

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

Music is both a written representation for musical sound and a pattern of sounds produced by people playing instruments or singing in rhythm, melody, or harmony. Music is not a natural entity because the sounds can be used to define and transform scores into deliberate objects. Songs have the ability to express and provoke a variety of emotions, including desire, optimism, happiness, and even madness. The song lyrics convey the message. The narrative of a song will help to deliver the message. Music is a work of art that has a significant impact on culture and serves a variety of purposes, including culture, entertainment, and communication, (Daemasya, 2023).

According to Sasongko (2016), the term 'pop music' is often referred to as 'contemporary music' simply to describe it as 'the music of today'. It is a form of modern culture in modern society. The term 'pop' comes from the word 'popular'. As Hardjana (2002) directly puts it, pop music is “the music of the common people, commercial, and a form of Western cultural influence”. Thus, it is the music of the common people, pop music actually has a specific character that is not far from the character of popular culture.

Meanwhile based on Rosebaugh (2022), popular music is not only entertainment, but also a reflection and shaper of example, can address topics of love, heartbreak, friendship, and even social issues such injustice and social change. Popular music is the most popular form of art, and popular music artists continue to have a significant societal impact, therefore it is critical to research popular music using all available analytical tools and paradigms.

The development of music in the world today is increasingly faster. We can easily hear almost all genres of music from various parts of the world every day. Both homeland musicians, musicians from Western countries, and Asian musicians, are competing with each other to produce a work that can be enjoyed by the wider community. It cannot be denied that music trends in Indonesia are also influenced by music trends from western and Asian countries, one of the western artists whose songs are trending among Indonesian youth is Taylor Swift.

Taylor Swift is a well-known American vocalist, lyricist, record maker, and performing artist. Modern York College granted her a privileged Specialist of Fine Arts degree in May 2022. She gotten the degree in appreciation of her extraordinary commitments to the music industry and her charitable work. Her individual life rouses swift's music, but she has never uncovered who her melodies are around. She has said that she composes around her individual life in her tunes and feels she can share enough almost her life in her music to let individuals know what she's going through (Urvashi, 2024).

Retrieved from Prambors (2023), since her 17-year debut, Taylor has often been the female musician with the No. 1 album on the world charts. With all these achievements, renowned universities including Berklee College of Music, Stanford University and Harvard University, have included Taylor Swift as a course. In 2023, Taylor was included in the top 10 list of The World's Most Powerful Women according to Forbes magazine, Taylor became the only musician and became the youngest recipient of the title that year.

Singers and songwriters like Taylor Swift use their platforms to talk about personal and social experiences related to gender, which can influence listeners' perceptions of gender identity. As a highly acclaimed and prolific artist, Taylor Swift has a huge influence on popular music. Her songs often reflect her own life experiences, including gender roles and power dynamics in personal relationships. Swift often writes about the strength and vulnerability of women, both in the context of love and in her career as an artist.

Taylor Swift is known for using love, romance, and relationships as the main themes in many of her songs. Her songs reflect universal emotional experiences, such as happiness, heartbreak, disappointment and learning in relationships. The discussion of this theme allows for an exploration of how these experiences are connected to issues of feminism.

The first song by Taylor Swift that will be discussed is 'The Man', it talks about how a woman's life would be if she were a man. Through this song, she satirizes the injustices that women often experience, such as double standards in

judging behavior and more limited opportunities. The song highlights how men are often given more freedom and advantages than women in various aspects of life. Although the song is critical, it is ultimately a form of empowerment for women. Through this song, Taylor Swift wants to show that women have the same abilities and potential as men. This theme is relevant to feminism as it criticizes the norms and injustices associated with gender.

Furthermore, it is 'Mad Woman', the song explicitly describes the experiences of women who are often victims of gaslighting, which is psychological manipulation that makes the victim doubt their own reality and perception. The lyrics also highlight how women are often stigmatized as “crazy” or “insane” when they express emotions or react to unfair treatment. This song can be interpreted as a form of female empowerment. Through this song, Taylor Swift invites other women not to be afraid to speak up and fight injustice.

In addition, it is 'Mean', the lyrics express a woman's feelings towards criticism and harsh treatment she may have experienced. The lyrics show that harsh words and negative actions cannot break someone's spirit or beliefs. The song is interpreted from a feminist point of view as a story about the empowerment of individuals, including women, in the face of oppression and demeaning criticism.

Another song is 'You Belong with Me', it tells the story of a woman who experiences unrequited love, where the man is already in a relationship with another woman who is represented as beautiful by society. This can be

interpreted as a challenge to traditional romantic norms that often emphasize the importance of physical appearance and social status.

Lastly, 'Love Story' is a romantic song inspired by the classic story of Romeo and Juliet. The song tells the story of a couple who must face great obstacles to be together, but they still choose to be together because of the strength of their love. The song depicts a love that dares to go against social rules and norms. The couple in this song had to go against the blessings of their parents and the people around them to be together.

Through the five Swift's songs, it can provide a comprehensive view of how Taylor Swift uses music as a tool to promote gender equality and challenge patriarchal norms. These songs do not only entertain, but also inspire many women to speak up and fight for their rights. The researcher is interested in analyzing Taylor Swift's song because her songs describe the general female experience and challenges that they face. Swift is a global artist, she has a great influence on her listeners and fans. Swift's music has a great influence especially on young women, shaping their perspectives on love, relationships, and their place in the world. Her music can serve as a platform to engage young people in discussions about feminism and social justice. Thus, the researcher will take a study with the title "Reimagining Feminism in Taylor Swift's Lyrics: A Dual Analysis through Cultural and Radical Lenses".

A.2 Problems of the Research

1. How do the representation of love, romance, and relationships in five Swift's songs reflect feminist ideals and perspectives?
2. How do Swift's lyrics challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes through cultural and radical lenses?

A.3 Objectives of the Research

1. Revealing the representation of love, romance, and relationships in five Swift's songs reflect feminist ideals and perspectives.
2. Illustrates Swift's lyrics that challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes through cultural and radical lenses.

A.4 Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this research aims to expand readers knowledge about the intersection of gender and culture in Taylor Swift's songs, providing them with tools to critically analyze traditional gender norms and stereotypes through cultural and radical lenses in popular music.

Practically, this research help readers in understanding the practical application of feminist analysis to media especially music, improving their ability

to analyze and comprehend gender representations in popular culture, and readers can also use this research as a reference for their research.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

In this research, the researcher focusses on analyzing the lyrics of Taylor Swift songs to identify feminism through cultural and radical lenses. The songs to be analyzed include five titles, 'The Man', 'Mad Woman', 'Mean', 'You Belong with Me', and 'Love Story'. Using feminist theoretical framework to analyze lyrics and gender representation, this research may include a two of feminist perspectives, it is cultural and radical ones to provide an in-depth understanding of gender issues in Swift's music.

A.6 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Patriarchy: A society in which the eldest male is the leader of the family, or a society controlled by men in which they utilize their control for their claim advantage.
2. Taylor Swift: Taylor Swift is a popular American singer-songwriter, was born on December 13, 1989, in West Reading, Pennsylvania. She is well-known for her interesting lyrics and catchy melodies, which have elevated her to the status of global music superstar.

3. Popular Culture: is commonly defined as the activities, beliefs, artistic output, and artifacts that are prominent or prevalent in a society at a given period. It includes the behaviors and emotions that arise as a result of connection with these dominant items and is greatly impacted by mass media, mass appeal, marketing, and capitalism.

4. Feminism: Feminism is a movement for women's equality with men, as well as a movement that rejects the premise that women are primarily acted upon by an oppressive system that must be stopped.

5. Cultural feminism: Cultural feminism is a form of feminism which emphasizes the fundamental differences between men and women, based on biological differences in reproductive capacity. Cultural feminism attributes these differences to distinctive and superior virtues in women.

6. Radical feminism: Radical feminism is a philosophy which emphasizes the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women or, more specifically, the social domination of women by men.

A.7 Organization of the Research Report

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter consists of an explanation regarding the background of the research study, the problem of the research, objective of the research, the significances of the research, limitation of the research, the definition of the key terms, and the organization of the

research report. The second chapter consists of theoretical framework which explains about Cultural and Radical Feminist theory of Carol Gilligan and some relevant researches of the study. The third chapter will discuss the research method which consists of the type of research, data, source of data, the technique of collecting data, and the last is the technique of analyzing data. Then the fourth chapter is the explanation about the discussions and the results of the data that have been analyzed and the findings from the analyzed data. The last one is the fifth chapter, which contains the conclusion and suggestions.

