

Affective and social burdens of urban femininity: Reading the lyrics and digital reception of Paris Paloma's *Labour*

Bilqis Tirtakayana¹, Rima Firdaus², Nayda Afdholy³

Universitas Airlangga INDONESIA^{1,2,3}

²Email: rima.firdaus@fib.unair.ac.id

Abstract – This study explores the emotional and social burdens experienced by women within the context of urban culture, as represented in Paris Paloma's song "Labour" and its reception on YouTube. The objective is to explore how feminist themes, particularly those related to gendered labor and emotional inequality, are articulated in digital music and audience responses. As digital platforms increasingly become sites of socio-cultural discourse, music consumption—especially songs with strong narrative lyrics—offers a space for expressing and recognizing shared gender-based experiences. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, combining Sara Mills' discourse analysis with Wolfgang Iser's reader reception theory to explore both the textual and interpretive dimensions of meaning-making. The primary data includes the lyrics of "Labour" sourced from Genius.com and the three most liked YouTube comments within the last ten months. These comments were selected for their popularity and engagement, offering insight into how listeners emotionally and cognitively interact with the song. The analysis identifies "Labour" as a critique of patriarchal expectations in domestic relationships, symbolizing the unequal emotional and physical labor often assigned to women. The song's lyrical structure and metaphorical language frame the domestic sphere as a site of exploitation. Meanwhile, YouTube comments reveal a strong affective connection among female listeners, who share personal stories and expressions of solidarity, thereby reinforcing the song's feminist message. In conclusion, "Labour" functions not only as a cultural artifact but also as a catalyst for digital feminist discourse, where music and social media together foster communal awareness and emotional validation.

Keywords: social burdens, song lyrics, digital reception, urban femininity, affective

1. Introduction

In the context of urban culture, music consumption has become an important medium for people to express their identity, emotions, views and aspirations on various social issues. Music is a form of audio communication that is able to open up individual horizons because of its connection to personal memory, aspirations, daily experiences, and its connection to certain social communities (Dijk, 2006; Boer and Fischer, 2012). This phenomenon is further reinforced by the increasing access and ease of accessing music through various digital platforms such as Spotify, iTunes, Joox, YouTube, and YouTube Music (Habibi & Irwansyah, 2020; Ramnandan & Mbhle, 2023). In the midst of massive music consumption, musical works do not only act as entertainment, but also as an important instrument in shaping public opinion and raising social awareness.

One form of social expression that often emerges through music is the feminism movement (Lahdji, 2015; Firdaus et al, 2023; Singarimbun, 2024). Music is used as a platform to voice women's experiences, reject structural injustice, and criticise the patriarchal social system



that places women in a subordinate position (Mcfarland, 2003; Sari, 2024). The main ideas of liberal feminism emphasize the recognition of gender equality, rejection of structural injustice, and resistance to discrimination and social inequality (Deveaux, 2006; Tong, 2009; Gray, Agliias & Davies, 2014; Mudzakkir, 2022). Through music, these ideas find a wider space for articulation, both personally and collectively, especially in the digital era that facilitates the distribution and exchange of meaning across borders.

One concrete example of how feminism manifests through music can be seen in Paris Paloma's 'Labour'. The song caught the attention of the public, especially women, even before it was officially released in 2023 through the TikTok platform. 'Labour' is considered a contemporary feminist anthem because it raises issues about the often invisible emotional and social burdens experienced by women in everyday life. According to Michelle (2023) on glassefactory.com, the song's popularity is reflected in its achievements on various charts, such as 30th place on the UK Single Chart and 8th place on Spotify's Top Songs Debut USA Chart, as well as the acquisition of more than one million plays in less than 24 hours and nearly one million views on YouTube.

'Labour's' presence has sparked widespread discussion in digital spaces, particularly on YouTube, where listeners actively share their interpretations and personal experiences through the comments section. Ayuni (2021) emphasises that the expressions used by citizens on digital platforms often reflect specific ideological goals and affiliations. The comments on 'Labour's' song not only reflect the audience's understanding of the lyrical narrative, but also demonstrate the strong emotional and affective resonance between the song's message and the listener's lived experience, particularly in relation to issues of feminism and gender inequality.

In contemporary academic studies, the emergence of a new wave of feminism has spawned a variety of approaches to analysing gender representation in popular culture. A number of previous studies are important references in this research because they offer similarities in terms of approach, theory, and object of study. First, the article '*A Study of Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Language Issues of Gender Representation in Selected Literary Text*' by Gheni (2021) examines gender representation through feminist stylistic theory. This study highlights the pattern of transitivity as developed by Sara Mills, with the finding that the representation of women in language tends to be passive, while men are placed as active subjects. This article emphasises the importance of context and reader assumptions in the process of interpreting gender meanings in texts.

Second, the article '*Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Ava Max's Song "Not Your Barbie Girl"*' by Manurung et al. (2023) shows how feminist stylistics can explore the perspective of women's empowerment in song lyrics. The song is interpreted as a form of rejection of gender stereotypes and a call for women's independence. Third, the article '*A Feminist Stylistic Analysis in Taylor Swift's Song "The Man"*' by Deameysa et al. (2023) also used Sara Mills' approach to analyse the representation of gender inequality. The findings of this study show how the song reflects the experiences of women who face double standards in a patriarchal society. Fourth, the article '*Feminist Stylistic Analysis: Female Leadership in the Lyrics of "Women Like Me" by Little Mix feat. Nicki Minaj*' by Simanjutak et al. (2024) highlights the discourse of women's leadership through a three-layered analysis: lexical, syntactic, and discourse. The song is considered to represent resistance to traditional gender norms and displays the vulnerability and strength of women in the realm of leadership.

The massive consumption and public response to musical works that raise feminism issues, as well as how gender discourse is reproduced and negotiated in the digital space, makes it important to study this phenomenon in more depth. This research is significant because it is able to show how music—especially in a digital context—is not only a product of popular culture, but also an arena for the articulation of discourses, especially feminist discourses, which have the potential to shape collective consciousness and expand the space of representation for women's voices. Although a number of previous studies have examined gender representation in popular music using Sara Mills' feminist stylistic approach, the focus of the research is generally limited



to issues of women's empowerment in general, gender stereotypes, and female leadership in mainstream English-language songs.

These two studies offer valuable insights into the linguistic depth of song lyrics through the lens of figurative language and cohesion analysis. The first study emphasizes how figurative language functions as a stylistic and communicative tool to convey deeper emotions and abstract ideas within selected songs, enriching listener interpretation and emotional engagement (Teja et al., 2022). Through this approach, the study highlights the poetic and symbolic dimensions that are often embedded in popular music.

Meanwhile, the second study takes a structural approach, examining both lexical and grammatical cohesion within song lyrics. It reveals how cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, conjunction, and lexical chains contribute to textual unity and clarity, allowing songwriters to maintain thematic consistency across stanzas and verses (Dewi, 2023). Together, these works demonstrate that song lyrics are not only artistic expressions but also structured texts that employ a range of linguistic strategies to enhance meaning and coherence.

This collection of recent scholarly works demonstrates a rich engagement with literature, culture, gender, and language across various genres and regions. Several studies employ feminist and critical discourse frameworks to interrogate longstanding cultural narratives and literary traditions. For instance, explorations of gendered expression in poetry and folktale offer insightful critiques of patriarchal structures through a literary lens, revealing the complexities of women's voices and representations in different cultural contexts (Ahmed et al., 2025; Ilahi, 2024; Arsyad & Salsabillah, 2024).

Moreover, the application of figurative language analysis in both classical and modern poetry underscores the enduring power of metaphor and imagery in constructing meaning and emotion, particularly in English and American literature (Anjani & Darmawan, 2024; Mangkulla & Gustary, 2024). These thematic continuities are echoed in the analysis of poetic and narrative structures that engage with existential, emotional, and socio-political dimensions, as seen in the study of Haruki Murakami's "Norwegian Wood" and Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea" (Uzma et al., 2025; Wajdi et al., 2024).

The intersection of literature and social commentary is particularly evident in analyses of novels like "Laskar Pelangi" and political slogans like "LUBER," both of which reflect on identity, class, and democracy within an Indonesian context (Wajdi et al., 2024; Wajdi & Asrumi, 2024). Complementing this is a focus on indigenous and regional expressions, such as Bhojpuri work songs and Balti folktales, that highlight the embodied, performative, and often overlooked voices within vernacular traditions (Rai, 2024; Ahmed et al., 2025).

Lastly, the tension between freedom of expression and linguistic structure offers a critical view into the literary strategies of contemporary poets, reminding readers of the evolving relationship between form and freedom in modern writing (Lestari & Alamsyah, 2024). Collectively, these articles contribute to an expansive, multidisciplinary dialogue on literature's role in reflecting and shaping human experience across temporal, spatial, and ideological boundaries.

These studies tend to highlight lexical and syntactical aspects, but not many have examined in depth the dimensions of discourse, subject position, and power relations hidden in lyrical narratives and digital audience responses. This study also contributes to the understanding of how song lyrics and audience responses shape power relations in the discursive realm, especially through Sara Mills' feminist discourse approach combined with Isser's reader response that focuses on subject position, agency, and resistance to hegemonic patriarchal structures.

2. Method



Furthermore, this research uses descriptive qualitative methods. According to Creswell (2009), descriptive qualitative methods are used to test theories by examining the relationship between variables. The data collection stage includes research boundaries, collecting information in the form of observations, documents and relevant literature (Creswell, 2008). The research data is secondary data in the form of song lyrics obtained from the genius.com page and four netizen comments on the official video of the song 'Labour' on YouTube based on the overall highest number of likes and comments in the last 10 months with the most likes. The selection of *Labour* MV video comments is based on the top 3 comments that have the most likes.

The use of YouTube comments in this study is for additional data to explore the response of digital society. This research aims to explore two main things: how the lyrics of 'Labour' represent the social burden of women, and how the public response on YouTube reflects the experience and resistance to the narrative. Data in the form of song lyrics and comments on the song's official video provide insights into how digital urban culture bridges gender discourses.

Unlike previous studies, the novelty of the research lies in combining the analysis of the lyrics of the song 'Labour' by Paris Paloma with audience comments on the official video on YouTube to reveal the representation of social and emotional burdens in urban culture. By combining Sara Mills' Discourse Analysis and Iser's reader reception theory, this research presents a new perspective in examining the discourse of feminism through digital media. In addition, this approach not only explores the lyrical narrative as the main text but also how listeners in the digital space mediate and interpret the meaning, which has not been widely studied in previous research.

Sara Mills (1995), through discourse theory, offers an analytical framework that focuses on the position of subjects and objects in discourse-through three levels of words, phrases or sentences, and discourse-as a tool for in-depth exploration of song lyrics, including the appearance of figures in subordinate positions. In addition, Iser's (1974) reception of reception that focuses on the response of the reader/subscriber provides a fundamental framework for understanding how social meanings are shaped and negotiated through cultural practices. In this research, both theories are used to examine how the song 'Labour' reflects the reality of women's social and emotional burdens in a patriarchal society.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

In the context of a fast-paced urban culture driven by the logic of capitalism, women often face the double burden of simultaneous role demands, both in the domestic and professional spheres (Brumley, 2014; Von Ankum, 2023). This song highlights the often hidden but inherent emotional labour of women's gender roles, ranging from emotional duties as a spouse to social responsibilities as a mother, worker and part of society. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, the word "labour" has several meanings, namely: (1) the practice of labour, especially involving hard physical effort and practical work with the hands, doing something with physical and mental effort; and (2) labour, giving birth to a baby. This title reflects two related issues of physical and emotional labour that are not usually considered "work", but are in fact very demanding and at the core of patriarchal structures.

Data 1

—Why are you hangin' on / So tight
—To the rope that I'm hangin' from / Off this island?
—This was an escape plan (This was an escape plan)
—And dive into the waves below
from [Verse 1]

Analysing Data 1, based on word level, the use of the diction "hangin' on" and "hangin' from" describes dependence and attachment, possibly as a metaphor for difficulties in a burdensome situation or atmosphere. The diction is assisted by the diction "rope" to bridge the interpretation as an image of a binding or pulling device. In addition, there is also the diction



“escape” which indicates a desire to run from the binding and difficult situation. At the phrase or sentence level, the phrase “Why are you hangin’ on / So tight” signifies the subject holding on tighter and tighter, finding it hard to let go. The narrative “This was an escape plan” can have a denotative meaning that there is a plan to get out from the situation presented earlier. Entering the level of discourse, we find that the perspective of I is seen to portray confusion and questioning the behaviour of the other party – shown as “you”. Moreover, the lyrics “And dive into waves below” signify a planned way of escape. From the lyrics of Version 1, a narrative of survival and escape is interpreted, created by the diction of “island” as the space where the situation occurs.

Data 2

—Who tends the orchards? / Who fixes up the gables?
—Emotional torture / From the head of your high table
—Who fetches the water/ From the rocky mountain spring?
—And walk back down again / To feel your words and their sharp sting?
from [Pre-Chorus]

Analysis of Data 2, based on the word level, actually has the potential to intersect with the phrase level, for example, there are several verb markers that indicate physical and domestic work that is often paired with subordinate roles such as gardening and fixing the roof in the lyrics “tends the orchards?” and “fixes up the gables”. Mention is also made of “emotional torture” which directly relates to the psychological burden of the work, and this diction is reinforced by the visual sense of “sharp sting” which causes a sense of suffering. In addition, there is a simile of social status or power relations, namely subordinates and superiors in the word “high table”. At the discourse level, more interpretations will emerge, for example, the lyrics take the form of questions that seem to describe individuals who work hard to fulfil the needs of others, but there is no appreciation. Moreover, the absence of appreciation is followed by a counter narrative in the form of verbal mistreatment in the lyrics “To feel your words and their sharp sting?” and implies injustice. This injustice clarifies the meaning of “From your head of your high table” as an inequality of power relations. From the Pre-Chorus section, it is interpreted as a critique of the patriarchal social system that does not recognise the contribution of women – as a subordinate party, both in physical labour, especially the emotional burden.

Data 3

—The capillaries in my eyes are bursting
—For somebody I thought was my saviour / You sure make me do a whole lot of labour
—The calloused skin on my hands is cracking
—And the silence haunts our bed chamber / You make me do too much labour
from [Chorus]

Analysis of Data 3, based on the level of words, found diction such as “savior” as an expression of hope for a figure who saves but is not in line with reality. There is also a diction in the title, namely “labour”, which can be interpreted broadly as hard work. There is also a diction that indicates a relationship with a dimension of intimacy in the diction “bed chamber” as if the hard work is a manifestation of love. Further clarified at the phrase or sentence level, there is a form of coercion to work and sacrifice in the phrase “You make me do a whole lot of labour” which may be directed at the subject you by my point of view as in the previous phrase -For someone thought was my saviour. The previous diction can help the analysis at the level of discourse that appears in “The capillaries in my eyes are bursting” and “The calloused skin on my hands is cracking” which provide visuals of excessive suffering, even exploitation that can be the result of the phrase “silence haunts our bed chamber” which implies emotional tension in a relationship. The emphasis on “labour” creates an affirmation of a great burden and creates helplessness. Therefore, the data from the Chorus produces a critique of exploitation in a



relationship by showing interpersonal injustice through intense descriptions of physical and emotional suffering, which extends to a critique of social norms that burden women.

Data 4

—Apologies from my tongue / Never yours
—Busy lapping from flowing cup / And stabbing with your fork
—I know you're a smart man (I know you're a smart man) / And weaponise
—The false incompetence / It's dominance under a guise
from [Verse 2]

Analysis of Data 4, at the word level, we can see the diction “apologies” as a representation of emotion and “never yours” indicating that only one party is expected to always apologise. In addition, “lapping from flowing cup” indicates an excess of something and can also indicate greed. Coupled with “stabbing with your fork / and weaponise” there are flashes of violence. Strong statements appear in “false incompetence” and “dominance under a guise” implying a form of control by manipulating others. More clearly seen at the phrase or sentence level that “apologies from my tongue / never yours” signifies the figure of me as the party who always apologises and the other party does not. The figure of the other party is then said to be “busy lapping from the flowing cup / and stabbing with your fork” as an implication of the meaning of being busy enjoying greed and hurting the other party. The figure of the party is clarified with “I know you're a smart man” which explicitly mentions gender. The perpetrator manipulates the phrase “It's dominance under a guise” by using the woman's psychological powerlessness as a weapon. The main idea that can be interpreted is a sharp criticism of power dynamics and hidden exploitation in interpersonal relationships.

Data 5

—If we had a daughter / I'd watch and could not save her
—She'd do what you taught her / She'd meet the same cruel fate
—So now I've gotta run / So I can undo this mistake
from [Pre-Chorus]

Analysing Data 5, based on the word level, there are many choices that refer to the female gender such as “daughter/she/her” which even shows that there is a cross-generational impact. The diction of helplessness and hopelessness appears in “could not save her/cruel fate/undo this mistake” even allowing for guilt, a desire to rectify the situation, and unavoidable suffering. At the phrase level, the lyric “She'd do what you taught her” emphasises that the behaviours and values taught by others—presumably men as “you”, will be passed on to daughters and present a recurring pattern of patriarchy and exploitation. The continued suffering implied by “She'd meet the same cruel fate” will continue to be experienced by the daughter. One way to break the repetitive chain is to run away as asserted in “I've gotta run”. Therefore, the Pre-Chorus section is considered to be against the structured injustice experienced by women in society and to escape the pattern, there is no other choice but to run away from it. The narrative produced in the Pre-Chorus section is the author's concern about the reproduction of patterns of injustice in the next generation, especially girls. Criticism of the social system that ignores women's suffering and emphasises radical action as a way to break the cycle, one of which is empowering individuals to fight against norm inequality.

Data 6

—All day, every day, therapist, mother, maid
—Nymph, then a virgin, nurse, then a servant
—Just an appendage, live to attend him / So that he never lifts a finger
—24/7 baby machine / So he can live out his picket-face dreams
—It's not an act of love if you make her / you make me do too much labour
from [Bridge]



Data analysis 6 is a section dubbed as a feminist anthem. There is no mistake in the interpretation of the penderngar because the construction of the selected diction is quite often associated with the role of women in the construction of a patriarcal society. To clarify the diction related to work and women's roles in Bridge, the following.

Table 1 Figure Stereotypical Representations of Women's Roles in Partiarcal Society

Lyrics	Expectation
Therapist	Emotionally supportive, always listens and heals others, neglects her own needs.
Mother	Caregiver and self-sacrificing nurturer, puts family first at all time.
Maid	Domestic laborer responsible for cooking, cleaning, and household chores.
Nymph	Sexual object, expected to be mesmerizing and desirable for male pleasure.
Virgin	Pure, modest, and sexually untouch; symbol of family and societal honor.
Nurse	Natural caretaker for the sick and weak, expected to show endless compassion
Servant	Obedient, submissive, and always available to serve other's needs.
Appendage	Defined by her relationship to men, lacks independent identity; complementary
Live to Attend	Exist to fulfill others' desires; her life revolves around caretaking roles.
Baby Machine	Valued primarily for her reproductive function; bearer of children.

The list of words above are stereotypical representations of women's roles that are attached by a patriarcal society and these words become demands that rest on women. More profoundly, the role of women in "appendage" portrays women as appendages to men, without the value of individuality. Not only that, the phrase "baby machine" embodies the low existence of women who are nothing more than mere reproductive organs. Then the diction "labour" is chosen to emphasise the unequal emotional and physical burden in the relationship, referring to exploitation and lack of recognition. The patriarcal system is further demonstrated when "Just an appendage, live to attend him" presupposes that women have no other purpose in life except to serve men. Male authority is reiterated in "So that he never lifts a finger" which seems to convey that the responsibility is entirely on women, while men are relieved of the task. The hidden manipulation of a romantic relationship or marriage is also heavily criticised in the lyrics "It's not an act of love if you make her / You make me do too much labour" which reinforces that it is exploitation, not a sign of love. Ultimately, the lyrical interpretations in Bridge's section highlight women's experiences as victims of a patriarchal system that obliges women to carry out a variety of exhausting roles continuously. Women in patriarchal societies are separated from their personal identities in order to fulfil the demands of social roles, not to mention all the traditional domestic and emotional burden expectations that limit individual freedom.

The song *Labour* by Paris Paloma becomes an articulation space for the affective and social experiences of urban women who have been subordinated in the patriarchal cultural structure. Referring to Sara Mills' discourse approach, the representation in the text cannot be separated from the structure of power relations that shape it, including how subjects and objects are ideologically constructed through cultural codes.

One of the most striking lyrical lines in the song states:

'All day, every day, therapist, mother, maid / Nymph then a virgin, nurse then a servant.'

This line shows how women are positioned in various roles based on affective labour and devotion. As therapist, mother, maid, women are used as agents to fulfil the emotional and practical needs of others, especially men in heteronormative household structures. Roles such as nymph, virgin, and servant also reflect classical feminine representations that have long been embedded in the Western cultural imagination – where the ideal woman is always in a position of submission, purity, or service.



In Sara Mills' (1995) framework, this narrative positions the female character as an object of speech, not as a subject who has authority over her own narrative. She is described, elaborated, and defined by social structures that regulate gender relations. The existence of women in this song is not seen as individual autonomy, but as a container of cultural expectations. In other words, women are 'subjected' to various identities and roles, not actively 'choosing' or 'articulating' their own identity.

The cultural codes that appear in this text are also reproductive of patriarchal norms. Women are considered as the "pillars" of domestic life, and these roles are naturalised, as if they have become nature. In fact, as Sara Mills (1995) argues, this kind of narrative is a construction produced by power relations in discourse. Thus, the lyrics of 'Labour' are not only a reflection of women's experiences, but also a critique of the naturalisation of these roles in contemporary urban culture.

The song 'Labour' serves not only as a musical text, but as a spark for discussion and collective expression in digital spaces, particularly on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. Thousands of videos have used snippets of the song to depict women's emotional labour, ranging from montages of domestic work, expressions of burnout, to personal testimonies. This reception shows that listeners—especially young urban women—are not simply passive consumers, but instead produce counter-discourses through their interpretations and affective expressions.

In Sara Mills' (1995) framework, this process marks a shift in the position of readers (in this case listeners and social media users) from objects to active subjects. They not only accept the meaning given by the text, but also re-articulate their experience through the text. It is here that the negotiation of meaning takes place that enables the formation of a digital emotional community—a space where women share their experiences, exhaustion, and collective awareness of structural injustices in the affective division of labour.

This phenomenon also represents a form of resistance to dominant cultural codes. In many of the digital content that uses this song, narratives of female exhaustion and anger emerge as a form of critique against burdensome gender expectations. Expressions such as crying while dressing up, showing a chaotic desk, or displaying a hectic daily schedule are forms of visualising invisible work that was previously not considered 'work' in patriarchal culture.

Thus, it can be said that the digital reception of the song 'Labour' has opened up space for the emergence of a counter-discourse. Women as subjects of discourse begin to reclaim narratives over their bodies and emotions, and form symbolic solidarities that challenge dominant structures. This shows how popular texts can be effective tools of cultural politics, when re-articulated in a participatory digital space.

These public responses in the form of comments play an important role in shaping the wider digital discourse on feminism and representations of women. Analysing these comments allows us to understand how listeners participate in creating meanings that are dynamic and contextualised. Public responses to the song 'Labour' by Paris Paloma are focused on using Isser's reader reception. Digital reader response is seen through the top comments on the Labour music video.

Based on a commenting approach that generates reflective and constructive responses, to the exclusion of an intentional approach. The theory will prove that the song 'Labour' is able to capture representation through subscribers through the perception of the emotional and social burden of women in a patriarchal society through urban culture, namely music.

Data 1 @xxx09 – 1 year ago

this is absolutely a love letter to women throughout history. as historian rosalind miles points out: part of the reason men were at the forefront of so much innovation throughout history isn't because of lack of education for women, but because they were free to do more with their time as women were carrying most domestic and emotional labour in the home.

Response: 48 thousand likes and 223 replies



The account @xxx09 alludes to love letters to women throughout history, which provides evidence that the system of inequitable workload between men and women has been ongoing. Reflectively, the issue of women's physical and emotional labour has never been highlighted as a significant contribution and is barely recognised, even in the historical record (Chamallas & Kerber, 1989; Duffy, 2011). This comment also reveals the structural bias that restricts women from exploring their potential in the public and intellectual spheres due to the absence of time for themselves as a result of the construction of workload in society.

Based on the comment above, Iser (1974) mentions that readers do not only receive text passively, but create meaning by activating their associations, values and knowledge. Based on the comment on account @xxx09 that the song listener is not only a contemporary social criticism but as a reflection across time on gender inequality. Women do not have the freedom to break away from men and economic dependence as a result of having no free time to do anything other than domestic work (Hooks, 1992). Lastly, these issues further increase the gender gap and make feminist issues "normal". The idea from account @xxx09's comment conveys the idea of the need for gender constructions that are entrenched in people's perceptions.

Data 2 @Anxxx – 1 year ago

My grandma gave birth to 17 children, 10 survived WWII, she did all the work, was a wonderful chef, separated from her husband, an abusive alcoholic who was busy with prostitute literally whilst she was in labour giving birth. She was shunned by her society, called a whore because she left her husband. This, grandma, is for you :red heart emoji:

Respos: 36 thousand likes dan 169 replies

This comment on @Anxxx's account reflects the real-life experiences of women in families, especially grandmothers. Giving birth to 17 children, losing some of those children during the war, and not giving up in the face of domestic violence illustrates women's incredible resistance amidst the social and cultural pressures of a semi-parochial society. This commentary also demonstrates deep-rooted gender injustice, where women like the grandmother not only bear the brunt of the physical and emotional labour, but are also punished by social norms for her decision to leave her husband-even worse, he is abusive and dabbles in prostitution.

It is unfortunate that the public judgement is not based on the whole incident, and does not even consider the challenges she faced. The enormous challenges faced by the grandmother provide a new construction (Hochild, 2012). So this commentary indirectly encourages readers to recognise and appreciate the role of women in the family and society, and fight against the stigma that oppresses them. In line with Iser's (1974) concept of concretisation, this is how the text becomes 'alive' through the reader's concrete experience. Readers not only consume the meaning of the song, but relive it through personal stories that show that Labour is able to evoke a collective memory of the suffering, resilience, and injustice faced by women.

Data 3 @ahexxx – 10 months ago

In India, there is this tradition of the wife/mother in the family eating last, they are not allowed to sit with the family and eat together. Instead they are often left with the leftovers of their own cooking while the men and children are served first and take away most of the food without consideration for the mother.

I am lucky to be born in a progressive family where this tradition has long since been immortalized. But it still persists in many families, regardless of economic class.

Response: 14 thousand likes and 121 replies

In this context, the Indian traditions mentioned in the commentary reflect a patriarchal structure in which women, especially mothers or wives, are positioned as subordinate in the family (Hale, 1989; Walsh, 2004; Mukhopadhyay, 2021; Firdaus et al, 2023). The fact that the practice of eating last and consuming only leftovers demonstrates the deep inequalities in the division of roles, responsibilities and rewards of women in the family. This implies the normalisation of gender injustice through everyday practices that are often taken for granted.



Normalising injustice in marriage there is a principle of reciprocity at work: a lot of choice goes into how we pay and get paid, and the payments between the parties involved are unequal and apply morning, noon and night (Hoshmilchild, 2012: 190). Marital relations have always been the main reason women's roles cannot be separated from society's standards.

Based on these comments in Iser's (1974) perspective, the reader's reception is also influenced by the specific cultural setting that forms the horizon of expectations. The tradition of the last meal for women in India becomes the lens through which readers interpret the song Labour. This further expands the meaning of the song in a cultural context that may have been explicitly raised by the author. In line with the author, readers can expand the scope of criticism of the song through the lens of their experience, showing that the text is open and polysemic.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned comments, it shows how the tradition not only represents patriarchy, but also maintains and reinforces patriarchal norms in Indian society. The author also highlights the existence of the family as a progressive family by offering an alternative narrative that attempts to dismantle the norm. Thus, the application of Iser's reader reception theory in this analysis proves that the song Labour is not just a static text, but an open container for the production of meanings that are diverse, reflective, and influenced by the social context and experiences of digital readers. This reception shows that the song is able to function as a space for collective articulation and a medium for dismantling patriarchal norms, which lives through the dialogue between the text and its public. Ultimately, patriarchy is a culture that dwarfs the position of women. Patriarchy not only refers to the power of men over women but that women who adhere to patriarchal culture actually do the same as perpetrators of injustice against other women.

4. Conclusion

The lyrics of the song 'Labour' by Paris Paloma represent the social burden of women through intense descriptions of physical and emotional struggles rooted in patriarchal norms. This narrative manifests in various metaphors, such as attempts to escape from restricted spaces, criticism of social systems that ignore women's contributions, and interpersonal exploitation that reflects gender injustice. The lyrics emphasise women's subordination to domestic roles, emotional burdens and norms that limit their autonomy as individuals, while interjecting perceptions of empowerment as a way to break the cycle. The presence of public responses in the YouTube comment section underlines the relevance of the lyrics to the real experiences of women from various cultural contexts. The conclusion also highlights a deep reflection on the structural injustices experienced by women, such as the stigma against women who go against social norms and the un-recognised history of women's contributions.

Through the interaction between the lyrics and the listener's response, 'Labour' becomes a medium of digital urban culture that bridges personal experiences with gender discourses around the world. 'Labour' not only creates a space for discussion on issues of gender injustice, but also strengthens resistance to patriarchal norms by empowering women to voice their narratives.

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