. Thus, this lyric does not merely describe the physical transformation of the landscape but also articulates a critique of the shift in values from an agrarian society toward an industrial society, a shift that has the potential to threaten food security and environmental balance.

Data 7:

Langit suram, udara panas akibat pencemaran

The phrase “Langit suram, udara panas akibat pencemaran” constitutes a semiotically rich sequence of signs because it presents a direct relationship between empirically observable environmental conditions and human activity as their cause. Within the framework of Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics, this phrase can be categorized as an indexical sign because there is a real causal relationship between the representamen and the object to which it refers. “Langit suram” and “udara panas” are not merely visual and sensory descriptions of natural conditions; rather, they are symptoms that indicate pollution and environmental degradation. Thus, these signs function as empirical evidence that directs the interpreter toward an ongoing ecological reality.

At the level of the object, this phrase refers to various forms of environmental degradation, such as air pollution caused by industrial activity, motor vehicle emissions, forest burning, and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. Meanwhile, the interpretant that emerges is not only an understanding of physical environmental

damage, but also a critical awareness of the social and ecological consequences of a development paradigm oriented solely toward economic growth. In this context, pollution is understood as the product of an imbalanced relationship between humans and nature, in which the interests of production and consumption are often placed above the principles of environmental sustainability.

More profoundly, the expression “langit suram” carries symbolic meaning that goes beyond meteorological description. In various cultural traditions, the sky is often associated with life, hope, order, and cosmic balance. Therefore, a gloomy sky can be interpreted as a symbol of the disruption of harmony between humans and the environment. Likewise, the phrase “udara panas” does not merely refer to a physical increase in temperature, but also becomes a symbol of ecological discomfort resulting from human actions. Together, these two signs construct an image of nature losing its capacity as a healthy and sustainable living space.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, this datum represents what may be called an ecological degradation narrative, namely a discursive construction that depicts the decline of environmental quality as a result of human activity. This narrative functions as a critique of anthropocentric ideology, which positions humans as the center and rulers of nature. Through this lyric, nature is not portrayed as a passive object that can be exploited without limits, but rather as an entity that responds to human treatment. “Langit suram” and “udara panas” serve as indicators that ecological damage will ultimately return to affect the quality of human life itself.

When analyzed within the contemporary social context, this lyric demonstrates a very strong predictive force. At the time the song was created, issues of global warming and climate change had not yet become as widely recognized in public discourse as they are today. However, the signs constructed in the lyric had already anticipated various phenomena that have now become global problems, such as rising global temperatures, air pollution, the climate crisis, and declining environmental quality. Therefore, from the perspective of Peirce’s semiotics, the phrase “Langit suram, udara panas akibat pencemaran” functions not only as a representation of environmental conditions, but also as an ecological critique that warns society about the destructive consequences of development that ignores the balance between human needs and the sustainability of nature. Thus, this sign forms an interpretant in the form of ecological awareness that environmental crisis is not merely a natural phenomenon, but the result of continuous social, economic, and political practices carried out by human beings.

Data 8:

“Tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin / Pengangguran merajalela”

The phrase “Tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin / Pengangguran merajalela” represents one of the sharpest forms of social criticism in the lyrics of Nasida Ria’s “Tahun 2000.” From the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics, these two phrases form an interconnected sign relation and produce meanings that go beyond a mere description of technological development. Triadically, the representamen in the expression “tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin” refers to the object of mechanization, automation, and the use of technology in various sectors of production. Meanwhile, the phrase “pengangguran merajalela” refers to the social consequences that arise from the declining need for human labor in an economic system increasingly dependent on technology. The relationship between these two signs is indexical because there is a clear cause-and-effect relation: the increasing use of machines in productive activities has the potential to reduce human involvement in the world of work, which ultimately leads to unemployment on a wider scale.

At the level of the interpretant, this sign constructs a critique of the modernization paradigm that places efficiency and productivity as the primary goals of development. Machines are positioned as symbols of technological progress capable of accelerating production processes and increasing economic profit. However, behind this symbol of progress lies a serious human problem, namely the increasing marginalization of human beings from productive spaces that previously served as their sources of livelihood. Thus, this lyric does not merely describe technological change but also reveals the tension between the logic of economic efficiency and human values.

Semiotically, the word “diganti” carries a highly significant semantic load. This verb indicates a process of substitution, namely the transfer of function from humans to machines. In this context, human beings are no longer viewed as the primary subjects in the production process but as elements that can be replaced when technology is considered more effective and profitable. This meaning leads to an interpretation of economic dehumanization, a condition in which human value is increasingly determined by productivity and economic capability. When machines are able to work faster, cheaper, and more consistently, humans risk losing their strategic position within the modern production system.

Furthermore, the phrase “pengangguran merajalela” does not only refer to the condition of joblessness but also becomes a symbol of social instability arising from technology-based economic transformation. Unemployment in this context can be understood as a form of structural unemployment, namely a condition in which technological change occurs more rapidly than society’s ability to adapt through skills development and education. Therefore, the issue raised in this lyric is not merely an individual problem of being unemployed, but a systemic problem related to the distribution of development benefits and social justice.

From the perspective of critical sociology, these signs reflect a critique of the capitalist economic system, which tends to prioritize capital accumulation and production efficiency over the welfare of workers. Machines become symbols of technological domination within the modern economic structure, while unemployment becomes an index of the social impacts generated by such domination. In other words, this lyric reveals the paradox of modernity: the more advanced the technology created by humans becomes, the greater the possibility that humans will lose their space of participation in the production process if they lack the capacity to adapt to such changes.

In the contemporary context, this interpretation becomes increasingly relevant with the development of industrial automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. Various jobs that were previously performed by humans are now beginning to be transferred to digital systems and algorithms. This phenomenon demonstrates that the anxiety expressed in the lyrics is not merely an imagination of the future, but a critical reflection that finds relevance in today’s social reality. Therefore, within Peirce’s semiotic framework, the phrase “Tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin / Pengangguran merajalela” can be understood as a sign that produces an interpretant in the form of criticism of the social impacts of technological modernization, particularly the risk of marginalizing human labor within an economic system increasingly oriented toward automation. This sign also serves as a reminder that technological progress, when not balanced by inclusive social policies, has the potential to create inequality, injustice, and humanitarian crises in modern society.

Discussion

The analysis of the eight linguistic data shows that the signs in Nasida Ria's "Tahun 2000" do not operate as isolated textual elements, but rather form an interconnected semiotic network that constructs a critical vision of modernity. Through Peirce's triadic relation of representamen, object, and interpretant, the lyrics articulate a complex relationship between technological progress, moral anxiety, ecological vulnerability, agrarian displacement, and the marginalization of human labour. Each sign contributes to a broader interpretive structure in which modernity is represented not simply as a historical movement toward progress, but as a paradoxical condition that simultaneously promises advancement and produces new forms of social, ecological, and human crisis.

The first pattern that emerges is the construction of moral and spiritual preparedness as a response to modern transformation. The phrase "siap ilmu, siap iman" functions as a symbolic foundation for the entire song. It indicates that the future cannot be faced through technological competence alone, but requires the integration of knowledge, ethical awareness, and spiritual resilience. This sign positions modernity as a challenge that is not merely technical, but also moral and existential. In this sense, the song does not reject modern progress; rather, it criticizes the absence of moral orientation in the pursuit of modernization. The interpretant produced by this sign reveals a prophetic dimension in which knowledge and faith are constructed as two necessary resources for maintaining human dignity amid rapid social change.

The second pattern concerns technological domination and the transformation of human relations. The signs "kerja serba mesin," "manusia tidur berkawan mesin," and "makan-minum dilayani mesin" collectively construct technology as both a symbol of progress and a sign of potential dehumanization. At the denotative level, these phrases refer to mechanization, automation, and technological assistance in everyday life. However, at the interpretive level, they reveal a deeper anxiety about the displacement of human agency. Technology is no longer represented merely as a tool that supports human activity, but as a system that increasingly reorganizes work, intimacy, domestic life, and social interaction. This suggests a critical transition from a human-centred society to a technology-centred society, in which efficiency and convenience may gradually weaken autonomy, intersubjective relations, and human values.

The third pattern is the semiotic representation of ecological and agrarian crisis. The phrases "penduduk makin banyak, sawah ladang menyempit," "sawah ditanami gedung dan gudang," and "langit suram, udara panas akibat pencemaran" construct a chain of signs that link demographic pressure, land conversion, industrial expansion, and environmental degradation. These signs function indexically because they point to causal relations between human activity and ecological damage. At the same time, they also operate symbolically because rice fields, sky, and air carry cultural meanings related to life, harmony, sustainability, and collective survival. The transformation of rice fields into buildings and warehouses produces a powerful semiotic paradox: a space that once generated life is converted into a space that serves capital accumulation. This pattern reveals a critique of developmentalism, particularly the ideology that equates progress with physical expansion, industrial growth, and economic productivity while neglecting ecological balance and food security.

The fourth pattern is the critique of labour marginalization in the modern economic system. The phrase "tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin / pengangguran merajalela" functions as an indexical sign that connects technological automation with structural unemployment. The sign does not merely describe the replacement of human labour by machines; it also reveals a wider critique of an economic system that values

efficiency over human welfare. In this context, machines become symbols of technological domination, while unemployment becomes an index of social instability and unequal distribution of development benefits. The interpretant produced by this sign points to economic dehumanization, namely a condition in which human beings are valued primarily according to their productivity and replaceability within the production system.

Taken together, these patterns show that “Tahun 2000” constructs modernity as a deeply ambivalent phenomenon. On the one hand, modernity is associated with technological progress, industrial efficiency, and the promise of a more advanced future. On the other hand, it generates anxiety over the erosion of moral values, the weakening of human agency, ecological destruction, agrarian displacement, and the exclusion of human labour. This ambivalence is central to the song’s social criticism. Nasida Ria does not present an anti-modern position; rather, the song offers a critical warning against a form of modernization that loses its ethical, ecological, and humanistic orientation.

Therefore, the novelty of this analysis lies in showing that “Tahun 2000” is not merely a religious or moral song, but a cultural text that functions as an archive of Indonesian modernity anxiety. Through its linguistic signs, the song records collective concerns about the future of technology, the environment, agrarian life, and human labour. As a form of modern qasidah, the song demonstrates that Indonesian popular religious music can participate in broader debates on modernity, development, and social transformation. Its semiotic force lies in its ability to transform simple lyrical expressions into a complex critique of the direction of modern civilization.

In this regard, Peirce’s semiotic framework enables the analysis to move beyond the identification of isolated signs toward an understanding of how signs generate critical interpretants within a specific socio-cultural context. The representamen found in the lyrics refers not only to textual expressions, but also to broader objects such as technological systems, environmental change, agrarian transformation, and labour displacement. The interpretants produced by these signs reveal the song’s critical consciousness: modern progress must be evaluated not only by its technological achievements, but also by its consequences for humanity, ecology, justice, and social sustainability.

The contemporary relevance of “Tahun 2000” becomes more evident when the semiotic findings are situated within current global debates on artificial intelligence, labour transformation, climate crisis, urban expansion, and ecological vulnerability. The lyrics that refer to the domination of machines, the replacement of human labour, the shrinking of agricultural land, and environmental pollution are no longer merely imaginative projections of the future. Instead, they resonate with contemporary global conditions in which technological systems, ecological risks, and economic restructuring increasingly shape human life. In this sense, the song’s semiotic structure demonstrates a strong anticipatory dimension: it articulates anxieties that have become central to twenty-first-century discussions on modernity.

The phrases “kerja serba mesin,” “manusia tidur berkawan mesin,” and “makan-minum dilayani mesin” acquire renewed relevance in the age of artificial intelligence and digital automation. Recent global reports show that AI and technological transformation are reshaping the nature of work, skills, and labour relations. The International Monetary Fund argues that artificial intelligence is likely to affect a significant portion of global employment, either by complementing human work or by replacing certain tasks previously performed by humans. Similarly, the World Economic Forum projects that technological development, demographic change, the green transition, and economic uncertainty will transform the global labour market by 2030. These developments

confirm the interpretant produced in the song: technology is not merely an instrument of progress, but also a force that reorganizes human agency, labour value, and social relations.

The lyric “tenaga manusia banyak diganti mesin / pengangguran merajalela” is therefore particularly significant in the contemporary context. It anticipates the current debate on structural unemployment, skills displacement, and the unequal distribution of technological benefits. The issue is not simply that machines replace humans, but that modernization may create a new hierarchy between those who can adapt to technological change and those who are marginalized by it. Thus, the song’s critique of mechanization can be read as a critique of a development model that prioritizes productivity and efficiency without adequately considering labour justice, human dignity, and social inclusion.

The ecological signs in the song also gain stronger relevance in the context of the current climate crisis. The phrases “sawah ladang menyempit,” “sawah ditanami gedung dan gudang,” and “langit suram, udara panas akibat pencemaran” resonate with global concerns over land conversion, environmental degradation, urban expansion, and climate change. Reports by the IPCC and WMO confirm that human activities have become a major driver of global warming, while recent climate indicators show intensifying environmental risks. In this context, the song’s representation of polluted air, gloomy skies, and shrinking agricultural land can be understood as a form of ecological warning. These signs indicate that environmental crisis is not an isolated natural phenomenon, but the result of social, economic, and political decisions embedded in modern development.

Furthermore, the representation of rice fields being replaced by buildings and warehouses reflects contemporary concerns regarding urbanization and the transformation of agrarian space. Global urbanization data show that cities and urban regions continue to expand, producing new pressures on land, food systems, infrastructure, and ecological balance. From a semiotic perspective, the conversion of rice fields into industrial or commercial spaces represents more than a physical transformation of landscape. It signifies a deeper shift in values: from land as a source of life, food, and collective identity to land as an economic asset serving capital accumulation. This reinforces the song’s critique of developmentalism, particularly the tendency to equate progress with physical expansion while neglecting ecological sustainability and food security.

Taken together, these contemporary references strengthen the argument that “Tahun 2000” should not be read merely as a nostalgic song about the future. Rather, it should be positioned as a cultural text whose signs anticipate key crises of contemporary modernity. Its lyrics construct a semiotic archive of Indonesian anxiety toward technological domination, ecological degradation, agrarian displacement, and labour marginalization. The song’s relevance today lies precisely in its ability to connect local Indonesian popular religious music with global debates on artificial intelligence, climate change, urbanization, and the future of human values. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to Indonesian humanities scholarship by demonstrating that modern qasidah can function not only as religious expression, but also as a critical cultural medium for interpreting the paradoxes of modern development.

Conclusion

Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic analysis of the lyrics of Nasida Ria’s “Tahun 2000” shows that the song represents anxiety about the consequences of modernity as expressed through a structured system of signs. Through the relationship among the

representamen, object, and interpretant, the lyrics construct a critique of technological domination, environmental degradation, the conversion of agrarian space, and the marginalization of human labor caused by mechanization. Signs such as “kerja serba mesin,” “sawah ditanami gedung dan gudang,” and “pengangguran merajalela” do not merely describe social change but also reflect concerns about the weakening of human values and ecological sustainability in modern society. The findings of this study demonstrate that Nasida Ria positions modernity as a paradoxical phenomenon: on the one hand, it promises progress; on the other hand, it has the potential to generate dehumanization, environmental crisis, and social inequality. Therefore, “Tahun 2000” does not merely function as a medium of entertainment or religious preaching, but also as a cultural text that articulates social criticism of the direction of modern development. The relevance of these messages to contemporary conditions indicates that the song lyrics possess reflective and visionary power in reading various problems that emerge as consequences of technological development and modernization.

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