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## The Message of Peace In The Song Atouna El Toufoule By Remi Bandali:

### A Semiotic Study Of Ferdinand De Saussure

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#### Abstract

**Keywords:**

Peace Message,  
Semiotic,  
Atouna  
el Toufoule,  
Ferdinand  
Saussure

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Messages of peace can be effectively conveyed through various artistic expressions, including songs. This study examines the message of peace contained in the song Atouna El Toufoule by Remi Bandali, which reflects the suffering of Palestinian children as victims of war and conflict. The research is motivated by the ongoing global concern over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which threatens peace and security, especially for vulnerable groups such as children. Using a qualitative method, this study applies Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to analyze the song lyrics and video imagery. The analysis focuses on signifiers and signifieds to reveal how linguistic and visual elements construct meaning. The findings show that Atouna El Toufoule contains a strong message of peace, emphasizing children's longing for safety, freedom, and a return to their childhood. Repeated lyrics such as "Give us peace" and "Give us childhood" symbolize an urgent plea for justice, security, and dignity. Visual representations in the music video further reinforce these meanings, depicting destroyed homes, children's tears, and dark skies as symbols of loss and oppression. The study concludes that the song is not only an artistic expression but also a powerful medium of resistance, awareness, and humanitarian advocacy. It represents a universal call for peace inspired by Islamic values of love, justice, and harmony.

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**Abstrak**

**Kata Kunci:**

Pesan  
Perdamaian,  
Semiotik,  
Atouna  
el Toufoule,  
Ferdinand de  
Saussure,

Pesan perdamaian dapat disampaikan secara efektif melalui berbagai ekspresi seni, termasuk lagu. Studi ini menganalisis pesan perdamaian yang terkandung dalam lagu "Atouna El Toufoule" karya Remi Bandali, yang menggambarkan penderitaan anak-anak Palestina sebagai korban perang dan konflik. Penelitian ini didorong oleh keprihatinan global yang terus berlanjut terkait konflik Israel-Palestina, yang mengancam perdamaian dan keamanan, terutama bagi kelompok rentan seperti anak-anak. Menggunakan metode kualitatif, penelitian ini menerapkan teori semiotik Ferdinand de Saussure untuk menganalisis lirik lagu dan gambar video. Analisis berfokus pada penanda dan petanda untuk mengungkapkan bagaimana unsur-unsur linguistik dan visual membangun makna. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Atouna El Toufoule mengandung pesan perdamaian yang kuat, menekankan kerinduan anak-anak akan keamanan, kebebasan, dan kembalinya masa kanak-kanak. Lirik yang diulang seperti "Berikan kami perdamaian" dan "Berikan kami masa kanak-kanak" melambangkan permohonan mendesak akan keadilan, keamanan, dan martabat. Representasi visual dalam video musik semakin memperkuat makna-makna ini, menggambarkan rumah-rumah yang hancur, air mata anak-anak, dan langit gelap sebagai simbol kerugian dan penindasan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa lagu ini bukan hanya ekspresi artistik, tetapi juga media yang kuat untuk perlawanan, kesadaran, dan advokasi kemanusiaan. Lagu ini mewakili seruan universal untuk perdamaian yang terinspirasi oleh nilai-nilai Islam tentang cinta, keadilan, dan harmoni.

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## Introduction

Messages of peace can be communicated through a variety of mediums, one of the most influential being music. (Shinar, 2003) Songs are not merely forms of entertainment; they are also powerful instruments for transmitting universal values such as harmony, mutual respect, nonviolence, justice, and compassion. In the Islamic worldview, peace is considered a comprehensive concept that involves establishing harmonious relationships with God, nature, and humanity – irrespective of religious affiliation, ethnicity, or cultural background. One of the most poignant artistic works that embodies such a peace message is Atouna El Toufoule by Remi Bandali. The song was born from the suffering of

the Palestinian people as a result of the prolonged Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which has remained a central humanitarian issue in global discourse. Continuous military aggression has destroyed homes, deprived children of education, undermined economic stability, and left countless families broken. Among those most deeply affected are children, who have not only lost their possessions but also their sense of safety, identity, and the joy of childhood. (Mukaromah et al., 2021)

Music is deeply intertwined with human experience.(N, 2012) It functions as a medium through which artists express their emotions, thoughts, and struggles, enabling listeners to connect and empathize. Arabic music, in particular, is closely linked with the social and cultural conditions of the Arab world, often becoming a vehicle for political resistance, identity expression, and the promotion of shared values. Songwriters use language artistically through stylistic devices, vocal intonation, metaphors, and wordplay – amplified by melodies and musical arrangements that strengthen the emotive power of their messages (Hidayat, 2019). In the case of Atouna El Toufoule, the poet uses the song as a medium to reveal the pain of Palestinian children whose dreams and childhood are shattered by war. This narrative stands in sharp contrast to the Islamic principle of rahmah (compassion), which emphasizes love and peace as foundations for harmonious human coexistence.

To explore how this message of peace is encoded, this study applies the semiotic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. Semiotics, in this sense, serves as a useful analytical tool for examining how signifiers (linguistic expressions, sounds, and symbols) relate to signifieds (meanings, emotions, and social realities). By analyzing the signs and symbols embedded in the lyrics of Atouna El Toufoule, this research seeks to uncover how the song conveys humanitarian values and social commentary. According to (Rorong, 2019), Saussure’s model of semiotics allows researchers to examine not only the explicit textual content but also the implicit meanings shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

This study is relevant for several reasons. First, it provides a linguistic and cultural analysis of a song that has become an emblem of peace and resistance. Second, it highlights the role of art—particularly music—as a tool for raising global awareness and strengthening solidarity with oppressed communities. Third, it contributes to the broader discourse on peace communication by showing how artistic expressions can function as symbolic resistance against violence and injustice. Ultimately, by analyzing *Atouna El Toufoule*, this research aims to demonstrate that music is more than just a form of expression; it is also a powerful cultural instrument capable of inspiring empathy, solidarity, and social transformation.

### **Method**

This study employs a qualitative research method combined with the semiotic approach of Ferdinand de Saussure. Qualitative methods are appropriate because they enable researchers to explore meanings, interpretations, and symbolic representations in texts or other cultural products (Subagyo & Kristian, 2023). In this research, the focus is on identifying and describing the message of peace found in the song *Atouna El Toufoule* by Remi Bandali. The analysis is divided into two main sub-results: (1) meaning and (2) representation. The semiotic approach is not only concerned with the linguistic meaning of the song but also with uncovering the signs and symbols embedded in the lyrics.

The primary data source in this study is the lyrics of *Atouna El Toufoule*. Supporting materials include the official video clip and additional references such as journal articles and news reports discussing the Palestinian context. The song was accessed through YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@meyoofficial2333>. Secondary data were also obtained from relevant literature related to semiotic theory and the socio-political context of Palestine.

The analysis follows the principles of Saussure's semiotic theory, focusing on the relationship between linguistic signs and their meanings. Each line of the

song was examined to identify its symbolic structure, which was then interpreted in light of the Palestinian conflict and messages of peace. The validity of the analysis was strengthened by cross-referencing multiple academic sources and previous studies that employed the same theoretical framework.

**Result and Discussion**

The results of the analysis of the song Atouna el Toufuli, the researcher found new findings, namely the message of peace described by a poet named Remi Bandali, he tried to make song lyrics that were very meaningful and represented the conflict that occurred in Palestine due to the crimes of Israel. This conflict is still a topic of conversation around the world, so researchers examine and analyze more deeply the meaning contained in the song Atouna el Toufuli. The following are the findings found by the researcher.(Chaniago et al., 2020)

Table 1: The Message of Remi Bandali's Atouna El Toufuli Song

Message	Translation	Lyrics
A little boy who came to see his house and wished his family a happy holiday.	We come with holiday greetings.	جِيْنَا نَعِيدُكُمْ
The child asked his friend.	And during the holidays we asked you.	بِالْعِيدِ مَسْأَلَكُمْ
Why is our house not decorated like a holiday celebration, because the house was destroyed by fire.	Why are there no holiday decorations in our place.	لَيْسَ مَا فِي عِنَّا، لَا أَعْيَادُ وَلَا زِينَةُ
He asked why is it like this?	O World	يَا عَالَمَ

My land and house were burned down by the bombs.	My land is burned to the ground.	أَرْضِي مَحْرُوقَةٌ
The land was occupied by Israeli Zionists and took away the children's freedom to play.	My land was stolen for its freedom.	أَرْضِي حَرَبِيَّةٌ مَسْرُوقَةٌ
Children dream and ask when will there be a day when all our homes and childhoods return?	Our dreaming sky asks the day.	سَمَائِنَا عَمَّ تَحْلَمُ، عَمَّ تَسْأَلُ الْيَوْمَ
And ask where is the beautiful sun without the darkness of dust from Zionist bombs?	Where the beautiful sun.	وَيْنَ الشَّمْسِ الْحَلِوَةِ
Where are the birds flying in the beautiful blue sky? Because the bomb explosion made the sky black.	Where the wings of a dove flap.	وَرُفُوفِ الْحَمَامِ
<b>Bait 2</b>		
The little boy spoke back, O world?	O World	يَا عَالَمَ
My land and house were burned down by the bombs.	My land is burned to the ground.	أَرْضِي مَحْرُوقَةٌ
In stanza two, it is repeated, why is my land consumed by Israeli Zionists and taken away the freedom of children to play.	My land was stolen for its freedom.	أَرْضِي حَرَبِيَّةٌ مَسْرُوقَةٌ
Their land and houses are small but their freedom is still taken away.	My land is small, like me, it's small.	أَرْضِي صَغِيرَةٌ، مِثْلِي صَغِيرَةٌ
The little boy wanted peace.	Give peace.	أَعْطُونَا السَّلَامَ
We want to experience our childhood.	Give us a childhood.	وَأَعْطُونَا الطُّفُولَةَ

We want to experience our childhood. (The lyrics are repeated, as the children feel a longing for peace in their own land.)	Give us a childhood	أَعْطُونَا الطُّفُولَةَ
We want to experience our childhood.	Give us a childhood.	أَعْطُونَا الطُّفُولَةَ
Please give us peace, and freedom to play in our own land.	Give, give, give us peace.	أَعْطُونِ ا، أَعْطُونَا، أَعْطُونَا السَّلَامَ
We want to experience our childhood by playing.	Give us a childhood.	أَعْطُونَا الطُّفُولَةَ
We want to feel our childhood has freedom.	Give us a childhood.	أَعْطُونَا الطُّفُولَةَ
We want to experience our childhood having parents and feeling peaceful.	Give us a childhood.	أَعْطُونَا، أَعْطُونَا، أَعْطُونَا السَّلَامَ
<b>Bait 3</b>		
By the time I was 4 years old, my childhood had already been taken away.	Where is my little four-year-old.	<i>A mon enfance A mes quatre ans</i>
We don't feel troubled, but why is our childhood being interrupted.	I am innocent.	<i>A l'innocence</i>
Young children want to experience playing in Lebanon's beautiful gardens.	In a beautiful garden in Lebanon.	<i>Au beau jardin Au neau À ce Liban</i>
They called the Zionists to listen to the sadness of the little children in Palestine.	What children call.	<i>Qu'appellent les enfants</i>
And ask the Zionists?	I ask you.	<i>Je vous demande</i>
When will you bring back my peace and childhood.	When to return.	<i>Vous prie de render</i>
We don't have a problem, but why all this devastation.	All are innocent.	<i>Toute l'innocence</i>
Our childhood wanted to experience playing.	From my childhood.	<i>De mon enfance</i>

Our childhood wanted to feel our parents' love.	From my childhood.	<i>De mon enfance</i>
So save us from these Zionist soldiers.	Save our childhood.	<i>Sauve, l'enfance</i>
So save us from these Zionist soldiers.	Save our childhood.	<i>Sauve, l'enfance</i>
So save us from these Zionist soldiers. (This lyric is repeated 3 times, because he feels that his childhood must be saved from Israeli oppression.)	Save, save, save our childhood.	<i>Sauve, Sauve, Sauve, l'enfance</i>
I'm a child, we're innocent.	I'm a child.	<i>I am a child</i>
And wanted to deliver a message to the Zionist Israelis.	Who has something to say.	<i>With something to say</i>
And please listen to my wishes.	Please listen to me.	<i>Please listen to me</i>
We want to play again like we used to before this war.	We want to play again.	<i>Who wants to play</i>
Why don't you give us our freedom?	Why don't you let me.	<i>Why don't you let me</i>
The doors of those houses are always waiting for me to come back home and play with my family.	My door is waiting for me.	<i>My doors are waiting</i>
My friends are always praying for the return of our homes and land.	My friends are praying.	<i>My friends are praying</i>
They are children begging from the bottom of their hearts to be given back their freedom.	<i>Small hearts are begging.</i>	<i>Small hearts are begging</i>
They asked for a chance for us to experience our childhood.	Give us a chance.	<i>Give us a chance 5x</i>
And they reaffirmed that they were given the opportunity to reconcile.	Please, please, give us a chance.	<i>Please, please, give us a chance. (Lirik Lagu Atuna Tufuli Arab, Latin, Dan Artinya</i>

	<i>Lengkap (Tirto.Id), n.d.)</i>
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Atouna el Toufoule's song has a heartfelt message and describes the sadness of Palestinian children. The song describes how children in the Gaza Strip are victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and they lose their playtime because they are victims of Israeli Zionist violence. The song was made in Fushah Arabic in the 1980s and popularized by Lebanese child singer Remi Bendali. Remi was born in Tripoli, Lebanon, on July 4, 1979, into a family of musicians. Rene Bendali's father was also a famous musician in Lebanon in the 1970s. The poet created this song because he directly witnessed the war that took place from June 6, 1982 to June 5, 1985. The war was fought between Israel and the Syrian-backed Lebanese nationalist militia and Hezbollah militia in the southern region of Lebanon, which attempted to attack Palestinians in the Gaza area in the most ruthless manner. (Aoun & Leroy, 2019)

The conflict between Israel and Palestine originates from the feud between Jews and Arabs, this conflict has existed since the time of the Roman Empire in Palestine. From 1517-1917, the Ottoman Turkish Empire ruled Lebanon, Syria and Palestine for approximately three centuries. This conflict shows how the Israeli military carried out attacks using various types of weapons and strategies in the Palestinian territories, especially in the Gaza Strip. The attacks included mass killings through land, air and sea operations, which not only targeted military forces, but also resulted in casualties among children, women, pregnant women, people with disabilities, medical personnel, and destroyed educational institutions and media.

This situation reflects the complexity of the conflict by illustrating its wide impact on various segments of Palestinian society. (Karisha, 2023) This heartbreaking condition during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is voiced by the poet in the song "Atouna El Toufoule" in the lyrics of which the poet hints that

there has been regret, pain and anger of children whose voices have been hidden behind the roar of bombs due to war. This song is a symbol of the childhood of Lebanese children who were attacked by Zionists and a symbol for those who need freedom and peace,(Zahra, 2025) because with this conflict they have to feel the fear and noise of bombs thrown by Israeli Zionists, the psychological conflict contained in the song also illustrates that these children want to feel the peace of their childhood and feel the time to play happily with their friends and family.

**Representation of Peace Value in Remi Bandali's Atouna El Toufuli Song**

In the lyrics of this song created by Remi Bandali, there is a message and value of peace that is expected by a child because he wants freedom and feels the time to play and be accompanied by his family, but that hope is lost when a group of Israeli soldiers commit brutalities so that a small child must become a victim. This song from the video clip interprets the values of peace.

Table 2: Representation of Peace Value in Remi Bandali's Atouna El Toufuli Song

No.	Image	Signifier	Signified
1.	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official Video duration 0:22</p>	A little boy was crying and shedding tears. And he asked the Zionist soldiers, when is the holiday coming?	This video clip represents a child who wants peace because he asks when the holiday comes, from the question has a meaning where the child knows that the holiday is a happy day and full of peaceful situations.

<p>2.</p>	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 0:24</p>	<p>A little girl asked again why we don't have a house and holiday decorations (jewelry).</p>	<p>This video clip represents a little boy who longs for peace in his house and makes decorations during the holidays. His words mean that he is sad because his current condition cannot feel the peace and warmth of the family in his childhood.</p>
<p>3.</p>	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 0:24</p>	<p>The little girl said, O world, my house and land are on fire.</p>	<p>This video clip represents a little boy who feels sad so he asks again why it had to be our house that burned down so his words have the meaning that he wants warmth with his family and does not want a situation like this.</p>
<p>4.</p>		<p>Our sky is dreaming, asking the days why the sky is not as bright as usual but looks dark</p>	<p>This video clip represents someone who dreams that the sky is bright and beautiful again, so the dream has a deep meaning because behind the bright sky there is warmth and peace. The words are a</p>

	<p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 0:39</p>	<p>with black dust.</p>	<p>formulation that has the value of peace.</p>
<p>5.</p>	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 0:46</p>	<p>Where is the beautiful sun, the birds flapping their wings?</p>	<p>This video clip represents wanting the beauty of the bright sun again and the birds that flap their wings in the beautiful sky, through the words have a deep meaning where a mother and child want a clear sky and do not want a dark sky full of black dust, because a clear sky has a meaning of peace because everyone can enjoy its tranquility and beauty.</p>
<p>6.</p>	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 0:53</p>	<p>My land was stolen for its freedom,</p>	<p>This video clip represents the situation of a person whose land is controlled by Israeli Zionists, from his words he has a hope for peace so that his home and land return to calm and peace, the word freedom here means that someone wants to feel peace.</p>

<p>7.</p>	 <p>Source: Youtube Meyo Official</p> <p>Video duration 1:03</p>	<p>Give us peace, and give us childhood.</p>	<p>The lyrics of this song and video clip represent the desire of a child who wants to feel his childhood with peace, this little boy asks for peace to the Israeli Zionists so as not to do brutalities and bombings to his land and home. The words give us a childhood here have a deep meaning where a child wants a childhood that can play in peace.</p>
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The lyrics of the song Atouna El Toufoule and its accompanying video clip communicate a profound message of peace and resistance, articulated through the voice and perspective of a child. This artistic choice reflects the reality on the ground, where chaos and destruction caused by Israeli Zionist aggression have left children and families in a state of fear and loss. By portraying these scenes through a child’s lens, the poet emphasizes the innocence and vulnerability of the most affected victims of war. The message embedded in this representation is not merely to express sorrow but also to inspire awareness and mobilize young people around the world to show solidarity with Palestine and to advocate for peace and justice.

The creation of this song was deeply rooted in the poet’s emotional response to the suffering of Palestinian children, who have been deprived of their safety, education, and the warmth of family due to the ongoing conflict. (Massad, 2012) Every lyric of the song reflects a deliberate attempt to symbolize lost childhood, making the figure of a child the central narrator and emotional anchor of the piece. The title “Atouna El Toufoule”, which translates to “Give Us Back Our Childhood,” powerfully conveys this sense of loss – reminding listeners of the children’s longing for a peaceful life, laughter in playgrounds, and a home

free from violence and fear. Through these semiotic elements of language and imagery, the poet encodes a universal message that transcends political borders: the right of every child to live in peace.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that *Atouna El Toufoule* is not merely an artistic composition, but a symbolic act of resistance, a call for peace, and a medium of humanitarian awareness. Through the tender voice of a child, the poet successfully conveys the profound impact of war on the most vulnerable group in society—Palestinian children. The interplay between lyrical meaning and visual imagery highlights the stark contrast between the harsh realities of conflict and the universal right of every child to live in safety and joy (Fairclough, 2018). Thus, the song transcends simple storytelling and functions as both a moral appeal and a political message directed at the global community.

One of the most striking findings is the song's ability to transcend cultural, linguistic, and political boundaries despite its simple artistic form. The values of peace and hope embedded in each lyric generate a universal emotional resonance, demonstrating how music can create a shared space of human identity across diverse audiences. Moreover, *Atouna El Toufoule* reveals the transformative power of art as a tool of collective memory and global awareness, capable of inspiring empathy, solidarity, and collective action (Small, 1998).

The limitations of this study lie in its focus on textual and visual analysis, which does not fully account for how different cultural audiences may interpret the song. Additionally, the research does not explore in depth the production and dissemination context of the song, which could further illuminate how its message spreads and influences various social groups. Future studies may benefit from incorporating audience reception analysis or comparative cultural perspectives to enrich the understanding of the song's broader impact.

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### **Authors' Contribution Statement**

Salma Nuraeni was primarily responsible for conceptualizing the research focus, conducting the semiotic analysis based on Ferdinand de Saussure's framework, and drafting the initial manuscript. Jarot Wahyudi contributed to refining the theoretical structure, validating the analytical framework, and providing critical revisions to strengthen the academic rigor of the paper. Both authors collaboratively reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript, ensuring that it accurately reflects their shared scholarly contributions.

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