

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introduction of this research. It consists of the research background, research problem, research purposes, research significance, previous study, and definition of critical terminologies.

#### **1.1 Research Background**

Self-reliance refers to the ability to depend on oneself for support and guidance without needing external aid or validation. In his essay, Emerson suggests that if everyone relied entirely on themselves, they would fulfill their dreams, hopes, and goals. He suggests that individuals should follow their instincts rather than conform to society standards (see Emerson, 1967).

It is essential to personal development and empowerment, especially for historically persecuted and marginalized women. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote an essay titled Self-Reliance. He emphasizes the importance of relying on one's own intuition and inner wisdom. As he wrote,

“A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within” (Emerson, 1967, p. 8).

Self-reliance is essential for women, who have historically been socialized to depend on others for validation and support. Patriarchal structures have often denied women the opportunities and resources necessary for self-sufficiency, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. However, as women have fought for greater equality and autonomy, the concept of self-reliance has become increasingly central to their empowerment.

Known for her reflective and personal songs, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has sold millions of albums. She has been outspoken about society's expectations of women and her personal battles with self-doubt. Swift has addressed the themes of love, heartbreak, friendship, and self-discovery in her

songs. Nonetheless, her portrayals of women's independence have struck a chord with her audience the most.

Taylor Alison Swift is a singer and musician from the United States. Her music reaches various genres, and her personal life inspired her music. At the age of fourteen, Swift went into the style of country music and obtained a songwriting contract with Sony/ATV Music Publishing in 2004. She became the youngest artist in history, winning the Grammy Award for Album of the Year at twenty. Swift earned the 2011 Woman of the Year award from Billboard. Among many other numerous awards, she was named the Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards and the Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music. She is the most well-known digital artist in the history of music.

Taylor Swift is a songwriter who has written many of her songs. Her songs express emotions related to broken hearts, falling in love, friends, family, and even seemingly insignificant things. *You Belong With Me* (2010), *Shake It Off* (2015), *Blank Space* (2016), *Lover* (2020), and *Cardigan* 2021 are just a few of Taylor Swift's songs that have won Song of the Year awards.

Swift's use of poetic devices in each of her lyrics must be distinct from how she writes her songs. Swift uses the song as a medium to convey thoughts, much like poets do with poetry, as demonstrated by Somad (2010) Poetry serves as the artistic platform for poets to communicate their thoughts and ideas through expressive means. Even further, poetry becomes the most profound way for the poet to express their anxiety in responding to a situation. Luxemburg (1989) said the definition of song lyrics or poems can be viewed as interchangeable, as they both encompass the essence of poetry. Additionally, he also said that the definition of poetry includes not only the types of literature but also proverbs, advertising messages, political terms, popular song-poems, and hymns (see Luxemburg et al., 1989). Furthermore, this assertion is further supported by Pradopo's statement in his scholarly work titled *Pengkajian Puisi*,

The message through the lyrics creates the listener's feelings and imagination and gives diverse meanings. Songs are a medium of communication between the songwriter and the listener about reality and imaginative stories. The lyrics of a song are poetic because they evoke feelings, attract attention, generate clear responses, and cause emotion (Pradopo, 2009).

Taylor Swift uses her songs as a messaging medium through which people share emotional responses, intentions, and meanings, and listeners' engagement with music, whether in live concerts, listening to CDs, or through streaming services, is driven by the medium's ability to convey and communicate emotions. One of the fascinating ideas Taylor Swift conveys in several of her songs is self-reliance as a woman. The meaning of self-reliance here is how Swift can achieve success in the music industry, how she can deal with all the insecurities that she is experiencing, and how she can be an independent woman by herself. Neilson (1935) urges that self-reliance can be characterized as the act of exhibiting or demonstrating trust in one's own capabilities, judgments, expertise, and other personal attributes. This assertion is further substantiated by the corroborative statement made by Hurlock (1980), he states that person who possesses self-reliance can have an impact on their own thinking processes.. They can make their own decision and pursue the hopes that might make them successful.

Self-reliance, according to Emerson (1967), is something that each individual needs in order to avoid conformity and false consistency and also to follow and trust his own instincts, beliefs, and ideas. Self-reliance refers to a person's capacity for problem-solving and independent decision-making. The ability to follow one's own thoughts and intuitions rather than conform to social norms is another crucial aspect of self-reliance. Emerson highlighted the self-reliance characteristic in his essay "Self-Reliance", including true to oneself, nonconformity independent thinking. Emerson emphasizes the need to trust one's own capabilities and instincts before relying on other people's judgments. People can have fulfilling lives and speak truthfully by following their distinct paths and

inner voices. Nonconformity is a refusal to bow to the pressure of society's opinions. A nonconformist will remain true to his or her ideas and trust the integrity of his or her mind. Independent thinking, on the other side, is crucial for self-reliance. Emerson felt people should establish their own opinions and ideals based on personal experience and intuition rather than blindly following others.

Furthermore, Taylor Swift's songs contain many examples of figurative language, one of the parts of poetic devices. In the song's lyrics, every phrase and sentence have a connotative meaning or implied meaning called figurative language. Figurative language leads to the meaning of the lyric becoming hidden and should be interpreted to understand. Sudjiman in Hasanuddin (2002) states that figurative language uses words whose structure and meaning are intentionally distorted from the ordinary structure and meaning to get freshness and strength of expression. Besides, X.J Kennedy (1979) figurative language is a language that uses figures of speech. A figure of speech is a way of saying something other than the literal meaning of the word. Kennedy divided figurative language into eight: metaphor, irony, simile, personification, hyperbole, allusion, metonymy, and symbol.

Because a significant amount of figurative language can be examined, this research is mainly interested in how Taylor Swift uses figurative language to convey woman's self-reliance in her song lyrics. Nevertheless, Swift uses a unique approach to portray the emotions and experiences she goes through in her songs. She used a variety of phrases with an implied meaning in her song. Some songs with implied meanings concerning woman's self-reliance are *Shake It Off*, *The Man*, *You Need to Calm Down*, *ME!*, *Bejeweled*, *Karma*, *You're on Your Own, Kid*, *I Did Something Bad*, *Look What You Made Me Do*, and *Mean*.

This research aims to know how Taylor Swift depicts her self-reliance in her selected song since she grew up in the American music industry. She was a teenager-girl to a mature woman who could find her identity as a woman who could stand alone. She has gained Favorite Country Female Artist, Worldwide Artist, and Favorite Pop/Rock Female Artist. She is also a Top Hot 100 Artist and received nominations for Best Country Album, Best Country Song, Record of the Year, and

Best Pop Vocal Album, also other awards. Thus, to find woman's self-reliance in Swift's selected song, this research uses the perception of figurative language from Kennedy & Gioia, Tarigan, and Perrine. Then, Emerson's Self-Reliance from his essay and the feminist approach from Cixous because these perceptions are appropriate to use based on the study's research problem. Here this researcher carries out a study entitled: "Woman's Self-Reliance in Taylor Swift's Selected Songs' Lyrics".

### **1.2 Research Problem**

This research made an attempt to examine the way Taylor Swift presented woman's self-reliance in her selected song through figurative language and to determine the meaning of each song lyric figurative language identified based on the provided background information. Therefore, the research question is framed in the following questions:

1. What the self-reliance characteristics are in Taylor Swift's selected songs' lyrics?
2. How is a woman's self-reliance depicted in Taylor Swift's selected songs' lyrics?

### **1.3 Research Purposes**

The analysis of the woman's self-reliance towards Taylor Swift's selected song lyrics in this research has several purposes, which include:

1. To find the self-reliance characteristic in Taylor Swift's selected songs' lyrics.
2. To find how woman's self-reliance is depicted in Taylor Swift's selected songs lyric.

### **1.4 Research Significances**

This research is intended to provide use to readers engaged in examining poetic or lyrical elements, especially concerning figurative language (simile, metaphor, synecdoche, idiom, metonymy, paradox, personification, repetition, irony, apostrophe, understatement, hyperbole, and allegory). This research has the potential to serve as an instance of reference for similar research objectives. The combination of various literary device theories in this research will signify the need for further research. In addition, this research will inspire researchers who intend to



investigate related elements of poetry. Subsequently, researchers can employ various similar theories in their research.

Furthermore, this research is deemed to offer a novel feature or contribution. This research will hopefully provide substantial insights and information related to how woman's self-reliance become a significant influence. Consequently, a reader will discover multiple combinations of theories required to examine the songs' lyrics, especially regarding figurative language, particularly about simile, metaphor, synecdoche, idiom, metonymy, paradox, personification, repetition, irony, apostrophe, understatement, hyperbole, and allegory.

### **1.5 Previous Study**

In order to facilitate the research process, prior studies from various sources have been compiled. These sources were consulted to provide a better understanding of the subject matter, as there are numerous theories related to this study; these previous studies were assessed and compared in order to determine which ones were relevant to this research, as they varied in terms of issues and research questions. The sources used in this research consisted of both academic journals and theses. The prior studies referred to earlier relate to similar topics as the present research.

The first prior research is from Rizka Maghfiroh from the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung conducted a study titled “The Portrayal of Woman in Sweetener Album by Ariana Grande” (2020). While this paper shares the topic of analyzing woman’s depiction in song lyrics, it focuses on a different object. The research applies feminism by Hélène Cixous’ feminism theory. It focuses on the aspect of the portrayal of the woman, such as the definition of the portrayal of the woman, independence and success, sexual woman empowerment, women's struggle, and the romantic life of an independent woman. Additionally, the portrayal of women in the Sweetener album is analyzed as a feminist movement.

The second previous study is a journal article titled “The Ways of Self-Reliance Development: Comparative Study of the Old Man and the Sea and Robinson Crusoe” (2021) by Nuriadi and Boniesta Z from the University of

Mataram. This article shows similarities in the chosen subject matter: the characteristic of self-reliance in the main character with the different objects. The theoretical framework employed in this study consists of Emerson's theory of self-reliance and Susan Bassnett's theory of comparative literature. This study discusses the main character in the object study, namely Santiago and Crusoe, and their efforts to reconstruct and improve their self-reliance in the face of various challenges. Santiago attempts to develop his self-reliance by reflecting on his past experiences, establishing a sense of personal independence, and acknowledging the particular factors that strengthen his resilience. At that exact time, Crusoe does various endeavors to sustain his survival, acknowledging the power of God in his life. Despite their distinct paths of developing self-reliance, the two figures are optimistic about surviving their bizarre and unfortunate yet insightful experience.

The third previous study is "Understanding American Values Through Emerson's *Self-Reliance*" (2020) by Rudy from Universitas Prima Indonesia. This article has the same chosen issues about the self-reliance concept by Emerson in the distinct objects. This study discusses how self-reliance influenced American civilization. It also shaped American ideals like morality and independence in daily life. Thus, it may improve life and self-awareness. People realized they could succeed if they trusted themselves and did it themselves. Emerson's spirit and writings profoundly influenced American art, literature, culture, and religion.

The fourth previous study is a journal article titled "*Interelasi Penggunaan Metafora Dan Citraan Dengan Penggunaan Simbol Dalam Lagu Cardigan Oleh Taylor Swift dalam Album Folklore* (Interrelation of the Use of Metaphors and Imagery with the Use of Symbols in Songs)" (2021) conducted by I Putu Andri Permana, Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari and Putu Indira Cika Mantika Sari from Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar. The similarity of this paper is the use of metaphor and imagery seen through the song. The research concludes that the song Cardigan by Taylor Swift is an excellent piece of literature since it has great metaphors, imagery, and symbols. The sign represents time and the journey that the song's topic takes through time, beginning in the past, both in the song's words and the music video.

The following reference paper is conducted by Agustin Evin Wulandari, a Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang student, titled "Figurative Language Used in Robert Frost's Selected Poems" (2015). The thesis has the same topic on figurative language as elements of poetry by Tengsoe Tjahjono. The research outlines the different kinds of figurative language, its purpose, and the prominent figurative language found in some poems by Robert Frost. Wulandari identified types of figurative language found in her thesis. They were paradox, symbol, climax, tautology, personification, repetition, parallelism, simile, rhetoric, and hyperbole. Furthermore, she found that symbol is the prominent figurative language used.

The last previous study, "Language Style Seen from Figurative Language Perspective in Taylor Swift's Red Album" (2019), was conducted by Nabila Wahyuningtyas from Universitas Sanata Dharma. This thesis shares correlations in the chosen topic: the type of figurative language by Perrine. The research aims at the types of language style and figurative language shown in the collected song in the Red Album by Taylor Swift. She found that Taylor Swift uses various figurative language types: understatement, irony, metaphor, simile, symbol, hyperbole, personification, paradox, and metonymy. She further found that metaphor and simile are the prominent figurative language used in Taylor Swift's album.

The current research is in accordance with previous research on the depiction of women in literature and the utilization of figurative language in literary works. This study sets itself apart from previous research on the topic by centering on the song lyrics of Taylor Swift, intending to emphasize the motif of woman's self-reliance. Prior studies have examined literary works broadly, but this research delimits its focus to analyze Swift's lyrics, intending to reach a more enhanced comprehension of the depiction of self-reliance in her songwriting.

The objective of this study is to demonstrate how the theme of women's self-reliance is portrayed in the music of Swift through an analysis of the figurative language and or simple sentences employed in a selection of her songs. The present study examines explicitly the way in which Swift uses literary devices such as metaphor and simile to communicate the significance of self-reliance for women.



Prior research has explored topics relevant to the current study, such as the depiction of women and the utilization of figurative language in literary works. However, this study makes a distinctive scholarly contribution by concentrating on the specific context of Swift's songs' lyrics. The present research aims to enhance comprehension pertaining to the depiction of woman's self-reliance in contemporary popular culture. Thus, they were examined separately. This research will focus on woman's self-reliance in Taylor Swift's selected lyric songs. Those are: *Shake It Off*, *The Man*, *You Need to Calm Down*, *ME!*, *Bejeweled*, *Karma*, *You're on Your Own, Kid*, *I Did Something Bad*, *Look What You Made Me Do*, and *Mean*. This research will analyze them through figurative language and simple sentences that appear in each song. Thus, this research chose this object, which was the first time anyone had ever studied. In addition, this research will focus more on discussing woman's self-reliance through figurative language and simple sentence points of view.

