

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents as an introduction to the study. It covers the background of the study, the research questions, the aim of the study, the scope of study and the significance of study. This chapter also includes the clarification of key terms and organization of the paper.

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Human communicates through two primary ways; verbally (such as speaking face-to-face, lectures, etc.) and nonverbally (i.e. images, colors, etc.) to convey what is in his/her mind. The French-Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), explains that language has the capability to provide a framework for representing other than itself, including music. Hence, music is one of ways of communication. This is also in line with what is argued by some scholars such as Sacks (2010) and Wilson, an American biologist (as cited in Mbe, 2017). Both scholars believe that human is both a musical and linguistic species. Furthermore, to the same degree as literacy and language, it is noted that music is powerful in its impact on human feeling and on the interpretation of events due to its extraordinary work in six different brain mechanisms. In terms of its social function, music is part of fundamental and primal aspects of human culture. According to Hargreaves & North (1997), music is an integral part of a culture in many societies.

A discipline that emphasizes representations is called ethnomusicology. Understanding about cultural contexts, ideology and politics, about the ways in which language functions, about gender and sexuality, and about the identities of cultures is the advantages of studying music (Bohlman, 2005). By investigating music, one inseparable integral part of music is lyrics. Lyrics are a vehicle for songwriters to convey messages which are the expressions of what they feel or writing about reflections of social reality in society.

In an attempt to reveal the meaning contained in lyrics of songs, semiotics is one of suitable theories that is able to dissect meaning even further to ideology. This is due to the fact that semiotics in general sense is a study of sign. Language, words, color, gestures are sign (Chandler, 2007). There are many major semiotic theories and one of them is from Roland Barthes. Barthes' two orders of signification (1957) can unravel denotation, connotation, and myth of signs. Denotation level is the literal meaning of sign while connotation is subjective

meaning of sign and myth is society's construction of phenomena that is considered natural, such as masculinity, femininity, etc.

In regards to Barthes' two orders of signification (1957), there have been some studies conducted in trying to investigate the portrayal and representation of women. The first study came from Maulida (2014) which attempted to analyze the connotation meaning found in each word that appears in the lyrics from dangdut song entitled *Wedus*. This song has denotation meaning where women reject patriarchal structures that exist in the community. By this fact indeed the listeners assume that Javanese women are able to violate the inherent norms of Javanese women such as, saying fine words, being calm, upholding family values, and being polite. Thus, this is the construction of the myth. The findings illustrate the representation of patriarchal ideology, even though the lyrics may seem like it is a representation of feminism towards that ideology. Consequently, whatever rejection or rebellions delivered by women, women realize that their status or responsibility is lower than men. Another study that deals with the portrayal of women came from Yazid (2014). His study entitled *Representasi Perempuan Minangkabau dalam Lirik Lagu si Nona* found that denotation, connotation, and myth reflect the real condition of socio-cultural life of people from certain group, in this case is Minangkabau people who alleviate women's position in the community.

While those previous studies focus in analyzing one particular song, this present paper tried to analyze some songs that were selected as the subject of the study due to their content and achievements. In regards to their content, those songs contain a depiction of women, while in regards to their achievements; the selected songs reigned majorly in the list of Billboard's Top 100 Year-End Chart. Consequently, this reflects the songs' sales, radio airplay, and streaming activity (Billboard). Therefore, those songs are immensely popular and widely listened among people.

To help analyze the data, as mentioned earlier, this paper uses the two orders of signification theory proposed by Roland Barthes (1957) considering that this study analyzes written language or text in the form of songs. Thus, Barthes' theory (1957) is required to investigate the denotation, connotation, and myth in the selected songs.

## 1.2. Research Question

There is only one primary question that will be answered in this research:

1. How are women portrayed in the selected songs?

## 1.3. Aims of the Study

This study aims to identify the portrayal of women in selected songs of Billboard's Year-End Top 100 Charts (2015-2018) from Barthes' two orders of signification (1957).

## 1.4. Scope of the Study

This study specifically investigates the portrayal of women in five selected songs from Billboard's Year-End Top 100 Charts (2015-2018) to reveal women's portrayal.

## 1.5. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to give more information and suggestion about portrayal of women in songs from power and resilient theories' perspectives. Practically, this study is able to enrich literature on the same topic.

## 1.6. Clarification of Key Terms

**Portrayal:** The way that someone or something is described or represented in a painting, film, book, or other artistic work (Cambridge English Online Dictionary).

**Orders of Signification:** Levels of meaning in semiotic systems. (Barthes, as cited from Chandler 1994).

**Denotation:** The first order of signification consisting of a signifier and a signified. (Barthes, as cited from Chandler, 1994).

**Connotation:** The second order of signification which uses the denotative sign as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified. (Barthes, as cited from Chandler, 1994).

**Myth:** The ideology produced by the combination of those two orders, which serves the ideological function of naturalization—in other words, making dominant cultural and historical

values, attitudes and beliefs seem entirely ‘natural’, normal, self-evident, timeless, obvious commonsense—and thus objective and true reflections of ‘the way things are’. (Barthes, as cited from Chandler, 1994).

## **1.7. The Organization of the Paper**

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter consists of the background of the study, research question, aims of the study, scope of study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

### **Chapter II: Literature Review**

This chapter presents the theory examining the problem, which includes theory of semiotic, Roland Barthes semiotic, the bases of social power theory, resilience model theory, objects of the study, and previous study.

### **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

This chapter covers the research methodology and procedure of the analysis. It includes the steps of collecting the data and the data analysis.

### **Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion**

This chapter talks about the interpretation of the collected data.

### **Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion**

This chapter serves the conclusion of the study and gives suggestions drawn from the analysis.