

Representing Narcissism in *Sempurnanya Aku* by NPD: A Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis

¹Stevi Pusvita Sari, ¹ Apriarama Sayyidinallah, ¹Sajjad Gharibnavaz

¹Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Indonesia

Co-email: 2025.stevipuspitasi@student.unas.ac.id

Abstract: Digital culture continues to evolve, transforming songs from mere forms of entertainment into powerful media for conveying meaning, ideology, and social representation. One notable example is *Sempurnanya Aku* by the vocal group NPD, whose lyrics contain expressions that represent self-image, superiority, and the pursuit of social validation. This study aims to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings of the song's lyrics and to uncover the myths of self-perfection and narcissism using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study collected data through documentation of the song lyrics. Data were analyzed using Barthes' three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. The findings reveal that, at the denotative level, the lyrics portray the persona of "I" as confident, attractive, popular, and worthy of being the ideal choice for others. At the connotative level, the lyrics represent self-superiority, the desire for social validation, and the tendency to position oneself as the center of attention. At the mythological level, the song constructs ideological narratives of self-perfection, portrays popularity as a measure of social worth, reinforces individual superiority, and emphasizes public recognition as a symbol of success within contemporary digital popular culture. Therefore, *Sempurnanya Aku* functions not only as entertainment but also as a cultural text that reflects the construction of identity and self-image in the age of social media.

Keywords: NPD; narcissism; semiotics; song lyrics; popular culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

This The ways in which people access, produce, and consume music have been fundamentally transformed by the rapid advancement of digital technology. The emergence of music streaming platforms such as Spotify, YouTube Music, and Apple Music, integrated with social media platforms including Instagram and TikTok, has created a new ecosystem within the global music industry. In this digital environment, the popularity of a song is no longer determined solely by conventional promotional strategies; instead, it is increasingly shaped by social media algorithms, user participation, and content-sharing practices. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has become a powerful mechanism for amplifying music popularity while simultaneously reshaping patterns of music consumption within contemporary digital society (Winkler et al., 2026; Wicaksono et al., 2021; Faisal et al., 2025; Yaumi et al., 2023).

Within digital culture, songs that achieve viral status on social media function not merely as entertainment but also as forms of popular culture that reflect social values, ideologies, and cultural realities. Song lyrics constitute a system of signs through which meanings are constructed and negotiated, making them an important object of semiotic inquiry. Roland Barthes' semiotic framework provides a comprehensive approach to understanding lyrical meaning through three interconnected levels: denotation, connotation, and myth. This perspective enables researchers to uncover the ideological meanings embedded in linguistic choices and symbolic representations within musical texts (Naufal et al., 2026; Sadiyyah et al., 2025; Andini et al., 2022; Yuniatun et al., 2025).

The expansion of social media has also fostered a digital culture in which self-image functions as a significant form of social capital. Individuals increasingly engage in personal branding practices to gain recognition and construct identities that conform to the ideals promoted by digital platforms. Consequently, representations of narcissism have become increasingly visible within contemporary popular culture. In this context, narcissism should not be understood solely as a psychological disorder but rather as a cultural representation characterized by self-promotion, the pursuit of social validation, and the construction of an idealized or superior identity. From the perspective of cultural studies, these representations are interpreted as systems of meaning produced through signs and symbols rather than as clinical conditions. Recent studies on personal branding on Instagram demonstrate that social media has evolved into a site of meaning production that reinforces myths of uniqueness, superiority, and ideal selfhood (Natanael et al., 2025; Junaid et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is clearly reflected in the song *Sempurnanya Aku* performed by the vocal group NPD. Since its release, the song has attracted considerable public attention across various digital platforms due to its catchy lyrics, humorous tone, and satirical style. Beneath its comedic surface, however, the lyrics contain expressions such as "*Sempurnanya aku 'tuk dirimu*" ("I am perfect for you"), "*Aku banyak yang mau*" ("Many people want me"), "*Walau aku tampan, kau biasa saja*" ("Although I am handsome, you are just ordinary"), and "*Tiada yang seperti aku*" ("There is no one like me"). These expressions construct representations of self-superiority, the desire for social recognition, and an idealized image of perfection.

From Barthes' semiotic perspective, these lyrics convey meanings that extend far beyond their literal interpretations. At the denotative level, they express confidence and self-appreciation. At the connotative level, they signify superiority, popularity, and the pursuit of social validation. Ultimately, at the level of myth, they reinforce the contemporary cultural belief that personal worth is measured by visibility, admiration, and public recognition within digital spaces. This myth of perfection aligns closely with the characteristics of today's digital popular culture, where online popularity and social approval increasingly function as indicators of personal success and identity (Natanael et al., 2025).

Although numerous studies have examined song lyrics using Barthes' semiotic framework, most have focused on themes such as romance, social criticism, gender representation, or political discourse. Comparatively little attention has been given to the representation of digital narcissism and the myth of self-perfection in viral songs circulating through social media. Furthermore, few studies have investigated how humorous and satirical lyrics construct ideological meanings related to personal branding, self-image, and social validation within contemporary digital culture. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the relationship between popular music, semiotic meaning-making, and digital identity construction.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of narcissism in the lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku* by NPD using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Specifically, it examines the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings embedded in the lyrics to explain how the song constructs narratives of self-perfection, superiority, and social recognition. By doing so, this study contributes to broader discussions on digital popular culture, semiotics, and identity construction in the era of social media.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Studies

The first study was conducted by Rejeki (2025), entitled *Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of the Song Lyrics "Berakhir di Aku" by Idgitaf*. The study aimed to identify the moral messages embedded in the song lyrics using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research analyzed the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings expressed throughout the lyrics. The findings revealed that the song represents moral messages concerning separation, longing, acceptance, and emotional healing. Similar to the present study,

Rejeki's research applied Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth to interpret song lyrics. However, the two studies differ in both their research object and analytical focus. While Rejeki (2025) examined the representation of moral values in *Berakhir di Aku*, the present study investigates the representation of narcissism and the myth of self-perfection in NPD's *Sempurnanya Aku*.

Another relevant study was conducted by Sadiyyah et al. (2025) under the title *Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of Måneskin's "I Wanna Be Your Slave": A Study of Denotative, Connotative, and Mythical Meanings in Modern Pop Music Lyrics*. Using a qualitative methodology based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, the researchers analyzed representations of identity, power relations, and ambivalence within the song lyrics. The findings demonstrated that the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings reflected complex identities and unequal power dynamics in interpersonal relationships. Although both studies employ Barthes' semiotic framework, they differ in their analytical emphasis. Sadiyyah et al. (2025) focused on identity representation and power relations, whereas the present research explores the representation of narcissism and the myth of self-perfection constructed through song lyrics.

The third study was conducted by Naufal et al. (2026), entitled *Representations of Romanticism in Tulus' "Jatuh Suka": A Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis*. The study aimed to examine how romanticism is represented in the lyrics of *Jatuh Suka* through Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. Adopting a descriptive qualitative approach, the researchers found that, at the denotative level, the lyrics portray the emotional experience of falling in love and the desire for emotional closeness. At the connotative level, the song represents romantic values such as honesty, vulnerability, and the courage to express one's feelings. At the mythical level, the lyrics construct an ideology of contemporary romanticism in which emotional openness and sincerity are regarded as natural and socially desirable qualities. Similar to the present study, Naufal et al. (2026) employed Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to interpret the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings of song lyrics. The primary difference lies in the research focus: while Naufal et al. examined representations of romanticism, this study investigates representations of narcissism and the myth of self-perfection in NPD's *Sempurnanya Aku*.

Based on these previous studies, it is evident that Roland Barthes' semiotic approach has been widely employed to examine the representation of various social and cultural phenomena in song lyrics, including moral values, identity, power relations, and romanticism. However, no previous research has specifically explored how denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings construct representations of narcissism within the context of digital popular culture and social media. Therefore, the novelty of the present study lies in its examination of how NPD's *Sempurnanya Aku* constructs narratives of narcissism, self-perfection, and social validation through lyrical signs and myths. This study is expected to contribute to the advancement of Barthesian semiotic studies, particularly in understanding representations of identity, self-image construction, and the ideology of digital narcissism in contemporary popular music.

B. Theoretical Basis

1. Roland Barthes' Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and the processes through which meaning is constructed within social and cultural contexts. According to Roland Barthes, every sign carries not only a literal meaning but also an ideological meaning shaped by culture. Building upon Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the sign, Barthes (1972) argued that a sign consists of two inseparable components: the signifier and the signified. He further developed Saussure's model by introducing two levels of signification—denotation and connotation—which ultimately give rise to myth, a system of meaning that naturalizes cultural values and presents them as common sense or unquestionable truths.

Barthes (1972) defined denotation as the first-order, literal meaning that corresponds to observable reality, whereas connotation refers to the second-order meaning shaped by cultural values, emotions, personal experiences, and ideological assumptions. The interaction between denotation and

connotation produces myth, a process through which culturally constructed meanings become normalized and accepted as natural. Consequently, Barthesian semiotics provides a powerful framework for understanding not only the meanings of signs but also the ways in which media construct and disseminate ideological messages through symbolic representation.

Barthes' semiotic theory has been widely applied in the analysis of various forms of communication, including advertising, film, literature, music, and digital media. The concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth remain highly relevant for uncovering the implicit meanings embedded in contemporary cultural products, including song lyrics circulating within today's digital media environment (Barus & Siregar, 2025; Yaumi et al., 2024; Suheri et al., 2025; Dalyan et al., 2025).

2. Song Lyrics as a Semiotic Text

Song lyrics constitute a form of literary expression capable of communicating experiences, emotions, ideas, and social criticism through the integration of language, sound, and musical expression. Beyond their aesthetic function, song lyrics also serve as a communicative medium that conveys multiple layers of verbal signs. Consequently, lyrics can be understood as semiotic texts, allowing diverse interpretations depending on their social and cultural contexts.

From Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, every word, phrase, and metaphor contained in song lyrics functions as a sign that can be analyzed through the three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Such analysis enables researchers to uncover both explicit and implicit meanings generated through linguistic choices and symbolic expressions. Previous studies applying Barthes' semiotic framework have demonstrated that song lyrics convey not only emotional messages but also ideological positions, identity constructions, and cultural values (Ishar & Irawan, 2023; Wulandari et al., 2025).

Accordingly, song lyrics should be regarded not merely as entertainment but also as cultural texts that reflect broader social phenomena. The meanings embedded in lexical choices, metaphors, symbolism, and repetition can be systematically explored through semiotic analysis, revealing the ideological structures underlying contemporary musical discourse.

3. The Concept of Narcissism

According to Hall (1997), representation is not simply a process of reflecting social reality but rather a practice through which reality is actively constructed by means of language and cultural systems. Meaning does not inherently reside within objects themselves; instead, it is produced through representational processes that are collectively understood and negotiated within a society.

Within cultural studies, the concept of representation explains how media shape public perceptions of various social phenomena. Through language, symbols, and narrative structures, media construct meanings surrounding identity, power, gender, beauty, and self-image. Consequently, representation is closely associated with Barthesian semiotics, as both approaches seek to uncover the ideological meanings embedded within systems of signs.

In the present study, the concept of representation is employed to explain how the lyrics of Sempurnanya Aku construct meanings related to narcissism, self-superiority, and the ideology of perfection through linguistic and symbolic expressions.

4. Popular Culture

According to Storey (2021), popular culture encompasses forms of entertainment that are widely produced, consumed, and interpreted by the general public, largely through the influence of mass media and digital platforms. Popular music represents one of the most influential manifestations of contemporary popular culture. In today's digital era, viral songs function not only as entertainment but also as sites of meaning production through which social identities, cultural values, and lifestyles are communicated and negotiated.

Songs disseminated through social media possess the capacity to rapidly generate trends, influence public perceptions, and construct new myths surrounding social life. Consequently, the analysis of popular music provides valuable insights into the ways ideological meanings are produced, circulated, and naturalized within popular culture.

In the present study, *Sempurnanya Aku* is examined as a product of contemporary popular culture that constructs myths of self-perfection, popularity, and the pursuit of social validation. These meanings are analyzed through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to reveal how systems of signs transform ordinary expressions into culturally accepted ideological narratives.

III. METHODS

Describe This study employed a **descriptive qualitative research design** to explore and interpret the meanings embedded in song lyrics through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. A descriptive qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to examine cultural phenomena by interpreting symbolic meanings rather than measuring numerical relationships. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is an appropriate approach for exploring and describing meanings that individuals or groups attribute to social and cultural phenomena.

The object of this study is the lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku*, performed by the vocal group **NPD**. The data consisted of words, phrases, sentences, and lyrical stanzas containing signs that represent narcissism, self-superiority, and myths of perfection. Data were collected through **document analysis**, in which the song lyrics were obtained, carefully read, and repeatedly examined to gain a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic and symbolic content.

Data analysis was conducted using **Roland Barthes' semiotic model**, which comprises three levels of signification. The first stage involved identifying the **denotative meaning**, namely the literal or explicit meaning of words, phrases, and sentences appearing in the lyrics. The second stage focused on **connotative meaning**, examining the symbolic meanings generated through social, cultural, and experiential contexts associated with the signs. The final stage analyzed **myth**, referring to the ideological and cultural beliefs that are naturalized through systems of signs and consequently perceived as common sense or unquestioned social truths (Barthes, 1972).

The findings from these three analytical stages were then interpreted to explain how the lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku* construct representations of narcissism and the myth of self-perfection within the context of contemporary popular culture. This analytical framework enables a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic signs function not only to convey literal meanings but also to reproduce broader cultural ideologies related to identity, social recognition, and digital self-representation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained in this study through semiotic analysis consist of song lyric excerpts, as shown in the table below. The analysis was conducted by identifying the connotative and denotative meanings, as well as the myths contained in each excerpt from the song “*Sempurnanya Aku*” by NPD. The findings were then interpreted using semiotic concepts to determine the meanings contained in the song's lyrics.

A. Denotative and Connotative Meanings in the Lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku*

Table 1. Excerpt from the lyrics of the song “*Sempurnanya Aku*” by NPD

Lyric Excerpt	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
<i>"Sumpah, kita ganteng banget"</i> ("Honestly, we're so handsome")	The persona states that he is very handsome.	Represents excessive self-confidence and positions

		the persona as someone who possesses greater value than others.
"Rugi nggak sih nyia-nyiaain kita?" ("Wouldn't it be a loss to let me go?")	The persona believes others would regret not choosing him.	Conveys superiority and the belief that the persona is the best possible choice.
"Sempurnanya aku 'tuk dirimu" ("I am perfect for you")	The persona claims to be perfect and ideally suited for the other person.	Constructs an identity in which the persona is portrayed as possessing higher personal value than others.
"Aku banyak yang mau" ("Many people want me")	The persona states that many people are attracted to him.	popularity functions as a source of social validation and self-worth.
"Walau aku tampan, kau biasa saja" ("Although I'm handsome, you're just ordinary")	The persona considers himself handsome while viewing the other person as ordinary.	Establishes a social hierarchy in which physical attractiveness becomes a marker of superiority.
"7000 pesan tak kubalas, aku harap kau bersabar. Ambil antrianmu sekarang, walau ku tak tahu balas kapan" ("I haven't replied to 7,000 messages. Please be patient. Take your number in line—I don't know when I'll reply.")	The persona claims to receive thousands of messages and suggests that people must wait for a response.	Hyperbolically symbolizes overwhelming social media attention, exclusivity, and high social status.
"Aku bintang di hidupmu" ("I am the star of your life")	The persona describes himself as the center of another person's life.	Positions the persona as the ultimate focus of others' attention and admiration.
"Tiada yang seperti aku" ("There is no one like me")	The persona believes that no one can equal him.	Reinforces an identity of uniqueness, superiority, and perfection.

The analysis presented in Table 1 demonstrates that the lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku* consistently operate on two interconnected levels of meaning. The first is the denotative level, which conveys the literal meaning of each expression, while the second is the connotative level, which communicates ideological messages concerning self-superiority and self-worth. For example, in the lyric *"Sumpah, kita ganteng banget"* ("Honestly, we're so handsome"), the lyrical persona literally declares that he is physically attractive.

At the connotative level, however, these statements function as markers of a more complex social identity. Expressions such as *"Rugi nggak sih nyia-nyiaain kita?"* ("Wouldn't it be a loss to let me go?") and *"Tiada yang seperti aku"* ("There is no one like me") extend beyond simple self-confidence to construct the persona as exceptional, irreplaceable, and superior to others. Consequently, the meaning shifts from personal expression to the affirmation of an elevated social status and self-worth.

A similar pattern appears in the lyrics *"Aku bintang di hidupmu"* ("I am the star of your life")

and "*Sempurnanya aku 'tuk dirimu*" ("I am perfect for you"), both of which position the lyrical persona as the center of attention and the embodiment of perfection. Furthermore, the hyperbolic expression "*7000 pesan tak kubalas*" ("I haven't replied to 7,000 messages") intensifies this image by exaggerating the persona's popularity on social media, thereby constructing an impression of exclusivity and social validation derived from widespread public attention.

Overall, the connotative meanings consistently reinforce the central theme of the song: the construction of an idealized, superior, and highly desirable identity. References to physical attractiveness, popularity, exclusivity, and uniqueness work together to portray the lyrical persona as an extraordinary figure worthy of admiration.

B. The Representation of the Myth of Perfection in the Lyrics of *Sempurnanya Aku*

According to Barthes (1972), myth is a second-order system of signification through which cultural values and ideologies become naturalized and accepted as common sense. Rather than merely conveying meaning, myths conceal the ideological assumptions embedded within signs. In *Sempurnanya Aku*, myth is constructed through a series of expressions that position the lyrical persona ("I") as the most perfect, desirable, and attention-worthy individual.

The first myth is the myth of self-perfection. Expressions such as "*Aku yang nomor satu*" ("I am number one"), "*Sempurnanya aku 'tuk dirimu*" ("I am perfect for you"), and "*Tiada yang seperti aku*" ("There is no one like me") construct the belief that perfection is an attainable personal quality and a legitimate basis for gaining social recognition. Rather than presenting perfection as the subjective perception of the lyrical persona, the song naturalizes it as an objective standard of personal success. As Barthes (1972) argues, this process demonstrates how language transforms ideology into something that appears natural, unquestionable, and universally accepted.

The second myth is the myth of popularity as social value. Lyrics depicting the persona as having countless admirers and receiving thousands of messages reinforce the belief that public attention is a measure of personal worth and success. Hall (1997) argues that representation does not simply reflect reality but actively shapes how reality is understood. Accordingly, the song constructs popularity as a form of symbolic capital that determines an individual's social position. Similarly, Storey (2021) contends that popular culture frequently equates public recognition with achievement, prestige, and social legitimacy.

The third myth is the myth of superiority as an ideal identity. Throughout the lyrics, comparisons between the lyrical persona ("I") and the addressee ("you") establish a hierarchical relationship in which the persona consistently occupies a higher social position. Superiority is represented as an ideology that legitimizes individuals possessing attractiveness, popularity, or exceptional qualities to evaluate or judge others. In this way, the lyrics reinforce the cultural assumption that exceptional individuals naturally deserve admiration, recognition, and elevated social status (Barthes, 1972; Hall, 1997).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that *Sempurnanya Aku* functions not merely as an entertaining popular song but also as a cultural text that constructs and normalizes the values of perfection, popularity, and superiority. Through the process of myth-making, these values become naturalized as desirable social norms, potentially shaping how audiences understand identity, self-worth, and success within contemporary digital culture (Storey, 2021).

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the lyrics of NPD's *Sempurnanya Aku* construct multiple layers of meaning through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework of denotation, connotation, and myth. At the denotative level, the lyrics explicitly portray the persona of "I" as confident, attractive, popular, and highly desirable. These literal expressions present a character who consistently emphasizes personal excellence and self-worth.

At the connotative level, however, the lyrics extend beyond simple expressions of self-confidence to construct meanings associated with self-superiority, social validation, and symbolic narcissism. Expressions such as "Sempurnanya aku 'tuk dirimu," "Aku banyak yang mau," "Walau aku tampan, kau biasa saja," and "Aku bintang di hidupmu" position the lyrical persona as an idealized individual whose value exceeds that of others. These representations reflect broader cultural narratives in which recognition, exclusivity, and admiration become central components of personal identity within contemporary popular culture.

At the level of myth, the song naturalizes ideological assumptions that equate self-perfection with personal worth, popularity with social success, superiority with an ideal identity, and public recognition with legitimacy. Rather than functioning solely as entertainment, the lyrics reinforce cultural myths that normalize these values in the context of today's digital and social media environment. The findings therefore suggest that popular music serves not only as an artistic expression but also as a cultural text that constructs and disseminates dominant ideologies concerning identity, self-image, and social status.

This study contributes to semiotic and popular culture scholarship by demonstrating how contemporary song lyrics participate in the production of cultural meanings surrounding narcissism and self-perfection. Nevertheless, the study is limited to the analysis of a single song using a qualitative semiotic approach. Future research is encouraged to examine a broader corpus of popular songs, compare representations across different musical genres and cultural contexts, or integrate audience reception studies to explore how listeners interpret and negotiate these ideological meanings in contemporary digital culture.

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Conflict of Interest

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