

# Anggraheni et al

*by Anggraheni Et Al*

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## When Traditional and Modern Culture Collide: Analysis of "Lathi" Song

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### ABSTRACT

*A fusion of traditional and modern culture can produce a new mood in entertainment. One of the entertainments can be heard in music. As we all know, music is a form of expression that may introduce a culture. The research is carried out to look at the Indonesian cultural elements in Weird Genius's song "Lathi" from various perspectives. The song "Lathi" was picked as its widespread popularity in Indonesia, particularly on Tik Tok and Instagram. It was featured in a cover video and the Lathi Challenge, making it one of the most searched songs in 2020. Research results, a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis and semiotic theory, was employed to examine each component of the data from this song. The study's main focus was the visual, verbal, and instrumental analyses. The study's outcomes revealed a variety of cultural components in the song "Lathi" that demonstrated the song's meaning or message, especially in terms of Javanese culture.*

*Keywords: Javanese culture; content analysis; modern; semiotics; song*

### INTRODUCTION

A cultural revolution in literature and art has swept the globe. Modernism becomes the basis of a movement in art. Art is considered as a reflection of how something is perceived or experienced. It might be an emotion based on anguish, rage, or abandoned thoughts utilized to arouse people's interest. Modernism is the reality of human evolution and how society views the culture that surrounds us at any given period. Modernism is documented history (Rochetti, 2016). The culture of Indonesian society can be divided into three layers: regional or local culture, national culture, and international or global culture. There were different conflicts, disputes, and modifications of foreign culture with local, national, or vice versa with the arrival of international culture into Indonesian society (Yuliaswir & Abdullah, 2019). The three layers can blend in the arts called music.

Music is extremely important in a person's existence since it has the ability to access a person's inner world (Keray Dinçel, 2017). Music undoubtedly plays an important role in man's daily existence with its attraction to hear. Music is now regarded as a ubiquitous media and is thought to be universal today. Even individuals who do not listen to music are exposed to it through radio and television shows and commercials that use appealing melodies to market various products and services.

Weird Genius is a songwriter best known for the song "*Lathi*," which is now trending. "*Lathi*" means "speaking" in the old Javanese language. The song's chorus portrays the story of a toxic relationship ruled by falsehoods and vanity. The song is a hybrid of contemporary music and English lyrics, with traditional Javanese instruments providing traditional components (Antika et al., 2020). This study aims to look at the Javanese cultural elements in Weird Genius' song "*Lathi*." The data is then analyzed using a quantitative way to analyze this song.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

From the nineteenth century until the present, modern literature reflects a period of time (Rochetti, 2016). Art is an essential component of the human civilization system, constantly evolving due to culture, technology, and science advances. As part of the arts, music can communicate with others. One of the goals of music is to communicate.

<sup>4</sup> Some scholars analyzed music through semiotics, Tarasti, E. (2012). The book entitled "*Myth and music: A semiotic approach to the aesthetics of myth in music, especially that of Wagner, Sibelius, and Stravinsky*," tried to investigate the relationship between myth and semiotics. Although his research may have a specific anthropological basis, its emphasis is on the Western art music tradition. Moreover, the conclusion was that myth and music open new perspectives.

<sup>3</sup> Skeide (2021), in "*Music to My Ears: A Material-semiotic Analysis of Fetal Heart Sounds in Midwifery Prenatal Care*," analyzed that three orchestrations are compared based on ethnographic experiences. In which three different instruments assist audiences in listening to what becomes fetal heartbeat music and qualifying fetal and pregnant life in connection to one another. The audible heartbeat music indicates a youngster needing parental love and care to listen in the Doppler-based orchestration. The Pinard horn creates esoteric fetal music that can be enjoyed by the midwife alone as a talented instrumentalist and aids in the enactment of a kid hidden in the belly.

Antika et al. (2020) in "*Analisis Makna Denotasi, Konotasi, Mitos pada Lagu "Lathi" Karya Weird Genius*" reveal the denotation, connotation, and myth in *Lathi* Song. This research had the same object of this research. The different things are about the semiotics that is chosen to analyze. Antika et al. (2020) used Roland Barthes's theory, and this research used content analysis and Saussure's dyadic.

According to all previous studies, were already mentioned that music and semiotic analysis able to create new perspectives, to get something new. So, it is time to stand Saussure's Dyadic semiotics and content analysis to analyze "*Lathi*" song, a masterpiece from Indonesian musician to know the reason and meaning of particulars symbols of Javanese culture which blended with modern music.

## METHODOLOGY

Integrating the many components of research projects cohesively and coherently is referred to as research design. In general, there are a few different types of study designs. The qualitative technique was utilized to collect data for this study, which was based on the study's purpose. The observation was used to collect the data in this study. In the "Lathi" song, semiotics was employed to reveal the significance of each symbol.

The data used in this study were collected from a music video entitled "Lathi" and song lyrics by Weird Genius, which has a 3.06-minute music video duration. This song was released on 27 February 2020. The lyrics of this song were written by Weird Genius and Sara Fajria. In collecting data, searching the original or official music video and lyrics is a must. There are several steps in analyzing the data resources as follows:

1. Gathering the data  
Find the original or official video music on YouTube. The supporting data is also the important information from the open-access journal and website.
2. Identifying the data  
Begin by analyzing the music video's cultural aspects (verbal, visual, and instrumental). Semiotic type is also decided to reveal the meaning of the symbols.
3. Analysis and classifying the data  
The following stage analyzes and categorizes the data resources by cultural element (verbal, visual, and instrumental).
4. Inferring the data  
Based on the previous analysis, the researchers will conclude.

Content analysis was the data analysis technique employed by the researchers. One of the most prevalent qualitative research approaches is content analysis. According to Cohen et al., 2002, the content analysis focuses on language and linguistic aspects, meaning in context, and is methodical and verifiable. Stemler (2015) mentions the content analysis that has become the most powerful tool in the researcher's kit. There are three focuses in analyzing the content of the resources data, as follows:

- a. Visual Analysis  
This study's resource data conveys the visual analysis through the music video. It consists of facial expression, physical appearance, clothing, the color of the background, and video shooting technique. The music video can be accessed.
- b. Verbal Analysis  
The lyrics of this song become the source of this study. The verbal analysis of this study relies on Halliday's theory of transitivity (1978). The lyrics with cultural aspects will be chosen to analyze.
- c. Instrument Analysis  
Instrumental analysis is generally focused on its music based on dense instrumentation and sparse instrumentation that affects the hearer's emotions, and other instruments affect the hearer's subconscious.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Weird Genius choreographed this song with an Indonesian, incredibly modern and Javanese traditional feel. This is demonstrated in the video clip, which depicts several Javanese cultures below in Table 1. The song's culture was investigated in this study. Using content analysis, the researcher carried out three types of research. This research is primarily concerned with verbal, visual, and instrumental analyses. Researchers discovered multiple civilizations in the song as a result of their research.

Table 1. Contents in "Lathi" Song

Sources	Time (s)	Kinds of Source (contents)
Karawitan Music	0:00-0:06	Instrument
Singer Start	0:07	Verbal
Sad Expression	0:07	Visual
Modern Dancer	0:18	Visual
Male model seduces the singer	0:30	Visual
Suffering from chain iron and bleeding	0:45	Visual
Suffering from chain iron and Black smoke	0:54	Visual
Change into demon	0:58	Verbal and Visual
Singing with black smoke background	1:02	Verbal and Visual
Dalang	1:03	Visual
Traditional Dancer	1:09	Visual
Kuda Lumping	1:18	Visual
Fire attraction	1:22	Instrument and Visual
Shards attraction	1:30	Instrument and Visual
Violence act by male model	2:06	Instrument and Visual
Take vengeance	2:18	Instrument and Visual
Crying	2:30	Visual
Closing. Singer and Male Model in the rain	3:00-3:06	Instrument and Visual

### Visual Analysis

The distribution of visual data is depicted in the first table below. Four different sorts of cultural arts in the song were discovered. The song features shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) art, dalang, leathered horse (*kuda lumping / jelathin*), and traditional dance (gambyong dance) cultures. The three arts are featured in the "Lathi" song clip. Almost every video scenario features all three of them. As a result, the materials combine a current style to make the song seem content.

Table 2 Distribution of Visual Culture

Type	Origin
Shadow puppet (wayang kulit)	Central java
Dalang	Central Java
Leathered horse (kuda lumping/jelathin)	Central and East java
Traditional dance (tari gambyong)	Central Java

## Verbal Analysis

The lyrics of the "Lathi" song describe what a person says might be used to determine his or her attitude. Weird Genius simply uses the aphorism from the first point of "*Ajining diri ana ing lathi*" in the song. The words come twice in the song, at 00:58-01:08 and 02:18:02:29 minutes, respectively.

Table 3. Distribution of Verbal Analysis

Type (Javanese Language)	Time (s)
<i>Kowe rak iso mlayu soko kesalahan</i>	00:58 - 01:08
<i>Ajining diri ono ing lathi</i>	02:18-02:29

The song's lyrics demonstrate that self-respect is contingent on what is uttered. Speech is a promise that will turn into an obligation, and speech is a person's image. Others will judge us based on how we communicate what we say with our lips. The lyrics are inspired by the Javanese proverb "*Ajining diri ana ing lathi, Ajining raga ana ing busono.*" The complete lyric is as follows:

### "Lathi," Lyric

I was born a fool

Broken all the rules

Seeing all null

Denying all of the truth

Everything has changed

It all happened for a reason

Down from the first stage

It isn't something we fought for

Never wanted this kind of pain

Turned myself so cold and heartless

But one thing you should know

*'Kowe ra iso mlayu saka kesalahan*

*Ajining diri ana ing lathi'*

Pushing through the countless pain

And all I know that this love's a bless and curse

Everything has changed

It all happened for a reason

Down from the first stage

It isn't something we fought for

Never wanted this kind of pain

Turned myself so cold and heartless

But one thing you should know

*'Kowe ra iso mlayu saka kesalahan*

*Ajining diri ana ing lathi'*

Source: <sup>5</sup> <https://hot.detik.com/music/d-5028805/lirik-lagu-lathi-dan-terjemahannya-kolaborasi-weird-genius-dan-sara-fajira>

### Instrument Analysis

Based on the study, the researchers discovered that the song *Weird Genius* included gamelan instruments, based on the study's focus on the instrumental portion of music. Almost the entire song is spent listening to the gamelan's variety of sounds. Then gamelan is mixed with current music that still includes gamelan music. Modern music blended with gamelan instruments can bring the audiences' imagination to the women's world full of love and anger. Gamelan instruments also gave the mystics atmosphere, and it is epic with traditional and modern dancers to reflect the woman's act.

Table 4. Distribution of Instrument Analysis

Javane Instrument	Time (s)
Gamelan	00:01 - 00:30
	00:53 - 01:03
	01:08 - 01:36
	01:38 -01:52
	02:14 - 02:23
	02:29 - 02:56

### Semiotics Analysis

This study used Saussure semiotics to reveal the real meaning of each symbol in the song. According to Saussure quotes by Sobur in his book *Semiotics Communication*, semiotics or semiology is a science that examines the life of signs in society (Sobur, 2009, p. 12). Video music is a kind of moving image. A film or moving image should be judged artistically and semiotically, not rationally. If it is rationally judged, a film or moving image may be worthless because it has no specific purpose and meaning (Mudjiono,2020). According to Saussure, a sign cannot be delivered without a marker. The sign or marked sign includes its sign and is thus a linguistic factor. The process of a sign or marker will produce an external reality or sign. Language signs always have two facets: signifiers and signs (signified). Signification is a relationship between these two, and the value of any sign is determined by its relationship with other signs in the system (Chandler 2002). According to the Saussure model, the signifier and the signified are inseparable components of a sign, and the relationship between them is the signification. Linguistic sign, according to Saussure, unites a notion with a sound, image, or gesture rather than an object and a name (Saussure, 2011). The figure of Saussure's dyadic is as follow:

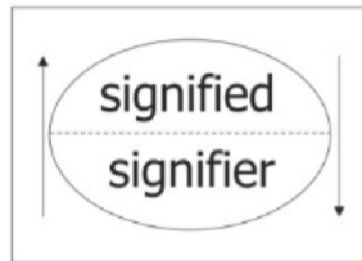


Figure 1. Saussure's Dyadic

Several Javanese traditions have chosen to meet the song's meaning, dance, and music; of course, it has its purpose. The song becomes symbols or signs to show the hearers or audiences' sadness, hate, anger, disappointment, and regret.

Table 5. Semiotic Analysis of Content

Signifier	Signified
Lathi (word)	Every single creature has its tongue to speak and communicate. It has become a symbol of communication or words or promises given to other people.
Sad expression	The song's opening shows sad expressions, and it is an introduction and clue about the song's story.
Modern Dancer	active movement depicts the fast movement of time.
Male model seduces the singer.	It describes the behavior of a man who loves a woman but finally hurts her.
Suffering from the iron chain on her neck and bleeding	The chain around the neck is interpreted as a snare of love that shackles an innocent woman. Love that even makes the woman feel shackled and hurt and bleed over the shackles of love.
Suffering from the iron chain and Black smoke	The sadness and pain. Black smoke gives the impression of a state that turns dark or evil, synonymous with death and the mystery behind its power.
Change into demon	The side of a woman's face that has let her down portrays anger; turning herself into a cold-hearted, heartless, hurtful person can turn a shackled innocent character into someone strong to repay the heartache received.
Sing with the black smoke background.	Expressing the dark feeling changes to reach the peak of emotion.
Dalang	The meaning of dalang is that life looks like a play. Many characters play and take part in our lives. As a puppet, we have to face the possibility of our life.
Traditional Dancer	It means that a woman with a feminine character, The tenderness of a woman, and faith.



Leathered horse (kuda lumping/jelathin)	The dynamics of the kuda lumping dance describe the strength, emotion, pain, and looks of how a man whips his riding horse. Power over a girl is represented by a kuda lumping which a dancer ride.
Fire attraction	It shows the emotions of a relationship that explode, especially in a love relationship.
Shard's attraction, a woman with a bit of smile	The representation of a man treats a woman full of love and passion. It is expressed with a bit of a smile, although it is just for a while.
Violence act by male model	The image of a man casually treats a woman. He hurt her easily and broke her heart.
Take vengeance	A wave of great anger takes over the woman's hurt, emotion, disappointment, and sadness—the peak of anger.
Crying	It illustrates the relief of having ended all of it.
Closing. Singer and Male Model in the rain	Rain means clean up. The vengeance in the end.

Saussure's theoretical approach helps know the sign system and how it works in this music video. This poster's verbal and nonverbal signs represent a meaning or referent or external reality. The "Lathi" song is a song that talks about toxic relationships. This work tells about the inner side of a woman in love—a woman born innocent breaks all rules because everything is seen as empty and denies all truth. Everything has changed, and the change happens for a reason. Love that is lived describes the situation of a woman who is shackled by chains with a bloody body. Even though the purpose of love is to get happiness, it is precisely love that turns her into a cold heart and heartless. A person's self-esteem is on his tongue or words; *Lathi* here symbolizes it. However, because *Lathi* finally made an innocent woman shackled by love change him from an innocent woman to like a vengeful demon. Most of the song lyrics directly express women's feelings.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Various Indonesian cultural traits in the "Lathi" song were discovered during the research. The song's choreography includes a dalang, leathered horse (*kuda lumping*), traditional dance (*Tari gambyong*), and shadow puppets (*wayang kulit*) employed as the proper symbols of life. In addition, this "Lathi" song contains elements of gamelan instruments and Javanese phrases. The song is contemporary, combining local culture with contemporary elements. To put it another way, this song with a current premise blends art and culture. It is hoped that many young generations and communities should be aware of the value of cultural ethics. The chosen Javanese culture was epic to present and blend with modern music and love stories. Dalang shows that life looks like a play. Many characters play and take part in our lives. As a puppet, we have to face the possibility of our life. "Lathi" itself has a dept meaning of the importance to keep our promise and say the good things to communicate with the others.

Moreover, the diversity of cultures contributes to our country's cultural richness, serving as a significant capital for developing a national culture that is both personable and conscious of its surroundings (Wijatmaka, 2012). Indonesia's cultural and natural wealth must be handled for the country to flourish and develop by utilizing the potential of the surrounding community through a public development model. Local cultural values and expertise, which have long been established, may always be preserved and promoted as an essential development resource. Javanese culture and Nusantara culture can also be incredible if blended with modern and suitable.

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