

Semiotic Analysis of the Lyrics of the Song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" the Work of Titiek Puspa: Ferdinand De Saussure's Theory

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the lyrics of the song "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" by Titiek Puspa through the lens of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. By analyzing the song's lyrics as a system of signs composed of signifiers and signifieds, the research explores how meaning is constructed and how the song reflects the social realities of marginalized women, particularly those engaged in nighttime professions. Data was collected through textual transcription and close reading of the song lyrics. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, the study interprets symbolic elements such as "night butterfly," "smiling through tears," and "black blood" to uncover themes of gender inequality, societal judgment, and emotional duality. The analysis further incorporates paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships within the lyrics to understand how their structure contributes to broader socio-cultural critiques. The findings reveal that "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" not only portrays the complex lives of women stigmatized by society but also serves as a poignant commentary on the tension between personal identity and restrictive social norms. This study demonstrates the relevance of semiotic analysis in uncovering the layered meanings embedded in cultural texts, emphasizing empathy and critical reflection toward social issues that persist in both past and present contexts.

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Introduction

The song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" by Titiek Puspa is one of Indonesia's musical works that has become part of the history of the country's popular culture. Known for its distinctive melody and profound lyrics, this song depicts the life of women who are in a marginal position within society. The lyrics contain a strong message about the tension between individual freedom and restrictive social norms, especially those related to the role of women in society. This song uses symbolism and metaphor to depict the role of women as "moths," an image often associated with a nightlife that is free yet isolated. As a work of art, the lyrics of this song can be analyzed more deeply using semiotic theory, which studies signs and their meanings within a communication system. Semiotics, as a rapidly developing branch of science in the 20th century, provides very useful tools for understanding how language and symbols work in creating meaning. One of the most influential semiotic theories is Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, a Swiss linguist who introduced the important concept of the sign, which consists of two main elements: signifier and signified.

Saussure's semiotic theory provides a framework for understanding how the signs in the lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" function to convey deeper meanings about female identity, social roles, and the conflict between personal freedom and societal expectations. In this analysis, the song lyrics will be understood as a system of

signs, where each word and symbol functions to communicate a specific idea or message.

The importance of semiotic analysis in this context lies in the ability to uncover the hidden meanings behind the words and symbols used in the song lyrics. By using Saussure's theory, we can identify the relationships between the signs present in the song and how they shape our understanding of the world depicted in the song. Semiotics also allows us to see how meaning in the lyrics of this song is formed through the relationships between signs in the structure of language, as well as how the lyrics interact with the broader social reality, especially regarding the role of women in society.

The song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" is not only a musical work enjoyed aesthetically, but also a cultural text rich in meaning. Through semiotic analysis, we can better understand how the lyrics of this song convey messages related to sexuality, women's identity, and the social views of that time. Saussure's semiotic approach provides us with tools to explore the relationships between signs in the song's lyrics and explain how meaning is constructed through the existing linguistic and symbolic structures.

To uncover these layers of meaning, semiotic analysis is a fitting approach. For instance, Rokhyanto et al. (2021), applied semiotic codes gnomonic, hermeneutic, and proairetic to examine meaning construction in the novel *Aroma Karsa* by Dee Lestari. Their study shows how each code contributes to revealing cultural meaning and social myths embedded in the text.

However, while many cultural studies employ sociological or qualitative approaches, there remains a lack of linguistic or interpretive studies that focus on the semiotic aspects of the song "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*". Most prior research tends to emphasize historical, social, or biographical contexts, without exploring how the interplay between *signifier* and *signified* constructs gendered meanings and power dynamics within the lyrics.

This research focuses on analyzing the song "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" by addressing three key questions: 1. How the signifier and signified in the lyrics create meaning? 2. What social meanings are embedded in the song? 3. How the signs in the lyrics represent the lives of night women? The objectives of this study are to examine the relationship between signifier and signified in the song's lyrics, identify the social meanings conveyed, and understand how the lyrics depict the representation of night women's lives. Thus, the aim of this research is to analyze the lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, with a focus on understanding how the signs in the lyrics work to create meaning and depict the existing social reality. This research is expected to provide deeper insights into how song lyrics, as a form of cultural text, function to communicate social values and evoke our understanding of the condition of women in society.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative-descriptive research design with a semiotic approach based on Ferdinand de Saussure's structural theory of signs. Qualitative descriptive research is particularly appropriate when aiming to interpret meaning within a specific cultural context and to explore the social implications behind symbolic texts such as song lyrics (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2019). Semiotics, as a method, allows for the deconstruction of signs into signifiers and signified, offering a layered

understanding of meaning and representation in media and texts (Chandler, 2017; Machin & Mayr, 2023).

Data Source

The primary data used in this study is the full set of lyrics from the Indonesian song “*Kupu-Kupu Malam*”, written and composed by Titiek Puspa. This song was selected due to its cultural resonance and the way it addresses issues of marginalization, gender roles, and morality in society. The lyrics are treated as a textual artifact suitable for semiotic and critical interpretation.

Data Collection

Data was collected through textual transcription and close reading of the song lyrics. Additional contextual data were obtained from secondary sources such as interviews with the artist, prior media analyses, and social commentary articles to support the interpretation of signs within relevant socio-cultural frameworks (Barthes, 2018; van Leeuwen, 2021). No human subjects were directly involved in this research; thus ethical clearance was not required.

Data Analysis Procedure

The semiotic analysis follows a structured process consisting of four main stages:

First stage is to Identification of Signifier and Signified: All words, phrases, and expressions in the lyrics were analysed to identify their function as signifiers (forms) and the associated signified (concepts). This process adheres to Saussure’s dyadic model, where meaning is constructed through the relational value of signs (Chandler, 2017). Second stage is to **Denotative and Connotative Meaning:** Each line was interpreted on both denotative (literal) and connotative (symbolic/cultural) levels. This dual-layer analysis helps uncover both the surface meaning and deeper ideological implications of the lyrics (Hall, 2021; Barthes, 2018). Continued with **Social Critique Contextualization:** Interpreted meanings were then connected with real-world social contexts, particularly concerning the stigma and public perception of sex workers in Indonesian society. This step integrates critical discourse analysis principles to interpret how social power and ideology are embedded within the song (Fairclough, 2018; van Leeuwen, 2021). The last stage is **Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Relations:** Finally, the lyrics were analysed in terms of paradigmatic (substitution-based relationships) and syntagmatic (sequence-based relationships) structures to reveal how meaning is created and organized within the linguistic system, according to Saussurean theory (Machin & Mayr, 2023). This multi-step analytical framework ensures a robust interpretation of symbolic and ideological meanings within the song, linking individual signs to broader cultural discourses.

Result and Discussion

Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiotic theory defines a *sign* as the combination of two inseparable elements: the *signifier* and the *signified*. The *signifier* refers to the physical form of the sign—such as a word, sound, or image—while the *signified* represents the conceptual meaning or idea associated with that form (Chandler, 2017). This dyadic model of the sign emphasizes that meaning is not inherent in the object itself but arises from the relationship between the signifier and the signified within a cultural and linguistic system (Hall, 2021).

In the context of song lyrics, signs may appear as words or phrases that carry specific meanings, which are shaped by the surrounding social and cultural context. Thus, analysing lyrics through a semiotic lens allows researchers to uncover not only the literal content but also the symbolic and ideological messages encoded within the text (Barthes, 2018; van Leeuwen, 2021). This is particularly relevant in texts that engage with socially sensitive themes, where connotation plays a significant role in shaping audience perception and interpretation.

Song Lyric:

Lyrics “Kupu-Kupu Malam” By Titiek Puspa:

*Ada yang benci dirinya, Ada yang butuh dirinya Ada yang berlutut mencintainya
Hitam darah, buram wajah, Yang mengaburkan cermin kehidupannya*

*Kadang kala ia tersenyum dalam tangis, Kadang kala ia menangis di dalam
senyuman*

Tuhan pun tahu, Tapi semua orang tak mau tahu

*Setiap malam bekerja Menghias diri seindah mungkin Oh, untuk menyambung
hidupnya*

Oh, kupu-kupu malam

Haruskah hidup seperti ini Di bawah kaki sang pendosa Oh, kupu-kupu malam.

Through semiotic analysis, “Kupu-Kupu Malam” presents the reality of the lives of sex workers with a deeply humanistic approach. The song serves not only as a portrayal of their lived experiences but also as a form of social reflection, highlighting how society often fails to understand the struggles of others.

Signs within the lyrics—such as “*smiling through tears*,” “*black blood*,” and “*night butterflies*”—function as powerful symbols of suffering, sacrifice, and social stigma. Phrases like “*God knows*” and “*doesn’t want to know*” further emphasize societal indifference, while also reminding listeners of the importance of compassion.

The song raises critical issues surrounding equality and empathy, shedding light on how women who work at night are frequently subjected to moral judgment, despite living lives marked by hardship and resilience. Through its lyrical composition, “Kupu-Kupu Malam” becomes a voice for the marginalized, urging listeners to reflect on their perceptions and biases.

Analysis of Signifier and Signified in Song Lyrics

The analysis of signifier and signified in the song lyrics is conducted by identifying key symbolic expressions. Below are selected stanzas from the song “Kupu-Kupu Malam” along with a semiotic interpretation of each:

1. Lyric: *Ada yang benci dirinya / Ada yang butuh dirinya / Ada yang berlutut mencintainya*

Signifiers: “benci” (hate), “butuh” (need), and “berlutut mencintai” (kneel to love)

Signified: These words represent the spectrum of public emotions toward sex workers—ranging from hatred, to dependence, to love. This illustrates the social duality in how these women are received: both marginalized and desired simultaneously.

2. Lyric: *Hitam darah buram wajah / Yang mengaburkan cermin kehidupannya*

Signifiers: “hitam darah” (black blood) and “buram wajah” (blurred face)

Signified: These phrases depict the emotional and physical struggles of sex workers. The meaning refers to the pain and trauma that obscure their ability to reflect a beautiful or fulfilling life, metaphorically blurring the “mirror” of their existence.

3. Lyric: *Kadang kala ia tersenyum dalam tangis / Kadang kala ia menangis di dalam senyuman*

Signifiers: "tersenyum dalam tangis" (smiling through tears) and "menangis di dalam senyuman" (crying within a smile)

Signified: This emotional duality reflects a life full of internal struggle, where joy and sorrow coexist. Sex workers often must hide their suffering behind a facade of happiness—showing resilience but also emotional burden.

4. Lyric: *Tuhan pun tahu / Tapi semua orang tak mau tahu*

Signifiers: "Tuhan tahu" (God knows) and "tak mau tahu" (refuse to know)

Signified: The contradiction between divine compassion and societal ignorance is evident here. These lines critique the lack of human empathy, even though divine understanding is assumed to be present. It underscores moral hypocrisy in social judgment.

5. Lyric: *Setiap malam bekerja / Menghias diri seindah mungkin*

Signifiers: "bekerja" (work) and "menghias diri" (beautify oneself)

Signified: These expressions portray the effort of sex workers to earn a living through their appearance. The act of beautifying becomes a symbol of survival and the necessity to adapt in a stigmatized profession.

6. Lyric: *Untuk menyambung hidupnya / Oh, kupu-kupu malam*

Signifiers: "menyambung hidup" (to make a living) and "kupu-kupu malam" (night butterfly)

Signified: The term "kupu-kupu malam" symbolizes sex workers who operate at night. The phrase emphasizes that their work is driven by survival needs rather than personal desire, challenging the moral assumptions often imposed on them.

7. Lyric: *Haruskah hidup seperti ini / Di bawah kaki sang pendosa*

Signifiers: "hidup seperti ini" (a life like this) and "di bawah kaki sang pendosa" (under the feet of sinners)

Signified: These lines question the social injustice faced by sex workers, who are often seen as immoral despite being victims of a flawed system. It calls attention to the irony where those in power—the real "sinners"—stand in judgment over the oppressed.

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

1. Lyric: *Ada yang benci dirinya, Ada yang butuh dirinya, Ada yang berlutut mencintainya*

Denotation: Describes three types of public responses toward sex workers: hatred, need, and love.

Connotation: This lyric reflects the duality of their lives—caught between social stigma and social necessity. *Hatred* reflects moral prejudice, *need* refers to their role in the social ecosystem, and *love* reveals a rarely acknowledged human dimension.

2. Lyric: *Hitam darah, buram wajah / Yang mengaburkan cermin kehidupannya*

Denotation: Depicts the physical and emotional exhaustion experienced by sex workers.

Connotation: "Hitam darah" (black blood) can be interpreted as trauma or psychological burden, while "buram wajah" (blurred face) indicates a crisis of identity or a loss of life's meaning due to social pressure and the nature of their work.

3. Lyric: *Kadang kala ia tersenyum dalam tangis / Kadang kala ia menangis di dalam senyuman*

Denotation: Expresses the emotional duality sex workers experience daily.

Connotation: These lines portray the irony of their lives: visible happiness as a mask to

conceal deep sadness, and hidden tears as a silent expression of their unspoken suffering.

4. Lyric: *Tuhan pun tahu / Tapi semua orang tak mau tahu*

Denotation: God understands all their struggles and pain, but society chooses to ignore it.

Connotation: This is a critique of social hypocrisy. Society often neglects its moral responsibility while being quick to judge others.

5. Lyric: *Setiap malam bekerja / Menghias diri seindah mungkin*

Denotation: Sex workers prepare themselves each night for work.

Connotation: "*Menghias diri*" (to beautify oneself) not only refers to physical appearance but also to their effort to meet unrealistic societal expectations in order to survive.

6. Lyric: *Untuk menyambung hidupnya / Oh, kupu-kupu malam*

Denotation: They perform this work to sustain their lives.

Connotation: The metaphor "*kupu-kupu malam*" (night butterfly) highlights their invisible struggles in the nighttime, as well as the fragile beauty that exists amid darkness and hardship.

7. Lyric: *Haruskah hidup seperti ini / Di bawah kaki sang pendosa*

Denotation: A rhetorical question questioning the justice of the sex worker's life.

Connotation: This lyric satirizes social injustice, where those who judge are often sinners themselves, yet feel morally superior.

Paradigm and Syntagm in Semiotic Analysis

To connect the lyrical analysis of "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" with Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of **paradigm** and **syntagm**, it is essential to first understand these two notions within semiotic theory.

According to Saussure (2011), a **paradigm** is a set of signs that can be substituted for one another in a given context. In the analysis of song lyrics, paradigmatic relations refer to the selection of words or symbols that could potentially convey similar meanings. For instance, the word "*kupu-kupu*" (butterfly), which symbolizes beauty or a specific social role, could be replaced by other culturally resonant symbols carrying equivalent connotations. Paradigm involves choices among interchangeable signs that shape meaning through contrast and association.

On the other hand, a syntagm is the linear combination of signs in a particular sequence to form a structured and coherent message. In lyrical composition, syntagmatic relations concern how words and phrases are arranged to produce continuous, contextualized meaning. For example, the lyric "*kadang kala ia tersenyum dalam tangis*" (sometimes she smiles in tears) gains emotional weight not only from its individual signs but from their syntagmatic arrangement, which allows irony and emotional contradiction to emerge.

This interplay between paradigmatic selection and syntagmatic structuring is central to the semiotic reading of song lyrics, as it reveals how meaning is constructed both through what is said and how it is said.

The Relationship between Paradigm and Syntagms in the Lyrics of the Song "Kupu-Kupu Malam"

- **Paradigm in Song Lyrics** In the lyrics of "Kupu-Kupu Malam," there are word choices and symbols that convey meanings related to the social life of women, especially those depicted as "night butterflies." In the paradigm, we can see that

the symbol "butterfly" can be replaced with various other word choices that also represent the role of women in society, such as "night woman," "dancer," or "night star." Each of these word choices can lead to a slightly different understanding of the role and identity of women in the context of this song. Paradigm, in this case, shows how the symbols used are interconnected in depicting a larger concept of sexuality, loneliness, or women's social roles.

- Syntagm in Song Lyrics On the other hand, phrases describe how the lyrics are arranged to create a coherent narrative. In the lyrics of this song, the arrangement of words such as "night butterfly" and the phrase "flying at night" creates imagery that reinforces the concept of solitude and freedom of a woman who is treated as an object in society. In the syntagmatic order, the repeated use of the word "night" emphasizes the time that highlights the tension between personal life and the social expectations imposed on women. These phrases work together to construct a complex narrative about the social and psychological realities of women.

Analysis Using Paradigms and Syntagms

Through the paradigm, we can explore the potential meanings contained in the choice of words or symbols present in the song lyrics. Words and phrases in the lyrics of "Kupu-Kupu Malam" can be exchanged with other symbols, but they have different resonances with the connotations of each choice. Meanwhile, the phrases describe how these words are arranged to create a broader picture of the lives of women trapped in certain social roles. Overall, the analysis of the lyrics of this song using paradigms and syntagms reveals that through the choice of certain words and their arrangement in a systematic order, the song conveys a message about the social and psychological condition of women, while also depicting the tension between personal identity and societal expectations. Paradigm shows the potential for symbol substitution in that context, while the syntagma demonstrates how each word and phrase works within the narrative structure to reinforce the message.

Social Critique in Songs

Semiotic analysis of the lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" by Titiek Puspa with a social context analysis, we need to understand how the lyrics of this song reflect the social and cultural conditions of its time, as well as how the meanings contained within it relate to the broader social structure. The lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" depict a portrayal of women trapped in the reality of nightlife filled with stigma and social judgment. In this case, the social context surrounding this song can be analyzed through semiotic theory, which explains how signs and symbols in the lyrics function to reflect and mirror certain social conditions.

Analysis of Social Context through the Lyrics of the Song "Kupu-Kupu Malam"

1. Women and Social Norms The lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" depict women as "night butterflies," a symbol often associated with the work done by women at night, such as being sex workers or women involved in nightlife. In the social context at the time this song was created (the 1970s), women who worked at night were often viewed negatively by society. They were often labeled as immoral women or those who had "fallen" in life. Through semiotic analysis with Saussure's theory, we see that the symbol "night

butterfly" is a sign that can be understood as a representation of the tension between a woman's personal identity and societal views towards her. The sign "butterfly" (which is usually considered beautiful and free) in the context of this song is transformed into something more tragic and alienated—related to an isolated life full of stigma. In this social context, the song reflects how rigid social norms govern women's lives, limit their freedom, and impose a negative moral stigma on certain life choices.

2. **Gender Inequality and the Social Roles of Women** This song also touches on the issue of gender inequality that was very relevant at the time, where women were often considered subjects who had to adhere to social norms set by a patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, women are often positioned as objects and must meet certain expectations, whether in domestic, social, or sexual roles. The lyrics of this song, which depict women trapped in nightlife, reflect how women often have no choices in their lives or only have limited choices constrained by social and economic circumstances.

Semiotic analysis helps us see how the lyrics convey meaning about the difficulties and limitations faced by women in a patriarchal society. The symbolism in this song depicts feelings of being trapped and isolated, which are the result of the inequalities present in the social structure. In a broader social context, this song depicts social inequality that forces women to choose life paths that do not always align with their desires or dreams.

3. **Critique of Social Structure** Besides depicting the social reality of women, this song can also be seen as a critique of the social structure that limits individual freedom, especially women's freedom. In the social context of Indonesia in the 1970s, which was still heavily influenced by conservative norms, women who chose to work outside the home or in nightlife were often viewed as betrayers of traditional values.

By using a semiotic approach, we can understand how the symbol of the "night butterfly" in the lyrics of this song not only depicts the social conditions of women but also serves as a critique of social norms that limit women's life choices. In a more modern society, although there have been changes in the perception of women, this song remains relevant because issues of gender discrimination and social inequality still exist.

4. **The Economic and Social Influence on Women's Life Choices** Besides cultural and moral factors, the lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" also reflect socio-economic realities. Many women are trapped in non-ideal jobs, including in the entertainment industry or nightlife, due to economic limitations or limited choices. In this social context, the song reflects the reality that many women are forced to live lives full of challenges, isolation, and sometimes lack of understanding from society. Difficult economic conditions often force them to choose jobs that are looked down upon, but this is more a result of the lack of access to better options.

Semiotic analysis through Saussure's theory shows how the relationship between sign and meaning in the lyrics of this song relates to the socio-economic structure that limits women's choices. Therefore, the symbol of the "night butterfly" not only reflects a life full of stigma but also depicts the socio-economic realities that influenced women's lives at that time—and remain relevant to this day.

Relevance to the Modern Context

The lyrics of the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" by Titiek Puspa with modern contextual relevance, we need to see how the symbolism in the song still holds appeal and relevance in today's society, even though the song was first released in the past. In this context, we will utilize the results of semiotic analysis that have revealed the symbolic meanings in the song's lyrics and relate them to social, cultural, and gender issues that remain relevant in modern society.

Relevance to the Modern Context:

The Role of Women in Society One of the main themes in the song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" is the depiction of women's roles in society, which is positioned within the image of the "night butterfly." This symbol refers to women who work at night, often associated with marginal professions, such as sex workers or women trapped in nightlife. Although this song was made in the previous decade, the theme of how women are confronted with social stereotypes and roles limited by traditional norms is still very relevant in the modern context.

In today's era, despite progress in gender equality, many women are still trapped in narrow and limited social roles, both in the workplace and in their personal lives. Semiotic analysis using Saussure's theory shows how signs in song lyrics, such as "night butterfly," contain broader meanings related to the social and psychological conditions of women who still face similar challenges, even in this more open world.

Freedom vs. Social Norms In the lyrics of this song, there is a tension between individual freedom (depicted with the symbolism of "flying") and social restrictions (represented by the isolated nightlife). In the modern world, women often face similar dilemmas, where their personal freedom in leading social and sexual lives often conflicts with existing norms. Although there has been progress in women's rights to choose their own paths, social stigma and judgment towards certain life choices (such as working in the entertainment industry or nightlife) still persist.

Using Saussure's theory, we see how the meaning constructed in the sign "moth" can be interpreted as a representation of this tension. In the modern world, this symbol can serve as a mirror for women who struggle to find their identity amidst existing expectations. Freedom manifested in non-conventional life choices remains a relevant issue, especially with the influence of social media and pop culture that often highlight "freedom" while simultaneously criticizing life choices that do not conform to social standards.

Symbolism and Gender in Modern Culture The song "Kupu-Kupu Malam" depicts women as symbols that are more complex than mere sexual objects, although many interpretations lean towards that notion. In a modern context, the symbolism in this song can be understood more deeply as a critique of the social construction of sexuality and gender roles. The phenomenon of "night butterflies" can now be used as a symbol to discuss the role of women in the entertainment industry, the online world, and jobs related to image or physical attractiveness.

Semiotic analysis, by introducing Saussure's concept of the relationship between sign and meaning, opens up space for a more critical understanding of how gender and sexuality are constructed through media and pop culture. This song reminds us that although we live in a more advanced era in terms of gender equality, these symbols remain relevant in depicting women's experiences in a society still trapped in stereotypes and conservative views.

Social and Economic Change More broadly, this analysis also opens up the understanding that the symbol of the "night butterfly" can refer to the social and economic conditions of women who struggle in situations of extreme limitation. In the modern context, although the global economy has changed, social and economic inequality between genders remains a significant issue. Many women are forced to choose less-than-ideal jobs to survive, and this is often connected to the symbol of "night work" in this song. Therefore, the lyrics of this song are relevant to the struggles of women in facing ongoing economic and social injustices.

Conclusion

Through a semiotic analysis of the lyrics of the song "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" by Titiek Puspa, using Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, we can understand how the signs in this song function to convey deeper meanings about themes of womanhood, love, and social roles. The lyrics, with their symbolism and the relationship between the signifier and signified, depict the feelings and societal views regarding the phenomena experienced by women at night. Saussure's theory, which focuses on the structure of language and the relationships between signs, allows us to delve deeper into the meanings contained within these lyrics. The importance of semiotics in analyzing cultural texts like this song demonstrates how an understanding of language can enrich our interpretations of artistic works. The lyrics of "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" not only tell a story but also reflect the social constructs present in society at that time

The song "*Kupu-Kupu Malam*" is a work of art rich in semiotic signs. Through Ferdinand de Saussure's analysis, it can be concluded that the song represents the life of night women as a narrative filled with struggle, emotional duality, and social stigma. The song illustrates that these women live under societal pressures marked by conflicting perceptions: on one hand, they are viewed with disdain or avoidance, while on the other, they become subjects of need and admiration. Symbolic representations such as "black blood" and "blurred face" depict the heavy burdens they bear, while the emotional contradiction of "smiling through tears" highlights their resilience in facing these pressures. Thus, the song not only conveys social critique but also provides space for empathy and understanding toward this often-overlooked life. Through the use of meaningful signs, Titiek Puspa successfully delivers a profound message to listeners, reminding us to be more introspective about societal values and norms.

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