

## Connotative Meaning in Selected Superman Is Dead Song Lyrics

I Kadek Dio Triana<sup>1</sup>, Ni Made Suwari Antari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>English Department, Universitas Udayana

E-mail: [dio.triana.2@gmail.com](mailto:dio.triana.2@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [suwari\\_antari@unud.ac.id](mailto:suwari_antari@unud.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this analysis is to find out some words that contains with connotative meaning as well as the conveyed message from the song writer on specific object of research in the four superman is dead's songs based on Jackson (2014) and Hook (1975) theories. The data was taken from the lyrics that was downloaded from the band official site, three of the songs that was analyzed are: "Memories of rose", "Blackmarket love", "Goodbye whiskey", and "Saint of my life" by Superman is Dead in their albums "The Angel and The Outsiders" and "Blackmarket Love". Descriptive qualitative method was implemented as the method in this research. After analyzing the data found from the lyrics, this study found that (1) There are 30 lyrics that contains connotative meaning, (2) Each of the song has different message based on the theme of the song and it was conveyed with different manner by the songwriter.*

## INTRODUCTION

Human is a creature that need to socialize with others, without any interaction, there will be no information exchange happen. In the process of information exchange, the understanding of each other idea is a must. Therefore, each person in a conversation, need to understand the meaning behind the speech. When we talk about meaning, there are several ways to deliver them such as talking in normal way, singing, reading a poem, etc. Singing is one of the most effective ways to deliver a message, this is due to the music that helps to make other people more relate to the song. Throughout the era, music is always developing alongside with the technology, people tend to have new problem in their life, and they listen to music that fit in their current condition in order to relief their stress. A good song is produced by a great artist or songwriter too, they compose the lyric with emotion and it produces such a beautiful and relatable lyric. Message in the song lyric may explicitly delivered or it could also be implicitly shown, they use connotative and denotative meaning to make each word fit into the song lyric in order to perfectly conveyed the message that they want to deliver.

Connotative meaning is the type of meaning where the true meaning is implied in what is directly stated, context has a big role in defining the meaning behind the song lyric which probably the main reason why people find it difficult to understand it. Whereas denotative meaning it is the literal meaning that is found in the dictionary. Each song has their own meaning and the meaning is made by the artist according to their preference, but sometimes people who listen to the song fail to interpret the meaning.

There is some previous study that are relevant to this current study, one of them is written by

Ines Puspita Sari entitled "A Semiotic Study of Denotative and Connotative Meaning in The Movie Beauty and The Beast". Various theories from experts were used in this study such as, theory of semiotic by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008), supported by theory from Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). As the object of research, the movie "Beauty and The Beast" were used. The data source was from YouTube and descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The semiotic theory of Roland Barthes was used to answer the problem of this study. The result of this study is that signifier and signified were found in the first scene to the seventeen scene and the message or meaning that were found is about life and love that is sincere without looking at physical appearance of your partner. Though the aim of this study and the current study is similar, there is differences on several aspects such as the object of the research where this study is using movie while the current study will be using song lyric. And the other difference is the theory used, this study is using semiotic theory from Roland Barthes while the semantic theory is going to be used in the current study.

Therefore, this undergraduate thesis aimed to identify the types of connotative meaning and also analyze the meaning behind the selected "Superman Is Dead" song lyrics. The reason of why Superman is Dead is chosen as the object of the research is because there are a lot of implied meaning in their song which is perfect for this undergraduate thesis, the other reason is this band also keen on environmental issue which influenced their music.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Semantic**

Lyons (1995) stated that semantics is the study of meaning. The term of meaning in the theory of semantics can be described from the mind of speaker to the mind of hearer by embodying them, as it was, in the form of one language or another. If the term meaning is described as ideas or concept, then it will not help us to answer such that question because the term concept is not clearly defined, and it is too vague and general. Furthermore, he states that the word meaning may not have the same range of application as any single word in other languages.

### **2. Connotative Meaning**

Meaning is what the speaker like to express to the opposite speaker or audiences, it can be in short, it can be long, it can be written, or it can be uttered. Meaning is expressed by the speaker, and it may fail to be delivered to the other person if that person didn't understand it. There are several theories about meaning, one of them is by Howard Jackson (2014) that stated a word has two meaning whether it is denotative or connotative and both of them have close relationship in a word. There are two kinds of meaning based on the way they are written or spoken, if it wasn't explicitly delivered, then the meaning is implicit or implied. Connotative meaning is the kind of meaning that is implicit, what the speaker said doesn't really mean that way or it has other meaning behind it. This is an example of connotative meaning, the word "Burning" in literal sense means something that is on fire while there is another meaning which is implied, Burning can also be referred as someone who is in rage. Other example is the word "Cool"; it means the weather that is cold while the implicit meaning is a person that is popular among their peers.

### **3. Types of Connotative Meaning**

Connotative meaning is not the actual meaning, but connotative meaning is having a personal meaning, implication, or interpretation of a word. It is contained other meanings in that it is derived from a combination of emotion and feeling which comes from the sentence

or word you want to convey. A word sometimes has an emotional meaning or what we usually call a connotative meaning other than the denotative meaning, stated by Hook (1975). Connotative meaning changes the meaning from the factual or denotative meaning; as a result, the connotative meaning of a phrase or sentence becomes the concealed or implied meaning. Connotative meaning is divided into three types namely positive connotative, negative connotative, and neutral connotative. Positive or good association that connects to a specific word is called a positive connotation, positive or pleasant of connotative meaning is also honorific, or word that people feel good. For instance, the word "Inexpensive" has the positive connotation and the negative form of this word is "Cheap" and the neutral is "Affordable", each of them has different effect when used in a sentence or in this case song lyrics.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This part consists of four parts, which are: the data source method and technique of collecting data, method and technique of analyzing data, and method and technique of presenting data.

### **1. Data Source**

The data for this undergraduate thesis was taken from the internet, to be precise from Superman is Dead official website. The lyric will be taken from two album by "Superman is Dead" entitled "The angel and outsiders" and "Black market love" album, there will be four songs selected from those two albums.

These two albums are created by Balinese band named "Superman is dead". Superman is dead is a punk rock band formed in 1995, they were formed in Kuta with the name "Stone Temple Pilots" changed to "Superman Silvergun" and then changed once more into "Superman is dead". The members of this band are Bobby Kool as lead vocal and guitarist, Eka Rock as bassist and backing vocal, and lastly Jerinx as drummer. The album "Black Market Love" is awarded in AMI Awards as "The Best Rock Album Nominee" in 2006, and Superman is Dead is well known for their social movement in rejecting the Teluk Benoa reclamation. As for the reason of why Superman is Dead song is chosen as the object of research is because their songs are rich with meaning that are implied, therefore, it is suitable as the object for this undergraduate thesis. This undergraduate focuses on only several songs from two albums, the songs that are going to be used are "Memories of rose" and "Saint of my life" from the Angels & the Outsiders (2009) album, "Black market love", and "Goodbye whiskey" from Black market love (2006) album.

### **2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

The data for this undergraduate thesis was taken by using the library research supported by documentation method. The steps that are done in this process are as follows:

- a. First, download the song from Superman is Dead official website and read the song lyric and fully understand each word in the song.
- b. Second, feel the song by listening to it while sing along to strengthen the emotion.
- c. And lastly, listing the and select the words or phrases that contains the features of connotative meaning according Jackson (2014) theory.

### **3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data**

This undergraduate thesis uses the descriptive qualitative method, this analysis data techniques will be used to answer the problem in the process of analyzing the data. The method includes data in the descriptive form such as written words or writing that is the result of independent observation. Content analysis will be used to as the analysis technique in

analyzing the data from the song lyrics. In this undergraduate thesis the data that are found were being analyzed based on the Howard Jackson (2014) and Hook (1975) theory. The steps that will be done in this process are as follows:

- a. Classifying the words that contains connotative meaning and divide them based on their types according Hook (1975) theory.
- b. Analyzed and then provide the description regarding the message of connotative meaning from the song lyrics.
- c. Concluding the result of into final conclusion after all of the steps above being done.

#### **4. Method and Technique of Presenting Data**

This undergraduate thesis uses informal method to present the data analysis. The data is explained by words based on the theories used. As follows are several steps that will be done in this process:

- a. Classifying the data that has been collected into their connotation type.
- b. After that, the collected data that has been classified based on their connotation types were presented in detail by using words.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The discussion that are presented in this section was the result of solving the formulated problems as the purpose of the research which is, the types of connotative meaning found in selected Superman is Dead song lyrics and their meaning, and also the messages conveyed by the songwriter. The analysis process was started by collecting the lyrics that contains connotative meaning based on Jackson (2014) theory, and then classified their type according to theory by Hook (1975).

#### **Type of Connotative Meaning**

Connotative meaning is divided into three different types that are differ in their criteria as well as the function. The first one is positive connotative meaning, this type is the one that implying a meaning behind the directly stated meaning that evokes positive emotions to the reader or in this particular field, the listener of the songs. The usage of this connotation type is to convey an implied message that is associate with kindness, loving, admiration and others forms of positive impactful action. The second type is the negative connotative meaning, contrary to positive connotative meaning, this particular type of connotations is implying all sort of negative emotions that is either directed at someone or even their own self. The usage of this type is simply to express one's anger, stress, sadness, disappointment and others negative emotions. And lastly the neutral connotative meaning, this type of connotation does not contain any negative neither positive motive behind their implied meaning, as the name implies it is neutral. Though lacking in emotions doesn't necessarily mean that this type of connotation is forsaken, they helped the musician to spice up their song as well as adding artistic values.

Therefore, following are the data that contains connotative meaning that has been classified into their respective type.

#### **1. Positive Connotative Meaning**

Lyric: Don't go, don't go away

Stay with me here in these **lullabies**.

According to Hook (1975) Positive or good association that connects to a specific word is called a positive connotation, positive or pleasant of connotative meaning is also honorific, or word that people feel good. In other words, this particular word evokes good kind of emotion for the people. In this lyric, the word lullabies were used in order to depict

the moment where both of them still in relationship and enjoy good times together. As for the reason of why lullabies were chosen on this particular lyric is because the word “lullabies” was related to the comfort feeling of a kid in the middle of a night while the mother sing them to sleep, it is related to the theme of this song where the main perspective of the song longing for the same feeling towards his ruined relationship.

## **2. Negative Connotative Meaning**

Lyric: Everlasting pain How can I **escape**?

Escape in the dictionary means the act of getting free or avoiding something, someplace, or someone. The words commonly used such as in “escaping from the dungeon”, “How can you escape from the famous strict homeroom teacher punishment?”. However, the usage of the word “escape” in this lyric is not referring to the act of escaping but it is implying the effort of someone that wanted to forget about their pain they experience from past event or in this case, the past relationship. By using the word “escape” the songwriter wanted to show the audience that the pain that the protagonist wanted to forget is immeasurable, and he is desperate to the situation because if the songwriter chooses other word such as “forget”, then the meaning would not be this deep considering the value of the word “escape” or escaping, is far deeper rather than “forget” if we consider about their usage in this particular lyric. The stated fact proven the word “escape” as the negative connotation type because it evokes a negative emotion which is a desperation.

## **3. Neutral Connotative Meaning**

Lyric: There is no one by your side, turn off the radio

The dictionary definition of the word “Radio” is an electronic device used to listen to a broadcast news or other entertainment such as song and story. The common usage of this word is simply to depict the literal things as an electronic device such as “Hey baby, do you mind turning the radio on? My favourite station is airing the new Beatles song”. In contrast to the literal meaning behind the word radio, the usage of the command phrase in this lyric was not about the action of turning off the radio, but the real meaning is to tell him as the main character of this song to give up and stop looking for someone to stay by his side. This explanation is supported by the previous verse of the song where the phrase “where are you” is being repeated several times, which is inspired by the common radio communication where words are spoken repeatedly to avoid misinformation.

## **The Messages Conveyed by The Songwriter in The Song Lyrics**

This section is focusing on discussing about the messages that the songwriter intended to convey in their song lyrics that used word or phrase that was considered to be a connotative meaning. The following words and phrases that contains connotative meaning from the song lyric was the lyric that has been analyzed and categorized based on their individual types.

### **Memories of Rose**

- I think about the end of the world
- All the struggle we had, and the past blood and tears my love! How could I forget.
- I’m haunted by, the memories of rose

These words were the most prominent words that supported the theme of the song, it conveys a lot of the idea behind the theme of the song as what were mentioned in previously. The song writer



firstly mentioned about the situation of the protagonist by using the phrase “End of The World” which means that the protagonist is in a state of desperation due to the ruined relationship with his partner, and by using the word “end” he wanted to convey the message to the listener that the protagonist of this song was immersed with the pain that he has and thinking that it was over for him. And the usage of world is showing that, the one that the protagonist in relationship with is dearly beloved by him and she is just like the world that always revolved around him.

The second lyric was the way the songwriter to convey the message of the current situation of the protagonist, this lyric is showing that the protagonist still had lingering feeling towards his partner that was shown by the usage of the phrase “past blood and tears” that indicates a past memories of struggle the couples has been through. Other way to interpret this situation is that the protagonist is trapped in the memories of the one he loved and does not willing to forget his partner along with the suffering they faced when they are still together.

And lastly, the song writer conveying the message of the whole song in the lyric “I’m haunted by, the memories of rose” just right before the guitar solo. The messages are no matter what the protagonist do, he still unable to forget the reminiscence of her and their memories as a lover, it is supported by the other lyric “Don’t go, don’t go away. Stay with me in these lullabies” that is repeatedly spoken in the chorus.

### **Blackmarket Love**

- I wear **second-hand**
- In the nation of **disaster**, never close your eyes
- When there’s no one by your side, **turn off the radio**.

The songwriter starts the song with a short catchy phrase that is repeated in the verse of the song, the repeated lyric is shouted just like a chant that the listener can easily sing along to. This was the way the songwriter conveys the message of the state of the peers that the protagonist represented as the rejected youth, it was shown by the lyrics “Tattoos on my hand, music’s on my mind, this will never end. This blackmarket love!”. The listener was shown the life that the protagonist and the other youth had been living on right off the start of the song, which was an effective and creative way to convey a message as in lyric of a chant due to the nature of this type of song that’s easy to remembered and sing along.

The second lyric that is crucial in the theme of this song was “In the nation of disaster, never close your eyes”, This particular lyric has the part of conveying the message from the songwriter to always be wary of the surrounding and trust only the right people. The listener was shown a gist of what is happening with the youth’s life in this song by the songwriter up to this point, thus making the listener may be able to immerse themselves with the setting of the song that they were listening to.

Which bring us to the next influential lyric, “When there’s no one by your side, turn off the radio”, this particular lyric was important to the messages that the songwriter wanted to convey, because it has the capability of inflicting an emotion that is quite sentimental. The command to turning off the radio in this lyric was actually has an implied meaning of forsaking the feeling of wanting to be saved by someone else, it was an irony depiction of real life where someone may desperately need help but there was no one willing to help him.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This section is discussing about the conclusions that are achieved based on the analysis and the discussions that has been undertaken from the previous chapter. The conclusions were parted by several points according to result of identifying the words and phrases that contains connotative meaning, and the messages that are conveyed by the songwriter in the song lyrics.

The result of this study is that there were 30 words and phrases that contains the connotative meaning which are divided into their own respective types from the selected Superman is Dead Song lyrics. Each of the song has varied song lyrics that contains connotative meaning, the “Memories of Rose” song have 12 connotative meaning that are divided to 6 negative connotations, 4 positive connotations, and 2 of neutral connotations. The “Blackmarket love” song have 6 connotative meaning that are divided to 5 negative connotations, and 1 neutral connotations. The “Goodbye whiskey” song have 5 that are divided to 2 positive connotations, 2 negative connotations, and 1 neutral connotations. And lastly, the “Saint of my life” song have 7 positive connotations.

The messages conveyed from the songwriter that was found was related to the theme of each song. For instance, the song lyrics “I’m haunted by, the memories of rose” from the song memories of rose was foreshadowing the struggle of the protagonist when he tried to escape from the past memories of his lover but could not achieve it because he still longing for that feeling.

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