

Construction of The Meaning of The Song Lyrics: Exile's Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver Analysis Roland Barthes' Semiotics

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Abstract. Songs serve not only as entertainment but also as a medium of communication that represents human emotional and social experiences. One song that reflects these dynamics is Taylor Swift's "Exile" featuring Bon Iver, which depicts emotional conflict and communication failure in romantic relationships. This study aims to analyze the construction of meaning in the lyrics of the song "Exile" using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. The research method used is qualitative with text analysis techniques of observation, documentation, and interviews with song listeners. The main data in the form of song lyrics are analyzed through three layers of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth. The results show that the lyrics of "Exile" construct the meaning of emotional alienation through signs, dialogue between characters, and the use of symbolic metaphors. At the denotative level, the lyrics depict separation and conflict between two individuals. At the connotative level, these lyrics represent emotional exhaustion, inner distance, and failure of interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, at the myth level, this song reflects the cultural view of romantic relationships trapped in a cycle of conflict due to a lack of empathy and emotional communication. This study concludes that Roland Barthes' semiotics is relevant for understanding song lyrics as cultural texts that represent the emotional reality of modern society.

Keywords: Romantic relationships, Emotional communication, Song lyrics, Meaning, Semiotics

1 Introduction

In the modern era, the development of information technology has changed the way humans communicate and express their identity [1]. Although communication has become faster and easier, this does not always translate into increased emotional closeness between individuals, giving rise to the phenomenon of emotional distance in personal relationships. This condition highlights the gap between technological advancement and the quality of emotional communication between individuals. Although digital communication enables faster and more efficient interaction, it often fails to convey deeper emotional meanings, which can lead to misunderstandings and emotional distance in interpersonal relationships. As a result, individuals tend to seek alternative

forms of communication that are more capable of expressing complex emotional experiences. In this context, music emerges as significant medium of symbolic communication, as it only conveys messages but also represents emotions, meanings, and interpersonal experiences through its lyrical and musical elements. As a communication medium, music plays a role in conveying messages and feelings and building interpersonal relationships, as the primary purpose of music is to communicate with its listeners. [2]

In line with the function of music as a medium of emotional communication, music not only evokes feelings, but also acts as a universal means of communication [3] One of the works that represents emotional communication through symbolic language is the song "Exile" on Taylor Swift's album *Folklore*, a collaboration with Bon Iver, released in 2020. This song received a positive response, reaching No. 6 on the Billboard Hot 100 and No. 5 on the Billboard Digital Song Sales Chart in the US And recorded more than 1 billion streams on Spotify by 2024. This achievement demonstrates that "Exile" has broad emotional appeal and relevance for listeners across cultures, making it a worthy subject of study in the field of communication. The album, *Folklore*, is structured like chapters in a narrative, with each song interconnected and lyrics serving as the primary medium for the singer to express emotions and experiences.[4]

Based on its emotional and symbolic relevance, the song "Exile" was chosen because it represents the complexity of the experience of alienation, loss, and communication failure in interpersonal relationships. Through a vocal dialogue between Taylor Swift and Bon Iver, this song depicts the dynamics of two individuals separated by misunderstanding and emotional distance with symbolic and musical linguistic elements that form a representation of deep emotional meaning. To understand this meaning, a theoretical approach is needed that is able to examine symbols and signs comprehensively, one of which is through semiotics as the study of signs and meaning in communication. [5] In this perspective, the lyrics and musical composition function as signifiers, while the emotional meaning and human experience represented become the signified. Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theoretical framework, this study examines the construction of denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings in the lyrics of the song "Exile" as the formation of identity and an expression of interpersonal communication crisis that reflects the social conditions of society.[6] Especially in describing loneliness, loss and communication difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, although this study primarily employs Roland Barthes semiotic framework as the main analytical approach, the findings are also conceptually related to interpersonal communication, particularly in understanding emotional distance and miscommunication. Emotional alienation, as represented in the lyrics of the song "Exile", reflects a breakdown in interpersonal communication processes, where individuals fail to interpret messages and emotions effectively. In this context, semiotic analysis helps to uncover how symbolic meanings in the lyric represent these communication failures, without shifting the main theoretical focus from semiotic itself.

Although research by the work [7] and [8] has demonstrated the relevance of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in examining emotions and relationship dynamics through song lyrics. The object of both studies is still limited to Indonesian music with a local cultural background. Until now, studies that apply Barthes's approach to the representation of cross-cultural emotional communication, especially in the lyrics of the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift ft. Bon Iver, are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study is directed to fill this gap by examining the construction of emotional and social meaning

through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, while maintaining the same theoretical framework in revealing layers of symbolic meaning in song lyrics.

Based on the background and research gap described above, this study specifically focuses on the problem of emotional alienation in romantic relationships that arises from the failure of interpersonal communication. In this context, emotional distance is not only understood as a psychological condition, but also a result of ineffective communication processes between individuals. Furthermore, this study views song lyrics as a form of symbolic communication that represents these emotional experiences. Therefore, the main issue examined is how emotional alienation and communication failure are constructed and represented through sign, meaning, and symbolic language in the lyrics of the song "Exile".

Based on the results of previous research, the study of the song "Exile" still needs further study to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and emotional feelings it contains. This research is directed to see popular music as a medium that represents social conditions and illustrates the failure to understand feelings between individuals. In addition to expanding the application of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to popular music texts, this study also contributes to the development of communication science by examining emotional expressions and symbolic meanings in music as a form of interpersonal communication, with the aim of analyzing the construction of denotative, connotative and mythical meanings as well as the representation of alienation and communication failure in the lyrics of the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift feat. Bon Iver.

2 Literature Review

Based on Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, song lyrics can be understood as cultural texts that construct emotional and social meaning through linguistic signs. Therefore, a review of previous research applying Roland Barthes's semiotic approach to song lyrics is necessary. Several previous studies have examined song lyrics as representations of interpersonal relationships and human emotional dynamics. The research conducted by [8] entitled "Construction of Inner Conflict Meaning in Song Lyrics 'Ego' by Rizky Febian", examines song lyrics as a medium for expressing inner conflict in interpersonal relationships. This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to describe the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings contained in the song lyrics. The results show that the inner conflict in the lyrics of the song "Ego" is represented through the demands of relationships. Egoism and unbalanced communication are the main factors that cause conflict so that relationships are understood as a space of tug-of-war of interests that have the potential to damage emotional closeness. This study confirms that song lyrics not only function as an expression of individual feelings, but also as a social reflection of the dynamics of human relationships.

Another previous research conducted by [7] entitled "The Meaning of Solitude: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of the Lyrics of the Song 'Ruang Sendiri' by Tulus". This research focuses on the representation of solitude in romantic relationships through three layers of meaning, namely denotation, connotation and myth. The findings of this study indicate that solitude is not always interpreted as a form of alienation, but rather as an emotional need to maintain self-balance in interpersonal relationships. At the myth level, solitude is understood as an emotional strategy to maintain the

integrity of relationships, especially when communication is not running optimally. Although it has similarities in the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, this research differs from the current research in terms of the object of study and cultural context, because it focuses on popular Indonesian songs.

Based on these two studies, it can be concluded that this study was conducted to address these shortcomings by using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. This theory examines the relationship between signs, meanings, and ideologies hidden behind the text through three layers of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth. This approach allows for an in-depth and systematic analysis of how Taylor Swift and Bon Iver construct emotional and symbolic meanings in the lyrics of the song "Exile," particularly in describing inner conflict, misunderstanding, and feelings of alienation in interpersonal relationships. In line with this, this study presents a new perspective in understanding the object of study of the song "Exile" as a construction of emotional communication meaning, which is not only understood as a symbolic musical work or a form of entertainment alone.

Popularity is a form of cultural product that has a broad reach and is influential in modern life. Through music, individuals not only interpret the entertainment aspect but also interpret the emotional messages, values, and life experiences represented in the songs. Music can convey feelings that are difficult to express with words, making it understandable to people from various cultures and backgrounds. [9] This demonstrates that music plays a crucial role as a universal medium for emotional expression, capable of connecting listeners across diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, music influences listeners' emotions, ways of thinking, and interpretations of social reality. [10] As a medium of communication, music serves to convey symbolic messages from the composer or singer to the listener. Songs provide a space for the songwriter to express his or her feelings, inner conflicts, and relationship experiences. This communicative relationship positions the singer as the communicator and the listener as the recipient, actively interpreting the meaning based on their respective experiences. [2] Through popular music, these messages reach the wider community and form emotional mass communication patterns. [11] In the communication process, song lyrics play a major role in conveying meaning and emotion.

Song lyrics are composed of a series of words and expressions that convey emotional meaning and gain meaning when sung. [12] As a main component in a musical work, lyrics convey meaning and information that can influence the listener. [13] They also function as a means of cultural expression that contains social, emotional, and interpersonal meaning. Lyrics are expressions of experiences seen, heard, or experienced by their creators, using language that is creatively processed to construct unique meanings. [14] Therefore, song lyrics often reflect social realities, individual experiences, and values prevalent in society. [15] Furthermore, lyrics can be understood as expressions of feelings strung together through words to form a specific meaning. Songs are an integral part of society due to their enjoyable nature and ability to represent a variety of human experiences through diverse themes. [16]

As a basis for analyzing the meaning in song lyrics, this study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. According to [5] Barthes developed the concept of signs into a multi-level system of meaning that includes denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. Denotative meaning refers to literal meaning, connotative to social, emotional, and cultural associations, while myths represent ideological meanings that live in society.

Through this framework, signs are not only understood as conveying meaning, but also as forming social and ideological realities. Therefore, Roland Barthes's semiotic theory is used in the study entitled "The Construction of Meaning in Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver's Song Lyrics - Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis" to reveal the meaning of betrayal, alienation, and modern social reflections such as emotional distance, communication failure, and the tendency towards individualism in interpersonal relationships.

Based on Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, song lyrics can be understood as cultural texts that construct emotional and social meaning through linguistic signs. Therefore, a review of previous research using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach in the study of song lyrics is necessary. Several previous studies have examined song lyrics as a representation of human relationships and emotional [8] entitled "Construction of Inner Conflict Meaning in Song Lyrics 'Ego' by Rizky Febian", uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to analyze denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings, and shows that song lyrics reflect inner conflict resulting from egoism and unbalanced communication in interpersonal relationships. Other research by [7] found that solitude is interpreted as an emotional need to maintain balance in relationships. Although using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, the study differs in its object of study, so this study focuses on the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift ft. Bon Iver, focusing on deepening emotional meaning and interpersonal communication failures.

2.1 Music as a Communication Medium

Music has long served as an effective means of conveying moral and emotional messages. A Semiotic Analysis states that music has a significant impact on the mindset, behavior, and emotions of its listeners. [10] Therefore, music, as a medium of artistic expression, reflects the culture of the society that supports it. The values and norms that shape the process of cultural enculturation, both informal and informal, are contained in music. [17] Furthermore, music also functions as a communication medium, allowing individuals to express their feelings and emotional messages to listeners. In this context, music can be understood as a form of communication because, through song and melody, the singer acts as the communicator, and the listener as the recipient, actively interpreting the meaning based on their individual experiences. [2] Through popular music, these messages reach the wider community and form emotional mass communication patterns.[11] In the communication process, song lyrics play a major role in conveying meaning and emotion.

Beyond its role as a medium of communication, music also serves a crucial role in social and cultural life. Listeners often feel connected to a particular song or genre because it reflects the values of a symbolic space where individuals affirm their identity, express their emotions, and interpret life experiences through the aesthetic and cultural representations they contain. Thus, music serves not only as a tool but also as a medium for identity formation and self-reflection, strengthening the emotional connection between individuals and listeners.

2.2 Song Lyrics as a Medium of Expression and Representation of Meaning

Music is able to convey feelings that are difficult to express in words, so it can be understood by people from various cultures and backgrounds.[9] In this case, song lyrics are crucial because they serve to convey emotion and meaning to the listener. Lyrics consist of a series of emotionally charged words and phrases that convey the tone when sung. [12] Song lyrics are a crucial component in a musical work that contains meaning and information, which can influence the listener.[13] Song lyrics also function as a means of cultural expression and as a symbolic place that stores social, emotional, and interpersonal meanings. Lyrics not only convey stories or emotions, but also contain symbols that can be analyzed to understand the message implied in them. Song lyrics are expressions from someone about something that has been seen, heard, or experienced. Linguists such as poets and lyricists play with language in expressing their experiences to create appeal and uniqueness in their lyrics or poems. [14] Song lyrics also often reflect social realities, individual experiences, and the values that live in society. [15] Lyrics can also be an expression of our feelings at that moment, or a collection of words that, when combined, create a meaning. Society can be said to be inseparable from songs, as songs have a pleasant character and represent many people thanks to the wide variety of song genres.[16]

Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of signs explains that linguistic signs consist of two main components: the signifier, which is a sound or written form, and the signified, which is the concept or meaning designated by the sign. [5] Saussure emphasized that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, so that the meaning of a word or phrase is shaped by social conventions and the context of its use. In the context of song lyrics, the words sung by the singer function as signifiers that evoke specific meanings according to the emotional experience and interpretation of the listener. Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis in this study is strengthened by this perspective, particularly in understanding how the lyrics of "Exile" construct denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings through linguistic symbols.

In the context of Taylor Swift's song "Exile" featuring Bon Iver, the process of meaning formation stems not only from the songwriter's intention as the producer of the text but also from the diverse interpretations emerging from the listener. The collaboration between two singers with differing narrative perspectives allows for the emergence of various interpretations of the emotional and relational meanings contained in the lyrics. This phenomenon aligns with Roland Barthes's view in semiotic theory, which asserts that meaning is not singular and not entirely determined by the author, but is also shaped by the reader or listener as the interpreter of signs. Thus, the lyrics of "Exile" can be viewed as an open text that allows for a plurality of meanings based on the subjective experiences and social contexts of each listener.

2.3 Roland Barthes' semiotics

According to [5] In his book *Semiotics of Communication*, Roland Barthes developed a semiotic theory that stems from Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of signs, but expands it into a multi-level system of meaning. Barthes explains that signs have three layers of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth. Denotative is the literal or basic meaning

that is objective and directly apparent. Connotative is the additional meaning that arises from the social, emotional, and cultural associations inherent in a sign. Meanwhile, myth is an ideological meaning formed from the connotative layer and serves to represent a particular cultural or ideological viewpoint within society.

Through this theory, Barthes shows that signs do not display meaning explicitly, but also form social and ideological realities that influence how humans interpret the world around them. Therefore, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is used in the study entitled "The Construction of Meaning in Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver's Song Lyrics - Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis" to reveal how the signs in the lyrics construct meanings about betrayal, alienation and modern cultural views on interpersonal relationships. In addition, this study also examines how the meanings that appear in the lyrics of "Exile" represent the social realities of today's society such as emotional distance, communication failure, and the tendency towards individualism in human relationships as well as the cultural ideologies that underlie them.

In this study, Roland Barthes semiotic framework is operationalized through three levels of meaning analysis : denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of the song lyrics, focusing on what is expressed in the dialogue between Taylor Swift and Bon Iver in the song "Exile". For instance, the lyrics depict two individuals who meet again after a separation and express their perspectives on a failed relationship.

Connotation, on the other hand, examines the emotional and associative meanings embedded in the lyrics. In "Exile", the alternating vocals and contrasting tones symbolize miscommunication and emotional distance between the two individuals. The repetition of certain phrases and the use of imagery, such as "seeing someone else's ending", reflect feelings of rejection, misunderstanding, and unresolved emotional conflict in interpersonal relationships.

Meanwhile, myth refers to the broader cultural and ideological meanings constructed through the lyrics. In this context, "Exile" represents a common narrative in modern relationships, where emotional alienation and communication failure become normalized experiences. The song reflects a cultural myth that individuals in romantic relationships often struggle to truly understand each other, leading to emotional distance despite previous intimacy. Through this framework, the lyrics of "Exile" are analyzed as a system of signs that construct symbolic representations of interpersonal communication failure, emotional alienation, and the complexity of human relationships.

3 Research Method

This study uses qualitative research methods to deeply understand the meaning of social phenomena contained in song lyrics. Qualitative methods emphasize the process of meaning-making, not numerical measurements. [18] This method is used to interpret the symbolic and emotional meaning in the lyrics of the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift ft. Bon Iver as a representation of social and cultural phenomena reflected through the song's text. This approach was chosen because it is in line with the research objective, which is to reveal symbolic meaning through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. This study uses primary data in the form of the lyrics of the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift ft.

Bon Iver, which was released on the album Folklore in 2020. The song's lyrics are analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which includes three layers of meaning, namely denotative, connotative, and mythical. [5]

The data analysis process was conducted in four stages. First, the researcher identified fragments of the lyrics of the song "Exile" that contained linguistic and symbolic signs of emotional conflict and failed interpersonal communication. Second, these signs were analyzed at the denotative level to understand their literal meaning. Third, they continued to the connotative level to interpret the emotional, relational, and cultural meanings inherent in the signs. Fourth, the researcher drew on the meaning of myth as an ideological representation that reflects cultural views on romantic relationships and emotional alienation. At this stage, myth functions as a communication system that conveys messages, not through its material or physical form, but through the culturally constructed meanings.[19]

This analysis focuses on the construction of meaning that depicts feelings of alienation, loss, and communication failure in interpersonal relationships through symbols and metaphors contained in song lyrics. Data collection was conducted through observation, documentation, and interviews. Documentation included the collection of official lyric texts, articles, journals, and relevant media reviews. In addition, interviews with six listener informants who understand the song "Exile" were conducted to gain insight into the interpretation of the song's lyrics. Data validity was maintained through triangulation, namely the use of various data collection and analysis methods to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the meaning obtained from the data.[12]

4 **Results and Discussion**

Based on the research results, there are three lyrics in the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift and Bon Iver that show signs with denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. These three lyrics represent the process of constructing meaning in an emotional relationship marked by a failure of interpersonal communication, as described below.

Table 1. Denotative, Connotative, and Myth Meaning of the Lyrics of the Song “ Exile” by Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver

Lyrics	Denotative	Connotative	Myth
“I think I’ve seen this film before”	The character in the song states that he has seen a film before.	These lyrics are interpreted as a representation of the repetition of emotions in relationships, where the conflict experienced by the character is not a new experience, but rather a relational pattern that continues to repeat itself and causes emotional saturation.	At the mythical level, romantic relationships are understood as relationships prone to repeated failure due to unequal emotional communication, so that relationship failure is often interpreted as the fault of one party.

Based on Table 1, The lyrics “I think I’ve seen this film before” reflect on a denotative level, interpreted as a character’s statement stating that he has seen a film before. This meaning refers to the act of seeing literally without connecting it to real-life experiences. On a connotative level, the metaphor of “film” is used to describe the impression of repeated emotions in relationships, so that the situation faced does not feel like a new experience, but rather like a conflict that is felt again and gives rise to emotional boredom due to communication failure. On a mythical level, the meaning of these lyrics does not stand alone in one sentence, but is understood through the series of lyrics in the song “Exile” as a whole, the lyrics represent the generally understood view that romantic relationships often experience repeated failure because relational issues are never truly resolved. This pattern forms the assumption that conflict and emotional alienation are considered a normal part of romantic relationships.

Table 2. Denotative, Connotative, and Myth Meaning of the Lyrics of the Song “ Exile” by Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver

Lyrics	Denotative	Connotative	Myth
“You never gave a warning sign” / “I gave so many signs”	Denotatively, the two characters convey conflicting statements about whether or not there are warning signs in the relationship.	Connotatively, this dialogue is interpreted as an emotional sign that is not mutually understood, thus giving rise to feelings of being ignored and indicating a failure in communication.	At the mythical level, romantic relationships are understood as relationships characterized by unequal emotional communication. This imbalance often leads to relationship failure being interpreted as the fault of one partner.

After the emergence of awareness of recurring relationship patterns, the conflict in the song "Exile" develops into a problem of emotional communication, which is marked by differences in perception between characters regarding the signs and clarity of feelings in relationships. As explained in the study "Semiotic Analysis of the Meaning of Fatigue in the Lyrics of the Song "Good Enough" by Chanyeol" that the lyrics reflect the way the author conveys their attitudes and hopes in facing various problems and difficulties in life as stated in the journal. [20] A similar thing is also seen in the song "Exile", especially through the lyric dialogue "You never gave a warning sign" / "I gave so many signs"

Based on Table 2, the dialogue reflects the differences in perception between the characters regarding the presence of warning signs in their relationship. At the denotative level, this dialogue shows conflicting statements between the two parties regarding previously communicated or uncommunicated messages. At the connotative level, this dialogue is interpreted as a failure of emotional communication, where one party feels they have never received clarity, while the other believes they have given sufficient signals. This difference in interpretation of the warning signs creates a feeling of being misunderstood and widens the emotional distance between the two characters. At the mythical level, this dialogue represents the common view in romantic relationships that relationship failure is often understood as a result of an individual's inability to perceive

or convey emotional signals. This myth reflects the social understanding that communication in relationships does not always occur equally, so the blame tends to be placed on one party, rather than on the overall relationship pattern.

Table 3. Denotative, Connotative, and Myth Meaning of the Lyrics of the Song “Exile” by Taylor Swift Feat Bon Iver

Lyrics	Denotative	Connotative	Myth
“You’re not my homeland anymore”	Denotatively, this lyric states that someone no longer views their partner as their “homeland” or homeland.	Connotatively, the word “homeland” is interpreted as a symbol of security, comfort, and a place to return emotionally, which indicates the loss of emotional ties and the feeling of no longer having a safe place in a relationship.	On a mythical level, these lyrics represent the common understanding that romantic relationships ideally serve as a safe space and a source of belonging. When a partner is no longer perceived as “home,” the relationship is perceived as having lost its relational meaning and experiencing emotional alienation.

Following the conflict of emotional communication demonstrated through the dialogue between the characters, the lyrics of the song “Exile” further represent a deeper form of alienation through the use of metaphor. This metaphor depicts a shift in the meaning of the relationship, from a space that previously provided a sense of security to a source of emotional alienation. Based on Table 3, the lyrics “You’re not my homeland anymore” denotatively indicate that the character in the song no longer views his partner as his “homeland.” This expression directly indicates a change in the emotional position of the partner, from being close and important to something no longer owned. At this level, the meaning of the lyrics does not stop only at physical separation, but also suggests the emotional distance that has formed in the relationship. At the connotative level, the word “homeland” is interpreted as a symbol of security, comfort, and a place to return emotionally. The loss of the meaning of “homeland” indicates that the relationship no longer provides emotional protection for the character. The partner who was a source of calm and a place to return to is now perceived as no longer safe, so that the existing emotional bond slowly weakens and disappears.

On a mythical level, these lyrics represent the common view in romantic relationships that the ideal partner should function as a “home,” a safe space that provides a sense of belonging and emotional protection. When a partner is no longer perceived as a “home,” the relationship is perceived as having lost its relational meaning. This condition reflects emotional alienation, where the relationship is no longer perceived as a place to return to, but rather as a source of distance and loss of meaning in the character’s emotional life.

Overall, the lyrics of the song “Exile” by Taylor Swift feat. Bon Iver build meaning through the interconnection of language signs and symbols that represent emotions,

dialogue between characters, and the use of metaphors. Based on the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings that have been described in Table 1 to Table 3, the construction of the meaning of this song is understood in layers through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, starting from the literal meaning to a deeper symbolic meaning. Emotions represent fatigue and boredom due to repeated conflicts, dialogue shows the failure of emotional communication between characters, while metaphors function as symbols of alienation and the loss of a sense of security in romantic relationships. These three elements are interconnected to form the meaning of the lyrics of the song "Exile" as a whole as in this song is understood in layers through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, starting from the literal meaning to a deeper meaning that reflects views on romantic relationships and emotional alienation. All of these elements are interconnected in forming the meaning of the lyrics of the song "Exile" as a whole as a representation of a fragile relationship and full of emotional alienation.

Emotions become an element in the formation of the meaning of the song "Exile". The lyrics that have represented the experience of repeated relationships continue to emerge feelings of disappointment, fatigue, and boredom due to conflict that is no longer understood as a safe and comfortable space, but rather as a source of emotional exhaustion. This interpretation is in line with the view of one informant who stated that the relationship in the song "Exile" is described as an emotionally exhausting relationship due to repeated conflicts and a lack of clarity in communication, so that one party begins to question the sustainability of the relationship [21] A similar view was also expressed by another informant who assessed that emotional exhaustion arises because the partner is no longer able to understand the emotional signals given, even though the feelings are still there. [22] Thus, emotions play an important role in shaping how characters interpret the relationships they experience.

The emotions that form are then expressed through dialogue between the characters, demonstrating a failure of emotional communication. The dialogue in the song "Exile" does not function as a means of conflict resolution, but rather as a space for exchanging conflicting perceptions. Each character feels they have conveyed their feelings sufficiently, but do not feel understood by their partner. One informant interpreted the dialogue in the song "Exile" as a meeting of two conflicting perspectives, so that the dialogue does not function as a means of regretting the conflict, but rather emphasizes the emotional distance between the two characters. [23] This view is reinforced by informants who emphasized that the conflict in the song "Exile" is not caused by a lack of communication, but rather by emotional communication that does not run effectively, so that the message conveyed is not truly received and understood.[24]

The failure of emotional communication depicted through dialogue is then emphasized through the use of metaphor as a symbolic representation of conflict and emotional alienation. The metaphor in the song "Exile" serves to convey emotional experiences that are difficult to express directly, such as feelings of loss of security and changes in the meaning of relationships. Symbols such as "film" and "homeland" show that relationships are expressed as something repetitive, tiring, and ultimately no longer a place to return emotionally. One informant views that the use of metaphor in this song reflects the widening emotional distance, where both characters are still in the same relationship, but experience emotional alienation [25] In addition, other informants emphasized that the symbol of "homeland" represents the loss of a sense of security in a

relationship so that separation not only means the end of a relationship, but also the loss of an emotional home [26]

Thus, the construction of the meaning of the lyrics of the song "Exile" as a whole shows that the collapse of a romantic relationship is not solely caused by the loss of feelings, but rather the failure to build equal emotional communication. Through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, the meaning of this song can be understood in layers, starting from the literal meaning to the myth that represents the social view of romantic relationships as a safe space that can collapse when conflicts recur and emotional communication does not run effectively.

5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the lyrics of the song "Exile" by Taylor Swift featuring Bon Iver, this study shows that the song is constructed in layers through the representation of emotions, dialogue between characters, and the use of metaphors. The song's lyrics represent the experience of a romantic relationship marked by repeated conflict, emotional exhaustion, and a failure to understand each other. The dialogue that emerges does not function as a means of conflict resolution, but instead emphasizes differences in perception and widens the emotional distance between the characters. The metaphors used reinforce the image of emotional alienation and the collapse of a sense of security in interpersonal relationships.

Overall, the song "Exile" represents the failure of a romantic relationship, not only caused by the loss of feelings, but also closely related to the failure to establish equal and effective emotional communication. Relationships are understood as spaces vulnerable to misunderstanding when emotions are not fully conveyed and received. These findings emphasize that popular music can function as a modern medium, particularly in depicting experiences of alienation, inner conflict, and failed interpersonal communication.

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