CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Literature is an art that does not stick to fine arts, but also in the form of writing. There are so many definitions of literature, both from experts, and the actors or connoisseurs of literature themselves. According to Wellek & Warren (1949:3), some theorists argue that literature cannot be "studied" at all. We can only read, enjoy, appreciate it. Written literary works include novels, poetry, short-story, folklore, fable, drama, and songs.

Songs are a combination of poetry with rhythm and sound elements. Baker (1904) stated that song is a simple poem with musical harmonization in the making. Many messages can be conveyed through songs. Influential lyrics, accompanied by music that adjusts the lyrics and carries certain meanings in a song make songs an easy means to tell stories, speak out, and argue. Inevitably, many communities voice their opinions through a variety of music.

This study will focus on three Taylor Swift songs: "The Man," "Mad Woman," and "The Last Great American Dynasty." Each song has the potential to disclose multiple aspects of gender issues, such as desires, and emotional expression. The Man was included in the lover album in 2019. Overall, the Lover album is about love that blossoms nicely in a relationship,

Vulture (2019) states that in this instance Taylor Swift's relationship with her boyfriend at the time, Joe Alwyn. The album is mainly about Swift's ability to get over her ex, mature from the experience, and fall back in love with The Man who loves and appreciates her. Mad Woman and The Last Great American Dynasty were on Taylor Swift's Folklore album, which was released in 2020. This album's aim is to portray the lives of numerous people around Taylor Swift, some of whom are purely imaginary characters, in the third person point of view, in this instance from Taylor Swift's own perspective. Folklore songs frequently include metaphors, figures of speech, and figurative language, making them sound like a collection of poems on one album. Also lately Taylor Swift likes to bring about gender issues such as feminism and masculinity on these two albums.

The feminist movement today is voiced through various media. Many feminist singers have voiced their opinions through music. Through songs, the feminist movement has become very common to convey a message to a large audience. In this case, feminists or not, but want to break various kinds of stereotypes and injustice, collectively using music as a forum to demand equality. In fact, in this age that has even been dominated by technology, there are still women who still get injustice in various domains. For example, in the fields of work and education, there are still men who do not want to work under women"s authority. In the field of education, there are still those who think women should not go to high school because in the end they have

to be married. And of course there are still many other things that have not been evenly distributed in this gender issue. This is what makes the existence of the feminist movement, feminists want to defend women's rights and get equality in it. One of the examples of feminism movement is an existentialist feminism.

Existentialist feminism exists in the feminist movement with the aim of appropriately conveying women's experiences and sentiments in the community, thus providing women an identity that can stand on their own. Existentialist feminism proposes that certain negative stereotypes about women be removed in order to allow women to express themselves freely. This is reflected in Taylor Swift's three songs *'The Man', 'Mad Woman'* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty',* which raise gender issues.

Taylor Swift is one of the musicans who uses her platform to voice feminist rights. Some of her songs such as *'The Man', 'Mad Woman'* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty'* address gender issues, gender roles, and society"s expectations of particular genders. This study emerged from awareness that songs can influence our opinions on gender issues. This research aims to analyze and understand how Taylor Swift reflects and confronts gender issues through the lyrics in her songs, especially will identify through existentialist feminism theory.

Feminism in music is not a new concept; experts such as Susan McClary (2002:8) argue that music not only reflects society, but also serves

as an open platform in which aspects of social life are validated, questioned, and conveyed. Thus, many musicians utilize their platform to speak for gender equality. This study will seek to figure out whether Swift's works reflect women's perspectives.

'The Man' contrasts the experiences of a man and a woman in the same situation. This helps us understand how gender issues influence how we see and evaluate the acts and accomplishments of individuals based on their gender. The song 'Mad Woman' portrays a woman who is raged and humiliated by society. It allows us to find out how the display of emotions, particularly anger, is frequently interpreted as a symptom of 'instability' in women, yet men are often free to express their anger without criticism. The song 'The Last Great American Dynasty' tells the narrative of Rebekah Harkness, a lady who is often labeled as 'mad' by society due to her unconventional behavior.

The present research is going to explore key concerns regarding how Taylor Swift uses her music to inspire thoughtful discussion about gender issues in society by analyzing these three selected songs in depth. This analysis will also help readers gain a greater understanding of how the music industry and pop culture can shape our perspectives on gender and expected roles in society.

1.2. Statement of the problems

Based on background above, researchers would like to discuss these following problems;

1. How gender issues portrayed in Taylor Swift's songs *'The Man',* *'Mad Woman'* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty'?*

2. What are conventional women‟s role that criticized by Taylor Swift in her songs *'The Man', 'Mad Woman'* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty'?*

1.3. Scope of the study

The researcher limited the scope of the research include an in-depth analysis of the lyrics of three selected Taylor Swift songs: *"The Last Great American Dynasty," "The Man,"* and *"Mad Woman."* This will involve identifying lyrics that express the gender issues. The research will also include the resources that will be used, such as song lyrics, interviews or insights from Taylor Swift, and other relevant research data.

1.4. Objectivities of the research

The writer formulates the purposes of this study based on the research questions as follows:

1. To analyze the gender issues that portrayed in Taylor Swift's songs *'The Man', 'Mad Woman',* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty'.*

2. To find out the conventional women"s role that criticized by Taylor Swift in her songs *'The Man', 'Mad Woman'* and *'The Last Great American Dynasty'.*

1.5. Significances of the research

1.5.1. Theoretical significances

This discussion is expected to provide benefits for students of the faculty of cultural science, researcher hope that there are lessons about gender or others that can be learned from this research. Also, this research is expected to benefit readers who will explore the study of existentialist feminism and also about gender issues, especially in women.

1.5.2. Practical significance

The researcher hope that this discussion can make people give more attention about gender issues that still happening in society. The researcher also hopes that readers can understand the struggle to achieve freedom for any gender by learn about existentialist feminism in this research.

1.6. Review of related literature

The researcher found several previous studies that had discussed similar to the title of this paper. The first, a research by Indah (2022) entitled Representation of Existential Feminism in the Lyrics of the Song 'I Made You Look' by Meghan Trainor. This study aims to find out the meaning of the lyrics of the song I Made You Look and also explain how existentialist feminism is

contained in the song I made you look. By using the theory of Simone de Beauvoir. This study found 5 stanzas that explain existentialist feminism in it.

The second, a research by Azis and Sunra (2022) entitled Gender Stereotypes in Enola Holmes: A Film Analysis of The Main Character. This research aims to find out the types of gender stereotypes felt by the main character, Enola Holmes, and also to find out the influence of gender stereotypes on Enola Holmes in the film Enola Holmes. In this study, researchers found that there are two types of gender stereotypes in the film Enola Holmes, namely femininity and masculinity with the conclusion that gender stereotypes have a negative impact felt by the protagonist, Enola Holmes. This research uses a discourse analysis approach to interpret the meaning contained in the Enola Holmes film. This research is a descriptive qualitative research.

The third, a research by Damayanti (2023) entitled An Analysis of Taylor Swift"s Song Lyric The Man using Feminist Literary Criticism Theory. This study aims to explain the role of women and social and discriminate against women in the song Taylor Swift's The Man. this study focuses on how Taylor Swift raises the issue of gender discrimination felt by women in the social sphere contained in the song The Man. this study uses a feminist literary criticism approach The researcher uses the theory of feminist literary criticism in her research.

The fourth, a research by Claudia & Garcia (2023) entitled "No One Likes a Mad Woman": Women"s Folklore and Representation in folklore by Taylor Swift. This research analyses most of the songs in Taylor Swift's album Folklore with various feminist issues in it and discusses how women are represented in culture and literature.

The fifth, a research by Putri (2022) entitled Representation of Feminism in Taylor Swift"s Songs. This research analyses seven songs from different albums by Taylor Swift including Look What You Made Me Do, The Man, I Forgot That You Existed, You Need to Calm Down, I Did Something Bad, Mad Woman, and Long Story Short. This research discusses how liberal feminism is expressed by Taylor Swift in the above songs by showing the struggle of women and women's emancipation in them.

Lastly, Ginting & Levana's (2021) research entitled Cultural Views of a Society Through Taylor Swift Songs, this research studied deixis in song lyrics from selected songs in Taylor Swift's Folklore album: Cardigan, The Last Great American Dynasty, August, Illicit Affairs, and Betty. This research focuses on person deixis, time deixis, and spatial deixis contained in the five Taylor Swift songs. This research uses descriptive qualitative method and uses the theories from Levinson and Yule.

The similarity between the first research and this research is both of the research use theory from Simone De Beauvoir about existential feminism. What make it different with this research is using a different songs from

different singers. The first research is use song from Meghan Trainor with title I Made You Look and this research use Taylor Swift"s songs such as The Man, Mad Woman and The Last Great American Dynasty. The second research and this research"s similarity is that they both explain gender stereotypes in the social sphere with literature as a medium to accommodate this idea. What distinguishes the previous studies mentioned above, in this thesis is explained about gender stereotypes that found in Taylor Swift's songs. The similarity between the third research and fourth research with this research is they study the same song of Taylor Swift, The Man and The Last Great American Dynasty. Things that makes it different between this research and Damayanti"s is, if Damayanti"s explain about the role of woman, then this research is explain more complex than just a role of woman, such as gender stereotype, double standard, etc.

The similarity between fourth and fifth research to this research are use the same song such as The man, Mad Woman and The last Great American Dynasty and talk about feminism in those songs. But what distinguishes them are, the fourth is more complex about the feminism such as, female rage and guilt, meanwhile this research only talk about the gender stereotype, double standard and gender role. The difference from fifth research and this research are the fifth one did not use The Last Great American Dynasty and the fifth research use liberal feminism as the theoretical base, while this research use existentialist feminism as the

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theoretical base. Also, the difference between the fourth research are, in Gading & Levana they focus on linguistic study in the Taylor Swift Song, and they use 5 songs of Taylor Swift while this research will only use 3 songs of Taylor Swift.

1.7.   Theoretical bases

1.7.1. Feminism Approach

According to Humm (1995), feminism combines the ideology of gender equality, essentially a structured effort to achieve women's rights, with the objective of societal transformation to benefit women. Humm suggests that feminism embodies the idea of women's liberation and recognizes that women face injustice due to their gender. Feminism offers a distinct viewpoint on the causes and agents of women's oppression.

Humm defines feminism as an organized effort supported by multiple stakeholders, mainly women themselves, to achieve equity with males in diverse sectors and advocate for women's fundamental rights, such as public expression. This movement began with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and continued into the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Ruthven (as referenced in Wiyatmi 2017:12) claims that feminist philosophy and movement emerged to speak out against male domination over women in society.

This feminist movement has several types of feminism related to the interests and rights fought for. There is liberal feminism pioneered by Mary

Wollstonecraft (1979). Wollstone thinks that women are just slaves and entertainment for men, especially white men (2014:5). Because of this assumption, Wollstone feels that women are forced to submit and obey what men want, which results in a woman not being free to pursue her dreams, even to voice her choices (2014:6). Wollstone therefore supports women's full freedom and human rights in all fields. Due to her criticism, women are now able to pursue education, have the right to enter politics and work, whereas previously this was only possible for men.

There is also the existentialist feminism which was pioneered by the theory of Simone De Beauvoir in 1949. This school assumes that women's existence is under the shadow of men. Beauvoir said that in society, men are considered the standard and norm in society, while women are only the other (1949: 15). This assumption means that women are submissive to men. Beauvoir emphasizes that women are not the other, that women are living beings who can be autonomous without the need for other appendages to follow.

Then there is Marxist feminism, which combines women's issues with Karl Marx's theory of capitalism. Heidi Hartmann as one of the figures who voiced Marxist feminism in her essay entitled The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union in 1979 (3). She quoted Friedrich Engels as saying that women's participation in the labour force would abolish gender distinctions and would lead to equal labour rights

for both women and men. This is very good to do because it will make women economically independent and not dependent on men. Although Engels also realised that there would be a possibility of women working more than men because they had to do housework as well, he believed that if women became workers outside the home, then patriarchal power would disappear and housework would not only be borne by women.

1.7.1.1.   Existentialist feminism

Existentialist feminism emphasizes that women are autonomous beings who do not need to be associated with other things as women are always seen as objects. This school highlights women's experiences in the context of social injustice, patriarchy, and dominating power structures.

The difference between feminism and existentialist feminism is that according to Humm (1995), feminism is a movement or ideology that aims to achieve gender equality for women in all aspects, from politics, households, to the world of work. Whereas according to Sus (2023) existentialist feminism is a branch of feminism that combines philosophy and feminism, so this branch of feminism focuses more on women's freedom of expression and the idea of women are autonomous individual that can stand on their own.

French feminist figure, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) put forward her famous theory about feminism that women are 'The Other'. In her book entitled Second Sex, which was released in 1949, she argued that women were only second, marginalized and isolated compared to men who were

always absolute. Beauvoir believes that men will always have connections to expand their intellect and the freedom to explore many things in the world, while women will always be confined in their own prison because of their natural boundaries which limit their scope (De Beauvoir: 1949:15). This statement proves that double standard is really exist. This can happen when men are thought to be the social standard and women are thought to be incapable of matching it. Women are constantly connected with things that are beautiful, kind, motherly, and so on, thus they cannot compete with men who are good at their jobs. This relates to Rollin's assertion in Diana (2014:9) that women are expected to consistently embody traits such as gentleness, diplomacy, sensitivity, cleanliness, tidiness, calmness, emotional expression, introversion, domesticity, mercy, instability, and likely have personal matters to ponder.

De Beauvoir (1949:15), argue that men are represented as beings whose are always positive and neutral, but women are represented negatively, this means that men are always considered the standard of humans, while women are the exception because they are always not included or not considered. The stereotype that thinks that women perform things that are not typically done by women will be viewed badly by society, but if done by males, it is regarded normal, and normal since he is a man, he is the norm in society.

One of her famous statements is "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." (De Beauvoir: 1949:15). The meaning of this statement is that gender roles as seen by society are not biological, but are formed due to social and cultural construction caused by many factors. This theory is related to Judith Butler's theory about gender performance.

1.7.2. The Concept of Gender

According to Oxford Dictionary, Gender refers to the state of being male or female, especially in the context of social and cultural differences, not biological differences. Simone de Beauvoir in Second Sex gives the same definition as Judith Butler that gender is not instinctive and biological, but gender exists because of the social and cultural deconstruction that influences it to form a gender.

Judith Butler in her theory of gender performativity (1990) argues that gender is not a biological thing, but gender is an activity based on gender that we play since we were born on this earth. For example, men will be given something related to machines to identify that their gender is masculinity which is identical to men. While women will be given something related to cooks or dolls to identify their gender as feminine which is identical to women.

1.7.2.1. Gender Role

Gender roles are arguably certain expectations of what men and women should do. This is argued by several experts, one of them by Judith Butler with the theory of gender performativity. Butler (1990) argues that

gender does not occur biologically, but occurs due to social and cultural deconstruction. Butler believes that performativity occurs due to continuous repetition until it produces a habit that looks natural. This happens in gender too. The theory of gender performativity believes that gender is an activity that a person performs since he was born because it is influenced by social and culture. This happens in gender as well.

Gender performativity theory believes that gender is an activity that a person performs since he was born because it is influenced by social and culture. generally, the role of men will start with giving certain colors or tools that identify him as a man, as well as women, until they grow up with certain stereotypes or jobs that have been associated with their respective genders, so in other words, a person has played his role in gender since the beginning because of social and cultural factors.

1.7.2.2. Gender Double Standard

Double standards are different treatment based on gender. This can be detrimental to both sexes. An example that is detrimental to men is not being able to show their weaknesses because they will be seen as being like women. Most people think that women are weak creatures and men are strong creatures. This makes men unable to express their emotions even though they are also humans who can definitely feel sadness too. Things that harm women from double standards are also found in the examples above, women are considered weak and cannot do anything without men, and in fact

women will always be victims. This is as explained by Simone De Beauvoir in her book entitled "The Second Sex", she assumes that men are basically men, and the woman is to blame. This could be a real example in society if a rape case occurs, instead of blaming the perpetrator, who is usually a man, society instead blames what the victim was wearing, what the victim did, even though the victim had no intention of positioning herself to be sexualized. .

De Beauvoir state that we live in a man's world, where men are considered absolute, the social standard and will always win. And women are considered unimportant, marginalized, and under the shadow of men. This injustice is what ironically occurs in society. The feminist movement indicates that double standards harm women more than men.

1.7.3. The Concept of Stereotypes

Stereotype is a conception of the nature of a group based on subjective and inaccurate prejudices. Stereotype is an idea that exists in people's minds in a group that is subjective and does not match the existing reality. According to the Oxford Dictionary, stereotype is a specific belief or image that many people have of a particular sort of person or thing, but which is often inaccurate in reality and may cause harm and offence.

According to Blum in Wulandari (2020), the stereotype is a false or misleading generalization about a group taken in a way that gives most of the stereotype although not entirely to refute the evidence. What is meant is the embedding of a concept or belief in a group that is not always accurate and

usually the community overrides the right thing and still believes in the wrong concept of the group.

The researcher concludes from the above that stereotypes are concepts or opinions about a group that are subjective and do not always reflect reality, according to Blum. Stereotypes frequently contain incorrect prejudices and can be justified by society even when the proof supporting them is not always true. In other words, stereotypes are untrustworthy viewpoints that may not necessarily correlate to actual reality.

1.7.3.1. Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are opinions about the features and activities associated with men and women (Brannon: 2017). This can be deemed positive, but only because society's opinion of women is so distorted that they are not equal to men. This is due to the gender assumptions that exist in society's beliefs on gender. Let's just state that men are expected to work outside and are always connected with hard work, whereas women are stereotyped as gentle, unable to work related to hard things, and will always be a wife and mother without the need to try other kinds of jobs.

Gender stereotypes generalize a concept that is not always correct about the genders of men and women, sometimes known as masculinity and femininity. Judith Butler, a feminist with a theory on gender performativity, agrees with Simone De Beauvoir's theory that gender is established through social and cultural construction. Butler (1990) claims in his book Gender

Problem that gender is an activity that we play from birth due to social and cultural formation.

For example, men will be identified with machinery and athletics, while women will be connected with motherhood and will always prioritize beauty since the very beginning. This impression can be harmful to the difficulties of masculinity and femininity. However, with the existence of the feminist movement, it is certain that stereotypes of women are the ones that suffer the most.

Concepts of gender stereotypes can be seen in the cultural and social concepts introduced by Barbara Welter in The Cult of True Womanhood which describes the norms for shaping the ideal woman in the 19th century. The Cult of True Womanhood considers that women should have the characteristics of womanhood, namely piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity in order to be happy. These characterizations of woman"s roles according to Barbara Welter, as follows:

a. Piety where women are required to be a religious person, in this concept, Welter states that women will be highly favored by men if they are religious and close to God. The logical reason given by Welter is because if a woman becomes a religious person, then there is no need for her to work outside the home, and she will always keep the house and work in the church. This is what The Man wants the woman to obey and stay at home and look after the house.

b. Purity where women must maintain their beauty and maintain their purity until marriage, this concept Welter expressed in his writings that said the highest throne of a woman's beauty lies in her purity. Women will be advised to keep their purity so that it can only be given to their future husbands. The release of a woman's virginity is said to be the best part of her life because she can restrain her desires. Welter quoted that men and their desires would be a sin because they did not bother to keep their virginity, but in contrast to women who are said to have a happy life if they keep their virginity and get married one day.

c. Submissiveness where women must be loyal and obedient, whether to men or existing norms, this concept is still related to the two concepts above. Men are portrayed as strong and all-encompassing, while women are portrayed as weak and submissive. Women are considered weak and ask to be taken care of and flattered by men. Because of this nature, according to Welter, women must always submit to their men, in this concept Welter cites that if a woman feels displeased with her husband's behavior, she will gently reprimand once or twice and the rest she must keep to herself. Being a submissive figure means that she cannot fight back even if she has to suppress her own emotions.

d. Domesticity where women should work in the domestic sphere such as keeping the house, caring for the family, and being a good wife and

mother. This concept strongly emphasizes that women should be responsible for family harmony. In connection with the three concepts above, a good wife is a religious person who will make her husband closer to God, a wife who maintains her virginity until the time of marriage arrives, a wife who has an obedient attitude to what her husband does, a wife who can harbor her emotions and accept them gracefully, a wife who can be a mother, and a girl for her husband.

1.7.4. The Concept of Song

According to Baker in *A Dictionary of Musical Terms* (1904:183), song is a brief poem, either lyrical or narrative, accompanied by music and characterized by a simple structure with uncomplicated sections. Song according to Oxford dictionary is a short musical arrangement that connects melodic tunes with vocalized lyrics, resulting in a harmonic balance of sound and story.

Based on the two definitions provided above, a song is a simple poem that includes the right tones to create a harmonious balance in a work. This simple poetry conveys or expresses a variety of themes, including gender issues, personal feelings, politics, and so on.
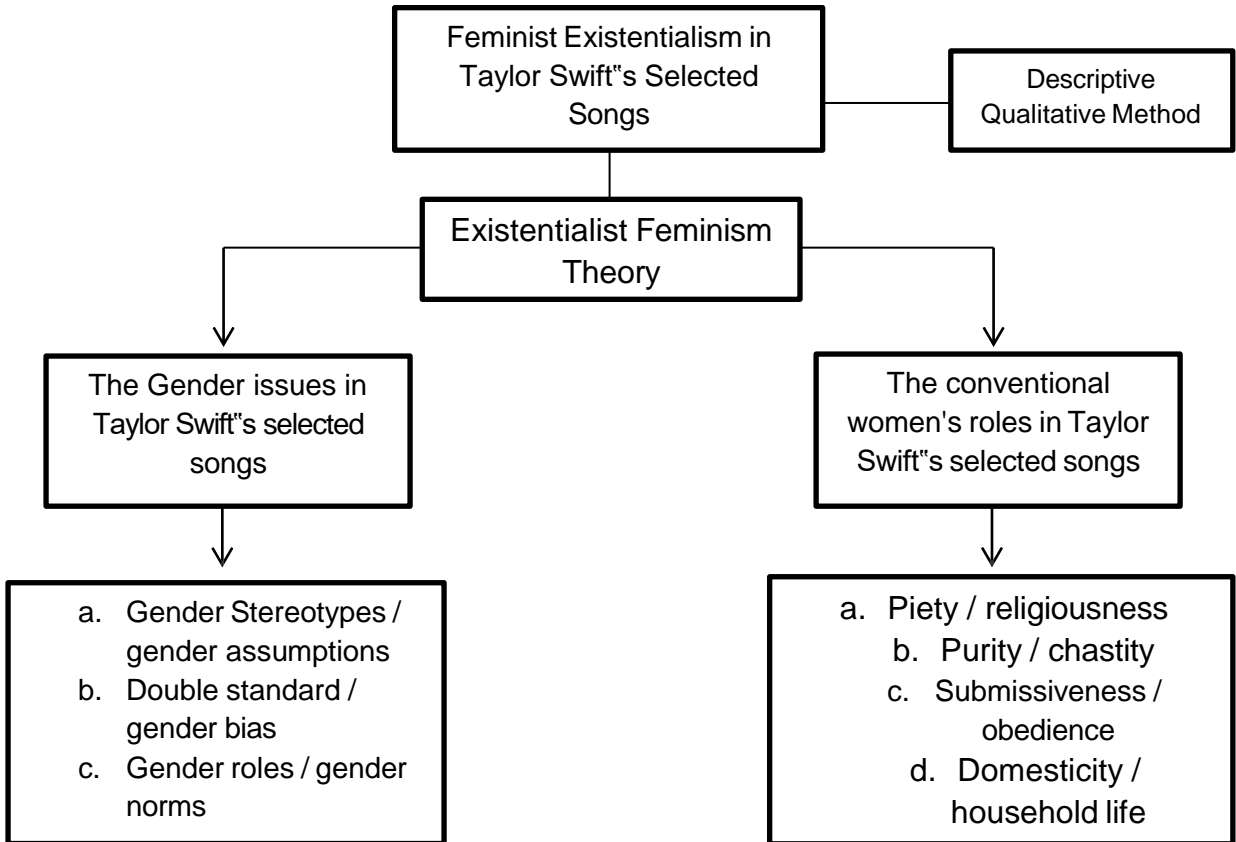
1.8. Conceptual Scheme

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┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│  Feminist Existentialism │              │   Descriptive    │
│  in Taylor Swift"s       │──────────────│ Qualitative Method│
│  Selected Songs          │              └──────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Existentialist Feminism │
│  Theory                  │
└─────────────────────────┘
      │                           │
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┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ The Gender issues│      │ The conventional │
│ in Taylor Swift"s│      │ women's roles in │
│ selected songs   │      │ Taylor Swift"s   │
│                  │      │ selected songs   │
└──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
      │                           │
      ▼                           ▼
┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ a. Gender        │      │ a. Piety /       │
│    Stereotypes / │      │    religiousness │
│    gender        │      │ b. Purity /      │
│    assumptions   │      │    chastity      │
│ b. Double        │      │ c. Submissiveness│
│    standard /    │      │    / obedience   │
│    gender bias   │      │ d. Domesticity / │
│ c. Gender roles /│      │    household life│
│    gender norms  │      │                  │
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Table 1: Conceptual scheme of Feminist Existentialism in Taylor Swift"s Selected Songs.

Conceptual scheme of Feminist existentialism in Taylor Swift selected songs which uses qualitative descriptive methods. From the title this research uses feminism approach. Through feminism approach there are two problems found in this research, the first is what are the gender issues in Taylor Swift's songs with the content in them, namely gender stereotypes, double standards, and gender roles. The second is how Swift criticize woman"s conventional roles such as piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.

1.9.   Method of the Research

1.9.1. Data and Data Source

The main data used are songs from Taylor Swift, The Man released in 2019 in Lover Album, Mad Woman released in 2020 in Folklore album, and The Last Great American Dynasty released in 2020 in Folklore. The primary data researcher took from journals, books, thesis, interview, and internet searches on several websites.

1.9.2. Technique of Collecting Data

Researchers use data collection techniques with the songs The Man, Mad Woman, and The Last Great American Dynasty with the following steps:

1. Listening to Taylor swift songs repeatedly while understanding the lyrics.

2. Tracing the meaning of some of the lyrics on the internet.

3. Watch and read her interviews about her songs and career.

4. Note taking the data in book.

1.9.3. Technique of Analyze Data

The researcher used a descriptive qualitative method for this research. This was done to make it easier to analyze the song. Also, the researcher chose to use a qualitative method because the researcher chose to analyze the songs. The researcher first listened to songs from Taylor Swift such as The Man, Mad Woman and The Last Great American Dynasty, then after that

the researcher examined whether the lyrics contained in the songs were related to the theme of feminism that would be studied. After hearing and digesting the lyrics, researcher sorted out which lyrics contained gender issues and which lyrics criticized the conventional role of women. After that, researcher looked for the meaning of several lyrics in selected songs by Taylor Swift, to find out the correlation of the lyrics with the singer's personal life.