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Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on the Lyrics of "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION

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Abstract

This research aims to find out the meaning in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION using Roland Barthes' theory. The research method used is qualitative by collecting data through Roland Barthes semiotic analysis. The song, released in 2018, tells the story of the Parkland incident in which 17 people died and 14 were injured during the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida. X the songwriter struggled with his mental health and was always suicidal. However, he made a promise to his friends and fans that he would never commit suicide. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis will dig deeper into the meaning of each verse in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION using elements of denotation, connotation, and myth, and is expected to make writers and readers understand well the meaning contained in the song "HOPE". The results showed that the denotation meaning in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" is to commemorate the shooting of students in Parkland, Florida and the connotation meaning in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" is to encourage listeners who are depressed not to end their lives. While the mythical meaning of the song lyrics "HOPE" is a message from the song owner that every problem must have a way out.

Keywords: Hope, Semiotics, Song lyrics, XXXTENTACION

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui makna yang terkandung dalam lirik lagu "HOPE" karya XXXTENTACION dengan menggunakan teori Roland Barthes. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui analisis semiotika Roland Barthes. Lagu yang dirilis pada tahun 2018 ini mengisahkan tentang insiden Parkland yang menewaskan 17 orang dan melukai 14 orang saat penembakan di SMA Stoneman Douglas di Parkland, Florida. Sang penulis lagu X berjuang melawan kesehatan mentalnya dan selalu ingin bunuh diri. Akan tetapi, ia berjanji kepada teman-teman dan penggemarnya bahwa ia tidak akan pernah bunuh diri. Analisis semiotika Roland Barthes akan menggali lebih dalam makna yang terkandung pada setiap bait dalam lirik lagu "HOPE" karya XXXTENTACION dengan menggunakan unsur denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos, serta diharapkan dapat membuat penulis dan pembaca memahami dengan baik makna yang terkandung dalam lagu "HOPE". Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa makna denotasi pada lirik lagu "HOPE" adalah untuk mengenang peristiwa penembakan pelajar di Parkland, Florida dan makna konotasi pada lirik lagu "HOPE" adalah untuk menyemangati pendengar yang sedang depresi agar tidak mengakhiri hidupnya. Sedangkan makna mistis pada lirik lagu "HOPE" adalah pesan dari pemilik lagu bahwa setiap masalah pasti ada jalan keluarnya.

Kata Kunci: Harapan, Semiotika, Lirik lagu, XXXTENTACION

INTRODUCTION

3 Music is a product of the mind. Therefore, the elements of vibration (physics and cosmos) in the form of frequency, amplitude, and duration are not yet music for humans until all of these are neurologically transformed and interpreted by the brain into pitch (melody-harmony), timbre (sound color), dynamics (loud-soft), and tempo (fast-slow) (Aritonang & Doho, 2019). A song will not be created if pitch, melody, and harmony do not form a harmonious combination; the fundamental aspect of a song is pitch (Budiman & Christin, 2021). Meanwhile, song lyrics are a part of literary work. Moeliono explains that the definition of song lyrics is a literary work that contains the outpouring of the heart and the composition of a song or melody (Wahyudiansyah & Sulistina, 2022).

20 Roland Barthes, a major figure in the field of semiotics, developed important concepts such as “denotation” and “connotation” to explain how meaning is constructed in a text. Denotation refers to concrete meaning, while connotation refers to deeper meaning. Barthes spent his childhood in Bayonne, At the age of nine, Barthes moved to Paris with his mother who worked as a bookbinder. (Fatah, 2019)

27 Semiotic analysis is a theory that examines the meaning and specific signs within an object under investigation. There are different types of semiotics in this approach, namely semiotics of signification and semiotics of communication (Nathaniel & Sannie, 2020). Semiotics of signification focuses on the theory of signs and understanding their specific context. Meanwhile, semiotics of communication emphasizes its approach to the theory of sign production, which includes six factors in communication: sender, receiver, message, code, communication channel, and referent.

44 4 Roland Barthes, a well-known figure, described semiotic theory as the science used to interpret signs. In language, signs carry specific messages and can include images, logos, dialogue, musical notes, songs, objects, facial expressions, and body movements (Aritonang & Doho, 2019). According to Barthes, semiotic theory involves three levels of meaning analysis: denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotative analysis explains the explicit, direct, and defined meanings that result from the relationship between the signifier and the signified in reality (Aritonang & Doho, 2019). On the other hand, connotative analysis deals with meanings that are implicit, indirect, and uncertain. At the myth level, the sign becomes a new sign with connotative meanings, eventually developing into denotation, where it becomes a myth. Denotation is linked to a literal or repressive lexical sense, closing the meaning. Conversely, connotation is associated with ideological understanding, as it can reveal or justify dominant values and apply to a specific period, which Barthes refers to as the myth of 'ideological concepts' (Rohmah, 2020).

19 26 XXXTENTACION, whose real name was Jahseh Dwayne Ricardo Onfroy, was an American rapper born on January 23, 1998. He was tragically shot and killed in Florida on June 18, 2018. XXXTENTACION's music career was often a topic of discussion due to his controversies. He faced domestic violence charges, which led to divided public opinion between his fans and the general public. However, he was also known for his generous personality and for promoting positive messages such as mental health awareness and reconciliation.

XXXTENTACION's immense popularity has left a strong legacy, particularly among the youth. His work is frequently deeply analyzed to reveal hidden meanings behind his lyrics. Despite having a short career, his impact on the music industry and rap culture remains strong to this day.

15 6 6 When talking about hip-hop music, it is impossible to separate it from Black musicians from the United States. The history of hip-hop music was first introduced by an African American, Grandmaster Flash, and The Furious Five. Initially, hip-hop music consisted of sounds from DJs who created variations from spinning discs to produce rhythmic sounds. Rapping then emerged to fill in the vocals for those sounds. In its development, hip-hop was also considered a part of the arts, and to express visual art, graffiti

became part of hip-hop culture. Journalist Alex Ogg stated that rap music was initially party music for the poor (Ulilalbab, 2021).

Music has become a significant element in the lives of Black Americans because it allows them to express their feelings about their social environment. Over more than three decades, hip-hop music has transformed from being initially unnoticed to becoming the most influential music in the development of music in America (Ulilalbab, 2021).

This research focuses on analyzing the meaning of the song "HOPE" by XXXTentacion, specifically from the perspective of a particular social group. The study will use semiotic analysis, drawing on Roland Barthes' theory, to interpret the song's lyrics and examine the use of signs and symbols, as well as denotation, connotation, and myth elements. The goal is to provide music enthusiasts with a deeper understanding of the song's meaning.

This study is centered on analyzing the meaning of XXXTentacion's song "HOPE." The researcher aims to examine the various interpretations of the song's lyrics, especially from the viewpoint of a social group. The research will present the researcher's interpretation of the lyrics of "HOPE" using semiotic analysis.

The song "HOPE" is one of the musical works of American rapper and singer XXXTENTACION. The song was released in 2018 as part of his second studio album titled "?". "HOPE" became one of the most attention-grabbing songs from the album, and continues to be a work that is always remembered by hip-hop music fans at large because of the meaning of the song's deep meaning. In "HOPE" XXXTENTACION explores themes such as depression, loss, hope, lyrics such as "I'ma be alright, I'ma be alright" show confidence in the ability to recover from difficult times. But keep in mind that XXXTENTACION passed away in June 2018, a few months after the release of the album "?". His tragic passing managed to leave a strong musical legacy that has influenced the change of many people in the world.

In this study, the author uses a qualitative research method to provide descriptive information through written words about individuals and observed behaviors. By employing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method, the author focuses on naming, connotation, and myth elements within the lyrics of XXXTENTACION's song "HOPE" to reveal the hidden meanings of the song.

In this research, the researcher is using the Publish or Perish application to locate relevant sources from previous literature. The search is limited to journal publications indexed in Google Scholar from 2019 to 2023 to ensure that the references found are current. Based on the search in the Publish or Perish application, the following publications have been identified:

Table 1. Previous research data from Publish or Perish

Authors and Year	Title	Cites
DA Aritonang, YDB Doho (2019)	Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Terhadap Lirik Lagu Band Noah "Puisi Adinda"	43
C Kevinia, S Aulia, T Astari (2022)	Analisis Teori Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Film Miracle in Cell No. 7 Versi Indonesia	14
ND Handayani (2020)	Pesan Dakwah Dalam Film Animasi Nussa (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)	9

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N Ardhiarisa (2021)	Representasi Kecantikan Perempuan dan Isu Beauty Privilege Dalam Film (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes tentang Film Imperfect Karya Ernest Prakasa)	4
O Noriega, GG Sukendro (2020)	Satirisme Cerdas Iklan Djarum 76 Filter Gold Versi Caleg Cerdas (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)	4

Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

The first manuscript, titled "Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on the Lyrics of Noah's Song 'Puisi Adinda'", authored by DA Aritonang and YDB Doho in 2019 and published in the Journal of Communication and Business Studies, aimed to uncover the meanings embedded in song lyrics using a semiotic approach. The paper utilized Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which distinguishes between literal meaning (denotation) and deeper additional meanings (connotation). Barthes' theory also introduced the concept of myth, explaining how signs function in culture to create ideological meanings. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing signs in the lyrics and interpreting both denotative and connotative meanings. Through Barthes' semiotic analysis, the lyrics of "Puisi Adinda" can be understood not only as an expression of personal feelings but also as a reflection of cultural values regarding love and relationships.

The second manuscript, titled "Analysis of Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory in the Indonesian Version of the Film 'Miracle in Cell No. 7'" by C Kevinia, S Aulia, and T Astari, was published in the Journal of Communication Studies and Society in 2022. The paper aimed to uncover hidden meanings within the film using a semiotic approach. It utilized Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze signs and meanings within the culture. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing and interpreting signs in the film to understand denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings. The study illustrates how elements in the film, such as characters, dialogue, and setting, collaborate to form rich and complex meanings.

In the third manuscript titled "The Message of Islamic Preaching in the Animated Film Nussa (Semiotic Analysis by Roland Barthes)" by ND Handayani, published in 2020 by UIN SUSKA RIAU, the paper aimed to uncover the meanings embedded in the animated film through its signs. It utilized Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to distinguish between literal meaning (denotation) and deeper or implied meanings (connotation). Barthes' theory also employed the concept of myth to explain how signs function in culture to form ideological meanings. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing signs in the film and interpreting denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings within it. The study illustrates how animated films can serve as a tool for preaching, delivering moral and religious messages in an engaging and understandable manner for children.

In the fourth manuscript titled "Representation of Women's Beauty and the Issue of Beauty Privilege in the Film (Semiotic Analysis by Roland Barthes on the film 'Imperfect' by Ernest Prakasa)" by N Ardhiarisa in 2021, the paper aimed to uncover how the concepts of beauty and beauty privilege are represented in the film through its signs. It utilized Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, distinguishing between denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (deeper or implied meanings). Barthes' theory also introduced the concept of myth to explain how signs function in culture to form ideological meanings. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing signs in the film and interpreting denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings within it. The study demonstrates how films can be used as a medium to critique and change societal views on beauty and social justice.

In their 2020 paper titled "Smart Satire in the Djarum 76 Filter Gold Advertisement 'Smart Candidate Version' (Semiotic Analysis by Roland Barthes)" published in Prologia, O. Noriega and GG Sukendro aimed to analyze how the advertisement uses satire to convey deeper messages related to politics and society. Satire is a form of expression that uses humor, irony, or wit to criticize weaknesses in society. Advertisements often use satire to attract audience attention and convey profound messages through humor or irony. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method. The analysis utilized satire to criticize public phenomena where many candidates use unreasonable methods to attract voters' attention. The study demonstrates how advertisements can be an effective medium for conveying social messages and critiques through clever satire.

Based on the thousands of manuscripts collected by researchers on the publish or perish application, researchers only took the five best manuscripts found by Google Scholar with the most cited by other users as references for this research. From the five previous studies, what distinguishes this research is that this research provides a more in-depth and contextual view of Roland Barthes' semiotics. With a case study approach, this research highlights the lyrics to find out the meaning of the song. This research provides a new relevant object. Therefore, the researcher feels this research is worth doing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I will be conducting a literature review that analyzes the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The main focus will be on exploring the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth proposed by Barthes. This analysis will help uncover the underlying meanings embedded in the song's lyrics.

According to Alex Sobur etymologically, semiotics derives from the Greek "semion" which means "sign". A sign defines itself as something that, based on previously established social norms, can be considered as something else (Erlangga et al., 2021). Semiotics is the science of signs and everything related to how these signs function, relate to other signs, and are transmitted and received by those who use them. The theory of semiotics is considered crucial in the study of language, which consists of signs. Therefore, language will always contain signifiers and signifieds (Kevinia et al., 2024).

The terms semiotics and semiology are still commonly used. Besides semiotics, other terms used in the history of linguistics include semasiology, sememics, and semiotics to refer to the field of study that examines the meaning of a sign or symbol (Mudjiono, 2011).

Semiotics is divided into three branches: 1. Semantics deals with the relationship between signs and the things they refer to, including their connotations and meanings. 2. Syntax deals with the relationship between signs within formal structures. 3. Pragmatics deals with the relationship between signs and the factors used to signal them. (Fatah, 2019)

Roland Barthes was a structuralist thinker who adhered to Saussure's theory of semiotics. According to Barthes, language is a sign system that reflects the assumptions of a particular society at a particular time (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022). Roland Barthes' semiotics developed a two-tiered (hierarchical) signification system that allows for the production of meaning through levels of denotation and connotation (Sevilla & Wahyuningratna, 2022).

According to Barthes, there are two systems of signification: connotative and denotative. Connotation requires the reader to be active in order to function, and it is built upon the original nature of the signifier. Barthes extensively discusses the second-order signification system, which is built upon another system. Literature is the clearest example of a second-order meaning system built upon language as the first. This second system is called connotative, and in its mythological form, it is distinctly different from denotative or straightforward signification. (Shalekhah & Martadi, 2020)

37 Denotation, in a general sense, is usually understood as the literal meaning, the "real" meaning, and sometimes confused with connotation. This process of signification, traditionally referred to as semantics, typically refers to the use of language with meanings that correspond to what is said (Tamara, 2020). On the other hand, Connotation is a semiotic sign consisting of semantic signs made up of signifiers and signifieds. However, at the same time, denotative signs also serve as connotative signifiers. In his book, *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes demonstrates how connotation works to create myths in popular culture. (Prasetya, 2022)

25 According to Barthes, myths are language; from this perspective, myths are a system of communication and messages. In short, connotations that have long been established and have become the views of society themselves constitute myths. For Barthes, myths are a semiological system that consists of signs interpreted by humans (Yelly, 2019).

32 Barthes' semiotics can be used to analyze song lyrics, music videos, and visual representations of artists within the context of music. Researchers can employ the concepts of connotation and myth to uncover the hidden meanings and ideologies communicated through music.

The song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION was released in 2018 on the album titled "?". The song was created to commemorate the students who lost their lives in the Parkland shooting incident.

9 The use of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory can help in analyzing the lyrics of XXXTENTACION's song "HOPE" to reveal deeper layers of meaning. Denotation provides direct descriptions, connotation explains deeper meanings, and myth unveils broader social meanings. This approach helps researchers understand how the song communicates with its audience through symbols and indirectly displayed signs.

METHOD

28 The research method used by researchers is descriptive qualitative research method with Roland Barthes semiotic theory analysis. The techniques used are primary and secondary data. With the aim of knowing the signs and markers that exist in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION. This research uses Roland Barthes Semiotics theory analysis to find out connotative and denotative meanings. Descriptive research seeks to describe or describe things as they are and uses qualitative data that will produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. After that, it will be described as a whole to find the results of the writing (Wibisono & Sari, 2021).

2 The data used are primary and secondary data. Primary data is basic data or main data (Damayanti, 2022). The secondary data of this research is information from other sources such as documentary data, books and the internet used by researchers. The data analysis technique used Barthes' semiotic analysis to find the meaning of denotation, implication and myth in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION.

5 This analytical research method using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory involves identification, classification, and interpretation of the song lyrics. The first step in this method is to identify the key elements of the song, such as the song lyrics to be analyzed. Next, the researcher will categorize the elements according to semiotic concepts, such as connotation, denotation, and myth described by Roland Barthes.

9 In addition, the researcher will analyze the myths contained in the song, which reflect broader values, beliefs. This helps the researcher to understand how the song reflects or criticizes existing myths. Data collection is done by analyzing relevant lyrics. Through this method, the researcher can provide an in-depth explanation of the meaning contained in the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION from a semiotic

perspective. This analysis helps in understanding how the use of signs in the song affects the perception of the audience, as well as how the song interacts with society more broadly.



Source: Paul Cobley & Liza Jansz (1991. P, 51)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the results of this research, the author will explain the signs and meanings found in the lyrics of the song "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION. The theoretical benefits of this research largely show how emotional communication can be done through lyrics and tunes. Noting how emotional messages can be conveyed effectively by expressing feelings that are difficult to express in words. In terms of practical benefits, this song can be part of a social campaign or songwriting initiative that aims to help people deal with emotional difficulties. In addition, it provides a platform to discuss issues that are often considered taboo such as depression. The following is a detailed identification based on the verses in the song lyrics using three significations of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis.

DENOTATION

Denotation meaning is the meaning of words that refer to the actual meaning and in accordance with the intended object (Simbolon et al., 2023). The lyrics of the song 'HOPE' are written in English (United Kingdom) which is the international language of the whole world. Therefore, to represent the denotation meaning, the author will translate the lyrics of the song 'HOPE' into Indonesian. In Barthes' semiology, denotation is the second level of significance. Denotation can be said to signify objective meaning, while connotation is a subjective and varied meaning (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022). In the context of denotation, researchers will identify the meaning of the lyrics that appear in the song. The researcher will explore the hidden meanings associated with these signs. For example, the action of giving a song lyric as an expression of deep feelings or a symbol of courage (Nurulita Danty Intan Pratiwi & Ida Afidah, 2022).

Tabel 2. Denotation Data of HOPE Song Lyrics by XXXTENTACION

No	Lyrics	Translation
1	Rest in peace to all the kids that lost their lives in the Parkland shooting, this song is dedicated to you	Istirahatlah dengan damai untuk semua anak-anak yang kehilangan nyawa dalam penembakan Pakland, lagu ini didedikasikan untukmu
2	Okay she keep cryin', she keep cryin' every single night	Dia terus menangis, dia terus menangis setiap malam
3	All alone, swear to God, I be in my mind	Aku sepenuhnya sendiri, bersumpah pada Tuhan, Aku berada pada pikiranku sendiri

Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

Semiotic analysis of the meaning of the lyrics in the first line can be interpreted as XXXTENTACION's tribute and remembrance to the students who lost their lives in the Parkland shooting incident. He states that the song is dedicated to them.

The meaning of the lyrics in the second line can be interpreted as a statement of someone who continues to cry due to the loss of one of their children in the Parkland, Florida shooting incident.

The meaning of the lyrics in the third line can be interpreted as an expression that someone swears to God not to attempt suicide due to profound sadness.

CONNOTACION

The connotation meaning according to Sumarsono is the meaning implied in an expression and is often related to a feeling, culture, or personal experience. Broadly speaking, the connotation meaning of the song 'HOPE' is XXXTENTACION's hope to persuade listeners who are in a slump not to be depressed and to think about ending their lives. A connotative sign is a sign whose meaning is open or has an uncertain meaning, meaning that it is open to new interpretations (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022).

Tabel 3. Connotation Data of HOPE song lyrics by XXXTENTACION

No	Lyrics	Translation
1	Day and night, on my mind, please don't kill the vibe	Siang dan malam, didalam pikiranku, tolonglah jangan bunuh getarakanku
2	Tired of the fuckin' hate, stackin cheese all on my plate	Aku sudah lelah dengan para pembenci, yang menumpukkan keju didalam pikiranku
3	Said I would't die, yuh, no, I'm not alright, yuh...	Katanya aku tidak akan mati, tidak, aku tidak baik baik saja

Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

Semiotic analysis of the meaning of the lyrics in the first line depicts someone who continuously experiences severe trauma and tries to end all the suffering they are enduring by ending their own life.

The meaning of the lyrics in the second line depicts the emotional and psychological struggle someone faces in dealing with haters in their life who continue to disturb them constantly.

The meaning of the lyrics in the third line describes someone who is struggling with their own thoughts and can no longer bear the continuous negative thoughts they are experiencing.

The connotation of this song reflects an aspiration to free society from violence and suffering. The lyrics of "HOPE" also mirror connotations related to social issues and depict concerns about gun violence, emphasizing the importance of peace and unity.

MYTH

Myth according to Barthes is the way certain cultures use signs to construct and convey specific ideologies. In the lyrics of the song "HOPE," researchers can explore deeper mythological meanings that may relate to broader cultural or social contexts. (Mulyaden, 2021)

The mythological meaning in XXXTENTACION's song "HOPE" conveys the message that every problem and suffering someone experiences is not permanent, and there will always be a way out of it. The song delivers a message that someone expresses their desire to change and leave behind their bad habits. However, "HOPE" surely holds diverse perceptions and interpretations of its lyrics, and individuals may connect it with their own personal stories.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings regarding semiotic analysis using Roland Barthes' theory on the lyrics of XXXTENTACION's song "HOPE," it can be concluded as follows:

"HOPE" is a song that portrays emotional resilience and invites listeners to reflect on their own lives and find hope amidst darkness. The denotative meaning in the lyrics of XXXTENTACION's "HOPE" can be interpreted as someone's feelings of respect and remembrance for the students who lost their lives in the Parkland, Florida shooting. The connotative meaning in the lyrics of "HOPE" depicts someone battling their own trauma from profound grief and facing daily harassment from persistent haters.

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