

# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Feminism is a movement that advocates for gender equality. The goal of feminism is for all people to be treated equally. This movement appears because women are sick that they are got no rights, cannot give opinions freely, cannot vote, cannot work, cannot get a fair education, to earn fair wages, and told to behave, unlike men. They want to change their lives to have a free life that not strict by their genders roles and wanted an equality between men and women by having the same opportunities that men received. Therefore, feminism has helped a lot of women to live their life to be free and had a huge impact on the everyday role of women in fighting what they believe in. The difference between feminism from other social movement is feminism focusing on gender and how it relates to the oppression of women all around the world.

Female empowerment is the movement to make all the feminist goal to happen. Without female empowerment, feminism goal will not be achieved because, if women do not march to empower others, how can others understand what women want, what women have been through, what equal rights are if not properly given the understanding if women do not speak up and women do not

fight for it. Female empowerment is to empower other people. To invite all people, to fight together for their rights, to fight for equality.

Empowerment enables them to take control of their lives, and their rights. Besides, organize to help each other and make demands on the nation to back and support their movement and for the society for a change of men perspective of women. Women empowerment can also be defined as an effort of individuals for achieving the power to think and act freely, make a choice, and to fulfill women potential to the society. Therefore, women empowerment makes women able to do these efforts because men are dominant for doing the efforts previously.

Female empowerment is the main movement in feminism. This movement happens because there is no equality between men and women that have to be stopped since it clicks some people to do sexism, violence, and oppression. Because women are usually considered as weaker, less intelligent, more passive than men. Women also usually seen as a sex object for men, and society makes some standardization to how women should be like, and behave. Women are encouraged to remain small, expected to be delicate creatures with closed legs and small waist.

Female empowerment can be expressed through many ways, such as education, art, and much more. In art, feminism is often expressed in a form of a song, like Beyoncé with Run the World (Girls), Lily Allen with Fuck You, Katy

Perry with I Kissed A Girl, Grimes with Kill V. Main, Fifth Harmony with That's My Girl, Daya with Sit Still, Look Pretty, Demi Lovato with Confidence, Dolly Parton with Just Because I am a Women, Yoko Ono with Sisters, O Sisters, and many more.

The writer choosing female empowerment as a study because she likes to analyze an issue about feminism, as the writer label herself as a feminist. And just like the writer explains above, feminism is a real issue in the world for many centuries, women have not been able to earn fair wages and still get blame while someone raped her. The writer wants to address this issue to someone that does not know about feminism at all, that accused feminist is someone who hates on men, to someone who did not see equality is the real issue, someone who does not know that sex and gender are used as justification for treating women differently than men.

The writer wants to tell everyone that feminism matters because it is a movement to erase a system like patriarchy and to achieve the feminist goal to everyone be treated equally. The writer also wants to tell that feminist does not mean someone feels oppressed, it simply means that we want gender equality. Someone may not have felt the outright sexism towards them, but sexism sometimes happens in the street, being valued how the way you look over your

brains, rape, and discrimination are the example of sexism. Just because you have not experienced it does not mean it is not happening to the others.

Even though there are so many artists with so many songs that used a feminist theme, the writer choose just to analyze Beyoncé song lyrics, because Beyoncé has so many songs with a feminist theme, and the writer likes Beyoncé era of feminist song, it is more empowering, the lyrics feel more connected with the issue in the world right now, every time the writer heard Beyoncé's song on the radio, the writer feels empowered by the lyrics of the song. And Beyoncé also the writer idol since she was a kid.

Beyoncé is not known only for her voice and beautiful face, but also known for her powerful song lyrics. Beyoncé often expresses her feelings about society, love, monogamy relationships, female sexuality, and female empowerment through her songs. Beyoncé packages an empowering post-feminist message in a pop song that indicated through the lyrics "Who Run the World? Girls" that shows female dominance and empowerment.

Beyoncé also has been successful to build a great musical empire by challenging gender norms with notable songs, such as "Irreplaceable", "If I Were a Boy", and "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)". That means Beyoncé song lyrics is a good subject to analyze because of her powerful song lyrics that have a feminist message.

However, as the writer has seen from various reports like The Guardian, Billboard, and others there is still a lot of people said that Beyoncé is not a real feminist, that she is just using a word “feminism” to boost her career but, some other feminist said that her feminism is just different from the other feminism because Beyoncé likes to relate everything women does with men, that women are better than men while the other feminist does not want to talk about men at all.

In 2014, Beyoncé writes an essay titled “Gender Equality is a Myth!” and she addresses some words of encouragement for all the women around the world to stop buying into a myth about gender equality because it is not a reality yet. Citing studies that show that women still being paid 77% of their male partners. Beyonce also said that if the society wants to accomplish gender equality they need to teach their children the rules of respect and equality, so as they grow up, gender equality will be natural ways of life.

Lyrics is a text which includes reflections of reality, feelings, and creates meanings from social life that aims to entertain and deliver good messages. In this study, the lyrics on Beyoncé’s song lyrics can be considered as a poetry, depends on the readers who see and hear the lyrics.

This study, song lyrics are analyzed to identify female empowerment dimensions proposed by Malhotra that expressed in selected Beyoncé song lyrics by using semiotics orders of signification in order to reveal the primary

signification (denotation) and secondary signification (connotation) of the signs proposed by Barthes that used in the text analysis.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

The writer assumes that equal rights are the key foundation of every problem that exists in this world. Feminism exists because there is no equal rights and respect for women, people with disability, LGBTQ+ people, and people of color. Feminists are not an angry lesbian who hate all men, a true feminist does not believe that women are better than men, or women are the victim of everything that men do.

Beyoncé told British Vogue that she hesitated to call herself a feminist. Even though she hesitated to call herself a feminist there is still a lot of people seen her as a feminist icon. She said that the word feminist can be very extreme, but she would like to call herself a modern day feminist because she believes in equality.

As a modern-day feminist, Beyoncé likes to speak an about equality rights, women rights. She tried to empower all women around the world through her songs, concerts, and social media. So, the writer likes to analyze Beyoncé song lyrics that is represented female empowerment using the theory of American Feminism, Female Empowerment Dimensions by Malhotra, and Barthes Semiotic Order of Signification.

### **1.3 Research Problem of the Study**

The problems will be discussed are as follows:

1. What are the general meanings of Beyoncé's song lyrics that represented female empowerment?
2. What type of female empowerment that is represented in selected Beyoncé's song lyrics?

### **1.4 Limitations of the Study**

This study is focusing on identify a meaning of female empowerment in eight Beyoncé's song lyrics by using semiotics order of signification that are proposed by Barthes(as cited in Chandler, 2002:86), and discovering what type of female empowerment dimensions that are in Beyonce's song lyrics which is proposed by Malhotra et al (2002:14). This study is narrowed into eight Beyoncé's song, which is Irreplaceable [B-Day Deluxe Edition, 2007], If I Were a Boy [I Am... Sasha Fierce, 2008], Run the World (Girls) [4 Album, 2011], \*\*\*Flawless [BEYONCE Album, 2013], Grown Woman [BEYONCE, 2013], 6 Inch [LEMONADE, 2016], Denial [LEMONADE, 2016], and Don't Hurt Yourself [LEMONADE, 2016].

The writer chooses only eight of Beyoncé's song because this song is more connected with the main issue that women feel right now, the writer also like these eight songs of Beyoncé, so it will not be bored to analyze it, and also make more sense to think about, so others that see the analyses will not get confused by the song lyrics.

### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to find out the answer from the research problems, the writer will be discussed are follows:

1. To identify the general meaning of eight Beyoncé's song lyrics that represented female empowerment.
2. To discover what type of female empowerment dimensions that are represented in eight Beyoncé song lyrics.

### **1.6 Significances of the Study**

Actually, the significances of the study are to expand the knowledge of the readers.

There are some significances of study, as follows:

1. Theoretically:
  - i. To give information and knowledge to analyzing a song using Barthes semiotic order of signification, for English Department



Pasundan University students and for further researchers' references.

- ii. To be used as references for learning activities for middle school and high school students.

2. Practically:

- i. To add library book collection of English Department Pasundan University.
- ii. The results of this study can broaden the Indonesian literary reader toward a meaning of a song.
- iii. The results of this research can add references research literature and linguistic in Indonesia and can serve as a reference for further literature or linguistic researchers.