



Representation of Masculinity in Fadel Chaker's Songs: A Barthesian Semiotic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study encompasses several areas of inquiry, one of which is Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings in representing subordinated masculinity and complicit masculinity in the song lyrics of *Law Ala Qolbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh* by Fadel Chaker based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Raewyn Connell's perspective on masculinity. The study was conducted using the lyrics of the two songs as the research object, with data collection and analysis. The research data consisted of words, phrases, clauses, and expressions in the lyrics that represent masculinity, while the units of analysis were purposively selected according to the research focus. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by a data classification sheet. Data were analyzed using a descriptive-interpretative method through Roland Barthes' three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth, with reference to Raewyn Connell's masculinity theory. The findings reveal that the two songs represent two forms of masculinity, namely subordinated masculinity and complicit masculinity. At the denotative level, masculinity is represented through expressions of love, longing, loyalty, sacrifice, and commitment to one's partner. At the connotative level, these representations portray men who are willing to express their emotions, build emotional intimacy, and demonstrate responsibility in relationships. At the mythical level, the songs construct the view that masculinity is not solely defined by dominance and emotional restraint, but also by sincerity, commitment, willingness to sacrifice, and the ability to express affection. The findings indicate that the representation of masculinity in the two songs constructs a more humanistic, expressive, and relational form of masculinity compared to hegemonic masculinity.

Keywords: masculinity, song, semiotics analysis

Representasi Maskulinitas dalam Lagu Fadel Chaker: Analisis Semiotika Barthes

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini memuat berbagai aspek kajian, salah satunya adalah kajian semiotika Roland Barthes. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna denotatif, konotatif, dan mitos dalam merepresentasikan *subordinated masculinity* dan *complicit masculinity* pada lirik lagu *Law Ala Qolbi* dan *Ya Hayatirruh* karya Fadel Chaker berdasarkan semiotika Roland Barthes dan perspektif maskulinitas Raewyn Connell. Penelitian dilakukan terhadap lirik kedua lagu sebagai objek penelitian dengan proses pengumpulan dan analisis data. Sumber data penelitian berupa kata, frasa, klausa, dan ungkapan dalam lirik kedua lagu yang mengandung representasi maskulinitas, sedangkan unit analisis ditentukan secara purposif berdasarkan relevansinya dengan fokus penelitian. Instrumen penelitian adalah peneliti sebagai instrumen utama yang didukung oleh lembar klasifikasi data. Analisis data menggunakan metode deskriptif-interpretatif melalui tiga tahap pemaknaan Roland Barthes, yaitu denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos, dengan mengacu pada perspektif maskulinitas Raewyn Connell. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua lagu merepresentasikan dua bentuk maskulinitas, yaitu *subordinated masculinity* dan *complicit masculinity*. Pada tingkat denotatif, maskulinitas direpresentasikan melalui ungkapan cinta, kerinduan, kesetiaan, pengorbanan, dan komitmen terhadap pasangan. Pada tingkat konotatif, representasi tersebut menunjukkan laki-laki yang berani mengekspresikan emosi, membangun kedekatan emosional, serta bertanggung jawab dalam hubungan. Pada tingkat mitos, kedua lagu mengonstruksi pandangan bahwa maskulinitas tidak semata-mata ditentukan oleh dominasi dan pengendalian emosi, tetapi juga oleh ketulusan, komitmen, kesediaan berkorban, dan kemampuan mengekspresikan kasih sayang. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa representasi maskulinitas dalam kedua lagu menghadirkan konstruksi maskulinitas yang lebih humanis, ekspresif, dan relasional dibandingkan maskulinitas hegemonik.

Kata kunci: maskulinitas, lagu, semiotika

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INTRODUCTION

Music is one form of popular media that has the ability to represent various social realities through the system of signs embedded in song lyrics. As a cultural product, songs function not only as entertainment but also as a site for the production of meaning that contains values, symbols, and ideologies existing within society. Song lyrics present human experiences through poetic language, enabling them to represent identity, emotions, and the social construction of gender. Therefore, song lyrics can be understood as cultural texts that not only reflect reality but also contribute to shaping public perceptions of both male and female identities (Berger, 2000).

In contemporary gender studies, masculinity is understood not as a biological characteristic inherently attached to men, but as a social construct shaped through cultural, historical, and social practices within society (Fakih, 1996). This perspective is reinforced by Connell (1995), who argues that masculinity is plural (multiple masculinities), meaning that there is no single universal form of masculinity. Connell categorizes masculinity into four main forms: hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordinated masculinity, and marginalized masculinity (Connell, 1995). These categories demonstrate that masculine identity is continuously negotiated through power relations, social norms, and specific cultural contexts. In social practice, hegemonic masculinity generally positions men as strong, rational, dominant, independent, and capable of controlling their emotions (Seidler, 1997). Consequently, emotional expressions such as sadness, longing, or vulnerability are often perceived as contradicting the ideal image of masculinity.

Developments in gender studies indicate that the representation of men in the media has undergone significant transformation. Various cultural works increasingly portray men not merely as dominant figures but also as individuals capable of openly expressing love, loss, sadness, and emotional vulnerability. Roman (2024) explains

that emotion is an inseparable component of masculinity; therefore, men's emotional expression should not be regarded as a sign of weakness but rather as the result of identity negotiation within social contexts (Roman, 2024). This shift is important to examine because it reflects the changing meaning of masculinity in contemporary popular culture.

This phenomenon is also evident in the Arab popular music industry. Compared with many other forms of media, Arabic songs are widely recognized for their lyrical richness, employing metaphors, symbols, and profound emotional expressions. One singer who consistently demonstrates these characteristics is Fadel Chaker. The Lebanese singer is widely known for his romantic songs that frequently explore themes of love, loss, longing, and waiting (Samwel, 2025). Two of his songs, *Law Ala Qalbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh*, were selected as the objects of this study because their lyrics represent male emotional expression. *Law Ala Qalbi* was performed by Fadel Chaker, with lyrics written by Nader Chehata (Nader Noor) and music composed by Rabih Seyoufi. The song was released in 2006 as part of the album *Musicana 9* (Chaker, 2006). Meanwhile, *Ya Hayatirruh* was performed by Fadel Chaker, with lyrics written by Mohamed Mady and music composed by Jean Saliba. It was released in 2005 as part of the album *Saharni El Shok* (Chaker, 2020). Both songs portray a male figure who openly expresses his feelings, reveals longing, acknowledges emotional dependence, and displays vulnerability within romantic relationships. Such representations are particularly interesting to examine because they depict forms of masculinity that do not fully conform to the hegemonic masculine ideals that have long dominated society.

The meaning of masculinity in song lyrics is not conveyed directly but is constructed through diction, metaphor, imagery, and various linguistic symbols (Barthes, 1977). Therefore, this study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to uncover the system of meanings operating behind the lyrical texts. Barthes' semiotics is used as the



analytical framework to examine the representation of masculinity constructed through the signs embedded in the lyrics. This approach enables the researcher to understand meanings that extend beyond the textual level by considering the cultural and ideological contexts underlying meaning construction (Barthes, 1972). In this study, myth analysis is employed to investigate how representations of masculinity in the lyrics construct or negotiate societal perceptions of male identity within Arab popular culture.

This study is guided by two principal research questions formulated to examine the representation of masculinity in the selected song lyrics. First, what forms of masculinity are represented in the lyrics of *Law Ala Qalbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh* by Fadel Chaker? Second, how can the representation of masculinity in these lyrics be interpreted through Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective? Based on these questions, the objectives of this study are to identify the forms of masculinity represented in the lyrics of *Law Ala Qalbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh* and to analyze those representations using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework.

This study is expected to enrich the application of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, particularly in understanding the mechanisms of denotation, connotation, and myth within cultural texts, while also expanding academic discussions on emotional masculinity in popular media, especially Arabic music. Furthermore, it is expected to serve as a reference for interdisciplinary studies connecting literature, culture, and gender. Practically, this study is expected to enhance the researcher's ability to analyze song lyrics through a semiotic approach, provide readers with a deeper understanding of the representation of emotional masculinity in songs, encourage critical awareness of the messages conveyed through lyrical texts, and serve as a reference for students of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program in analyzing Arabic song lyrics using semiotic approaches while enriching contemporary Arabic literary studies from cultural and gender perspectives.

Several previous studies have examined the representation of meaning in song lyrics using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. (Zahra et al., 2025) analyzed the representation of meaning in the lyrics of songs by Sherine Abdel Wahab. Furthermore, (Mukminin, 2024) investigated the representation of love in Arabic song lyrics using Barthes' semiotic framework. The study found that love is represented through various linguistic signs that generate denotative and connotative meanings while simultaneously constructing myths surrounding romantic relationships in Arab culture. Likewise, (Anggraini et al., 2024) examined cultural symbols in Arabic song lyrics through Barthes' semiotic analysis. Their findings revealed that the symbols embedded in the lyrics convey cultural messages representing identity, life experiences, and the social values of Arab society. In contrast, studies on the representation of masculinity have predominantly focused on visual media rather than Arabic song lyrics. For example, (Aldrian & Azeharie, 2022) analyzed the representation of masculinity in father figures in films and found that male characters were portrayed through responsibility, leadership, and emotional closeness to their families. Their study demonstrated a shift from hegemonic masculinity toward a more expressive and humanistic form of masculinity. Another study by (Utari & Hikmah, 2024) examined the representation of masculinity in advertising. The findings indicated that advertisements construct masculine images through various visual symbols representing strength, courage, responsibility, and particular social identities.

Based on this review, a research gap remains, as only a limited number of studies have examined the representation of masculinity in Arabic song lyrics by integrating Connell's theory of masculinity with Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. Most previous studies have focused primarily on representations of love, culture, or symbolic meanings in songs without relating them to masculinity as a social construct. Furthermore, studies on masculinity have generally used films,

advertisements, or other visual media as their objects of analysis, whereas research on Arabic song lyrics remains relatively limited. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the representation of masculinity in two songs by Fadel Chaker through Barthes' semiotic reading enriched by Connell's perspective on masculinity. The integration of these two theoretical approaches is expected to provide a more comprehensive explanation of how masculine identity is constructed, negotiated, and naturalized through the system of signs embedded in Arabic song lyrics.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to examine the representation of masculinity in the song lyrics of Fadel Chaker (Safarudin et al., 2023). A qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on interpreting the meanings embedded in the lyrics rather than on measurement or statistical testing. The descriptive qualitative method enables the researcher to describe the linguistic elements of the song lyrics while interpreting the meanings constructed through systems of signs and the socio-cultural contexts underlying them (Rohanda, 2016). In literary and cultural studies, texts are understood as sites of meaning production that not only reflect reality but also construct values, ideologies, and social identities (Ahmadi, 2019). The objects of this study are two songs by Fadel Chaker, namely *Law Ala Qalbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh*. These songs were selected because they thematically represent masculinity through emotional expression, interpersonal relationships, and the construction of male identity in Arab popular culture. The research data consist of linguistic units, including words, phrases, clauses, and metaphorical expressions that contain indicators of masculinity. The primary data were obtained from the official lyrics of the two songs, while the secondary data consist of books, scholarly journal articles, and previous studies related to masculinity theory, Roland Barthes' semiotics, and popular culture studies.

The data were collected through documentation and note-taking techniques. The documentation technique was employed to obtain the official song lyrics from published sources, followed by cross-checking with several references to ensure the accuracy of the lyric texts. Subsequently, the note-taking technique was conducted by repeatedly reading the lyrics to identify passages representing indicators of masculinity, such as courage, assertiveness, responsibility, commitment, emotional control, resilience, protectiveness, rationality, and various forms of emotional expression embedded in the text. The identified data were then classified according to the requirements of the analysis.

The data were analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework through three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. The first stage involved denotative analysis, which identified the literal meanings of words, phrases, and sentences in the song lyrics. The second stage involved connotative analysis, which interpreted the symbolic, emotional, and cultural meanings conveyed through diction, metaphors, and imagery. Finally, the myth analysis focused on identifying the ideologies and social constructions that are naturalized through the representation of masculinity in the lyrics. Throughout the interpretative process, Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity served as the conceptual framework for identifying the forms of masculinity represented in the texts, while Roland Barthes' semiotic theory functioned as the analytical framework for uncovering the process of meaning-making at each level of signification. Accordingly, this study not only explains the meanings embedded in the song lyrics but also reveals how representations of masculinity are constructed and interpreted within the context of Arab popular culture.

RESULTS

According to Connell (1995), subordinated masculinity refers to a form of masculinity that occupies a subordinate position in relation to



hegemonic masculinity. This form encompasses men who do not conform to the standards of hegemonic masculinity and are therefore often associated with characteristics considered contrary to dominant masculine ideals, such as gentleness, vulnerability, and openness in expressing emotions. In contrast, complicit masculinity refers to a form of masculinity that does not fully embody the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity but nevertheless benefits from the patriarchal order without challenging the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. Men who exhibit this form of masculinity generally do not exercise direct dominance; however, they continue to uphold values that are socially regarded as masculine characteristics (Connell, 1995). In the context of this study, complicit masculinity is operationalized through representations of commitment, loyalty, responsibility, and sacrifice demonstrated by male characters in establishing and maintaining romantic relationships. These indicators were selected because they are consistent with the thematic context of the song lyrics analyzed in this study.

Semiotics is the study of signs and the processes through which meaning is constructed in social and cultural life (Taufiq, 2017). Roland Barthes extended Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory by emphasizing that signs generate not only linguistic meaning but also cultural and ideological meanings (Berger, 2000). Denotation constitutes the first level of signification, representing the direct relationship between the signifier and the signified. It produces the literal meaning of a sign (Sobur, 2014). Connotation refers to the meaning that emerges from the relationship between signs and the social, cultural, emotional, and ideological experiences of a society (Mulyazir & Fadhilah, 2023). Furthermore, Barthes introduced the concept of myth as a second-order system of signification. According to Barthes (1972), myth does not refer to legends or folktales; rather, it is the way a society constructs reality through cultural signs so that particular values and ideologies appear natural and unquestionable. Myth functions by naturalizing social constructions, allowing specific values, ideologies, and beliefs to be accepted as self-

evident within society. Through this process, perspectives on gender, identity, power, and masculinity are reproduced and legitimized as naturalized social realities (Hall, 1997).

The findings indicate that the lyrics of *Law Ala Qalbi* and *Ya Hayatirruh* by Fadel Chaker represent two forms of masculinity from the perspective of Raewyn Connell, namely subordinated masculinity and complicit masculinity. Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, the signs embedded in the lyrics generate denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings that reflect the social construction of masculinity within Arab culture.

In *Law Ala Qalbi*, masculinity is represented through a man's openness in expressing love, longing, and emotional suffering. This representation is evident in the following lyrics:

- 1) *Lau 'alā qalbī dāb fī hawāk* (If only my heart could melt in your love)
- 2) *Juwā 'uyūnī %anīn wa garām musytāq li-'ainaik* (Within me grow love and longing for you)
- 3) *Qalbī nadālaka in fī yaum wa ta'ālā* (My heart calls for you, hoping that one day you will come)
- 4) *Wa inta mā bitgīb 'an bālī* (You never leave my thoughts)
- 5) *Isma' minnī wa 'īsy ma'a qalbī zamānī* (Listen to me and live with me and my heart)
- 6) *Lau titmannā ad-dunyā bi%ālhā takūn fī aidai* (If you desired the whole world, I would willingly place it in your hands)

At the denotative level, these lyrics depict a man expressing his love, longing, and hope toward his beloved. At the connotative level, symbols such as the heart, love, and longing signify emotional depth, vulnerability, and the need for a partner's presence. At the level of myth, the song constructs the view that a man who openly expresses affection, sadness, and longing does not lose his masculinity; instead, such expressions reflect sincerity and loyalty within a romantic relationship. Consequently, the representation in this song is predominantly characterized by subordinated masculinity, although

several lyrics also demonstrate elements of complicit masculinity.

In contrast, *Ya Hayatirruh* represents masculinity through commitment to building a relationship, willingness to make sacrifices, and appreciation of a woman as the source of life's meaning. This representation is reflected in the following lyrics:

- 1) *Qalbī mā dāqi an-naum... wa lā yaum wa lā irtā* (My heart has never experienced peaceful sleep, not even for a single day has it found rest)
- 2) *wa batis 'al lau abbaitak... Wa anā dāyib fīk* (And you still ask whether I love you, while I have completely melted in my love for you)
- 3) *Rūi wa nāsī al-abāyib wa bi 'umrī syārīk* (I give you my soul, forget everyone else, and choose you as my lifelong companion)
- 4) *Hāt idak ti'an idī syūfubbak juwwā warīdī* (Take my hand in yours and see your love flowing through my veins)
- 5) *Musy 'āyizak tib 'ad 'annī wa lā 'āyiz af al mustannī* (I do not want you to leave me, nor do I want to keep waiting)
- 6) *Dah anā minak wa inta minnī wa ayātī ma 'āk* (I belong to you, you belong to me, and my life is with you)

At the denotative level, these lyrics portray an invitation to build a life together, make sacrifices, and devote oneself to the happiness of one's partner. At the connotative level, the heart, hands, and world function as symbols of commitment, trust, devotion, and emotional responsibility. At the level of myth, the song constructs the belief that masculinity is realized through a man's willingness to protect, provide, and sustain a relationship without exercising dominance over his partner. Accordingly, the representation in this song is predominantly characterized by complicit masculinity, although several instances of subordinated masculinity are also identified.

DISCUSSION

Identification of Forms of Masculinity in Two Songs

Data 1 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents subordinated masculinity because the male character

openly acknowledges that he is deeply immersed in feelings of love. This representation is reflected in his willingness to express his emotional experiences honestly. The male character in these lyrics does not attempt to maintain the image of a man who is always strong and emotionally self-controlled.

Data 2 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents subordinated masculinity because the lyrics portray the male character openly expressing his love and longing for the woman he loves. This expression of affection demonstrates that he does not conceal his emotional state; rather, he embraces love and longing as integral aspects of his identity.

Data 3 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents subordinated masculinity because the lyrics depict the male character openly expressing his hope and longing for the woman he loves. In this context, masculine identity is represented through the courage to express one's emotions.

Data 4 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents subordinated masculinity. The lyrics show that the male character openly admits that the woman he loves constantly occupies his thoughts and constitutes an essential part of his emotional life.

Data 5 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents complicit masculinity. The lyrics portray the male character inviting the woman he loves to build a life together as an expression of commitment within a romantic relationship. Consequently, the male character is represented as someone who embodies commitment, responsibility, and a willingness to build a shared future with his partner.

Data 6 from *Law Ala Qalbi* represents complicit masculinity. The lyrics depict the male character demonstrating his commitment and willingness to give his best to the woman he loves. His readiness to fulfill his partner's wishes represents responsibility, sacrifice, and dedication within a romantic relationship.

Data 1 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents subordinated masculinity. The lyrics portray masculinity as being constructed through the courage to express emotional vulnerability, thereby challenging the conventional construction of masculinity that expects men to always appear strong and capable of controlling their emotions.



Data 2 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents subordinated masculinity. The lyrics portray the male character openly affirming the depth of his love for the woman he loves. This openness in expressing affection and emotional vulnerability reflects a representation of masculinity constructed through the honest expression of feelings.

Data 3 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents complicit masculinity. The lyrics depict the male character affirming his commitment to devote himself to the woman he loves through his willingness to make sacrifices and sustain the relationship over the long term.

Data 4 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents subordinated masculinity. The lyrics show the male character openly expressing his desire for both physical and emotional closeness with the woman he loves.

Data 5 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents subordinated masculinity. The lyrics depict the male character openly expressing his desire for the woman he loves to remain by his side.

Data 6 from *Ya Hayatirruh* represents complicit masculinity. The lyrics portray the male character affirming his commitment to building a relationship founded on mutual belonging and togetherness with his partner.

Analysis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in Two Songs

From the perspective of Roland Barthes' semiotics, at the denotative level, the phrase *Lau 'alâ qalbî dâb fî hawâk* literally means "If only my heart could melt in your love." Literally, it expresses the male character's deep love for his partner. At the connotative level, *qalbî* (my heart) functions not as a physical organ but as a symbol of emotional life, sincerity, and inner identity. Likewise, *dâb fî hawâk* (melt in your love) symbolizes the male character's emotional surrender to the person he loves. Love is portrayed as a force that transcends the male ego, allowing vulnerability while reflecting the depth of his affection. Consequently, the lyric constructs the image of a man who openly

acknowledges the influence of love on his emotional life. At the mythical level, the lyric challenges the conventional belief that men must always appear strong, emotionally detached, and in control. Instead, it constructs an alternative myth in which loving deeply and acknowledging emotional vulnerability are natural expressions of masculine identity. Through this system of signs, the lyric redefines masculinity as an identity that can also be expressed through sincerity, vulnerability, and emotional openness within romantic relationships.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Juwâ 'uyûnî %anîn wa garâm musytâq li-'ainaik* literally means "Within me grow love and longing for you." Literally, the lyric portrays the male character's deep love and desire to reunite with the woman he loves. At the connotative level, *%anîn* (longing) and *garâm* (love) symbolize a profound emotional bond between the male character and his partner, while *li-'ainaik* (to your eyes) represents her presence and the emotional intimacy that continually occupies his thoughts. Consequently, longing is portrayed not merely as the desire to meet but as a psychological need for the partner's presence. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men can openly express love and longing without compromising their masculine identity. Rather than reinforcing the hegemonic ideal of emotional restraint, the song presents an alternative myth in which affection, longing, and emotional openness are natural dimensions of the male experience. Thus, the lyric not only conveys romantic meaning but also redefines masculinity as an identity that embraces sincerity, emotional intimacy, and vulnerability within romantic relationships.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Qalbî nadâlak %in fî yaum wa ta'âlâ* literally means "My heart calls for you, hoping that one day you will come." Literally, the lyric expresses the male character's longing to reunite with the woman he loves. At the connotative level, *qalbî* (my heart) symbolizes emotional depth and sincerity, while *nadâlak* (calls for you) represents longing, hope, and the emotional need for a partner's presence. The invitation to come reflects the recognition that the loved one's presence is es-

sential to the male character's emotional well-being. Consequently, the lyric portrays men not as emotionally self-sufficient but as individuals who also seek emotional intimacy and companionship. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that expressing longing and desiring a partner's presence does not diminish masculine identity. Rather than reinforcing the patriarchal ideal of emotional restraint and independence, the song presents an alternative myth in which openly acknowledging emotional needs is a natural and legitimate aspect of romantic relationships.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Wa inta mâ bitgîb 'an bâlî* literally means "You never leave my thoughts." Literally, the lyric portrays a man who constantly thinks about the woman he loves. At the connotative level, the expression 'an bâlî (from my thoughts) symbolizes emotional attachment and the depth of an intimate relationship rather than merely the act of thinking. The mind functions as a psychological space where memories, affection, and longing are preserved, indicating that the loved one has become an inseparable part of the male character's emotional life. This connotation suggests that romantic relationships are sustained not only through physical closeness but also through enduring emotional bonds. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men can openly express loyalty and emotional attachment without compromising their masculine identity. Rather than reinforcing the hegemonic ideal of emotional distance and self-reliance, the song presents an alternative myth in which remembering, longing for, and emotionally valuing one's partner are portrayed as natural expressions of loyalty, commitment, and masculinity.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Isma' minnî wa 'îsy ma'a qalbî zamânî* literally means "Live with me and my heart." Literally, the lyric expresses the male character's desire for a lasting relationship and a shared life with his partner. At the connotative level, the word 'îsy (live) symbolizes not only physical existence but also a commitment to building a future together. The invita-

tion to live with his "heart" reflects the male character's willingness to share affection, hopes, and life's journey, emphasizing a relationship founded on emotional commitment and mutual belonging. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that masculinity is defined not only by strength or dominance but also by the willingness to build and sustain a committed relationship. The invitation to share life together portrays the male character as sincere, responsible, and devoted to his partner. Through this system of signs, the song presents commitment, loyalty, and responsibility as essential elements of masculine identity, representing masculinity through the capacity to build a stable, harmonious, and enduring relationship.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Lau titmannâ ad-dunyâ biâlhâ takûn fî aidaik* literally means "If you desired the whole world, I would willingly place it in your hands." Literally, the lyric portrays the male character's willingness to fulfill the hopes and wishes of the woman he loves as an expression of affection. At the connotative level, *ad-dunyâ* (the world) symbolizes everything of value, including happiness, dreams, hopes, and well-being, while *fî aidaik* (in your hands) represents the male character's desire to devote everything he possesses to his partner with sincerity. This connotation reflects not merely the offering of material possessions but also the willingness to dedicate his abilities, efforts, and resources to his partner's happiness. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that the ideal man is one who demonstrates commitment, responsibility, and self-sacrifice in sustaining a romantic relationship. Although many cultures associate men with the responsibility of protecting and providing for their loved ones, the song presents this role as an expression of sincere love rather than domination. Through this system of signs, masculinity is represented not only through strength or authority but also through dedication, commitment, and self-sacrifice for one's partner.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Qalbî mâ dâqi an-naum... wa lâ yaum wa lâ irtâ* literally



means “My heart has never experienced peaceful sleep; not even for a single day has it found rest.” Literally, the lyric portrays the male character’s physical and psychological distress caused by emotional suffering (Gross, 2015). At the connotative level, the expressions *mâ dâqi an-naum* and *wa lâ irtâ%* symbolize not only sleeplessness but also anxiety, longing, and emotional turmoil. The inability to sleep reflects how love has affected every aspect of the male character’s life, leaving him unable to find inner peace without the presence of the person he loves. This connotation portrays love as a deeply transformative emotional experience that shapes an individual’s psychological state. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men can experience profound emotional suffering because of love without diminishing their masculine identity. Rather than reinforcing the traditional ideal of emotional restraint, the song presents an alternative myth in which anxiety, longing, and loss are natural aspects of the male experience. Through this system of signs, the lyric redefines masculinity as an identity that includes the courage to acknowledge and openly express emotional vulnerability within romantic relationships. At the denotative level, the phrase *wa batis’al lau %abbaitak... wa anâ dâyb fik* literally means “And you still ask whether I love you, while I have completely melted in my love for you.” Literally, the lyric emphasizes the male character’s profound love for his partner. At the connotative level, the expression *dâyb fik* (melted in your love) symbolizes self-surrender, sincerity, and deep affection rather than simply being in love. The partner’s question reflects a need for reassurance, which the male character answers by affirming the depth of his love. This connotation suggests that love is not merely a verbal declaration but a deeply rooted emotional state that shapes one’s inner identity. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men can openly express profound love without compromising their masculine identity. Rather than reinforcing the traditional ideal of emotional restraint, the song presents an alternative myth in

which expressing love honestly reflects sincerity and commitment within a romantic relationship. Through this system of signs, the lyric represents masculinity as an identity shaped not only by strength and assertiveness but also by the courage to express affection and emotional depth.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Rûwa nâsî al-abâyib wa bi’umrî syârîk* literally means “I give you my soul, forget everyone else, and choose you as my lifelong companion.” At the connotative level, the word *Rû* (my soul) refers not merely to the essence of life but also symbolizes sincerity, devotion, and complete self-surrender to one’s partner. The expression *nâsî al-abâyib* (forget everyone else) symbolizes the partner’s position as the highest priority in the male character’s life. Meanwhile, the phrase *wa bi’umrî syârîk* (I choose you as my lifelong companion) conveys the meaning of lifelong commitment, loyalty, and enduring faithfulness rather than a temporary attachment. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that the ideal man is one who demonstrates commitment, loyalty, and a willingness to make sacrifices for the person he loves. Within many cultural contexts, men are often regarded as being responsible for sustaining a relationship and providing their partners with a sense of security. This song reproduces that perspective by portraying sacrifice and loyalty as expressions of love rooted in sincerity rather than in domination. Through this system of signs, the lyric represents masculinity as an identity constructed through commitment, responsibility, and dedication to sustaining a romantic relationship.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Hât îdak tian îdî syûf ubbak juwwâ warîdî* literally means “Extend your hand to hold my hand, see your love flowing through my veins.” Literally, this lyric portrays the male character’s desire to establish closeness with his partner and express the depth of his love. At the connotative level, the word *îdî* (hand) does not merely refer to a body part but functions as a symbol of intimacy, trust, support, and emotional connection between two individu-

als. Meanwhile, the expression *ubbak juwâ warîdî* (your love flows through my veins) does not simply describe the flow of blood but symbolizes that love has become an inseparable part of the male character's life. The symbol of veins indicates that affection for his partner flows through every aspect of his existence and serves as a source of his emotional vitality. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men do not always have to maintain emotional distance or conceal their need for affection. Instead, the song presents an alternative myth that seeking closeness, physical touch, and attention from a partner is a natural aspect of romantic relationships. Through this system of signs, the lyric deconstructs the assumption that men must always appear emotionally independent while simultaneously representing masculinity as an identity that is also constructed through emotional intimacy and the ability to openly express affection.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Musy 'âyizak tib'ad 'annî wa lâ 'âyiz afal mustannî* literally means "I do not want you to leave me, and I do not want to keep waiting." Literally, this lyric portrays the desire for the relationship to remain intact without distance or prolonged waiting. At the connotative level, the word *tib'ad* (to move away) does not merely refer to physical distance but also symbolizes emotional separation, the weakening of intimacy, and the possibility of losing one's partner. Meanwhile, the word *mustannî* (waiting) represents uncertainty, unfulfilled expectations, and inner anxiety caused by a relationship that lacks certainty. This expression demonstrates that the male character longs for the presence and assurance of the woman he loves. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that men do not always have to appear emotionally independent and suppress their feelings. Instead, the song presents an alternative myth that acknowledging the fear of loss, desiring a partner's presence, and seeking certainty within a relationship are natural experiences for men. Through this system of signs, the lyric deconstructs traditional masculine perceptions that associate

men with emotional toughness and instead represents masculinity as an identity that also encompasses vulnerability, the need for affection, and the courage to openly express emotions.

At the denotative level, the phrase *Dah anâ minak wa inta minnî wa ayâtî ma 'âk* literally means "I am yours, you are mine, and my life is with you." Literally, this lyric expresses a reciprocal relationship between the male character and the woman he loves, as well as his desire to live a life together with her. At the connotative level, the expression *minak wa inta minnî* (I am yours and you are mine) is not understood as ownership in a literal sense but rather as a symbol of emotional intimacy, equality, and mutual commitment within a romantic relationship. Meanwhile, the phrase *wa ayâtî ma 'âk* (my life is with you) symbolizes that the partner has become an inseparable part of the male character's life journey. The shared life portrayed in this lyric represents the hope for a harmonious relationship built upon mutual support, trust, and loyalty. This connotation demonstrates that love is understood as a bond involving shared commitment rather than merely a temporary feeling. At the mythical level, the lyric constructs the view that male masculinity is not measured solely by the ability to lead or dominate a relationship but also by the ability to build a relationship founded on loyalty, commitment, and togetherness. In contrast to traditional perspectives that often position men as the center of power within relationships, this song presents an alternative myth that an ideal relationship is built through mutual belonging, mutual support, and shared responsibility. Through this system of signs, the lyric represents masculinity as an identity manifested through commitment, loyalty, and readiness to live together with a partner in an equal and harmonious relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the representation of masculinity in the lyrics of *Law Ala Qolbi* and *Ya Hayatiruh* by Fadel Chaker is constructed through Roland Barthes' three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth.

At the denotative level, both songs portray men who express love, longing, sadness, sacrifice, and commitment toward their partners. At the connotative level, symbols such as the heart, eyes, hands, and expressions of longing represent emotional depth, responsibility, and sincerity in building romantic relationships. At the mythical level, both songs construct the view that men can still be perceived as masculine despite expressing emotional vulnerability, as long as these expressions are based on sincerity, loyalty, and responsibility.

Based on Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity, *Law Ala Qolbi* predominantly represents subordinated masculinity, while *Ya Hayatiruh* predominantly represents complicit masculinity. Both songs demonstrate that masculinity is not only manifested through dominance and strength but also through the courage to express emotions, commitment, sacrifice, and care for one's partner. Therefore, this study confirms that Fadel Chaker's song lyrics represent a more humanistic and expressive form of masculinity and contribute to the development of Barthes' semiotic studies through the integration of Connell's masculinity theory in the analysis of Arabic song lyrics.

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