# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher present background of research, problem of research, objective of research and significance of research.

## 1.1. Background of Research

Emotions are central to human experience as they influence perception, decision-making, and social interactions. Lazarus, as cited in Choirudin & Setyabudi (2020), stated that emotions arise from how individuals appraise or interpret an event, particularly whether the event is perceived as a threat to their well-being or personal identity. These emotional responses can be expressed through various forms such as writing, painting, or composing music. Among these, music especially song lyrics is widely recognized as one of the most powerful mediums for expressing deep emotional experiences.

The song lyrics are often referred to as “sung poetry” (Muzakka et al., 2021) because they contain personal reflections, figurative language, and layers of emotional meaning. According to Athanasopoulos et al. (2021), music can express complex emotions that are both universal and culturally specific. Wu (2022) further explains that the combination of melody and narrative in music offers listeners emotional release, particularly in times of psychological stress.

Building on this, song lyrics are particularly meaningful for individuals who have experienced trauma. They can serve as emotional outlets, allowing both artists and listeners to externalize their pain, fear, and confusion through sound and language. In doing so, music can help individuals begin to process their traumatic experiences and gain a sense of emotional clarity.

Given this potential, music has become an important subject of study in the context of trauma and emotional recovery. McFerran et al. (2020) emphasized that songs offer a safe space for trauma survivors to express internal wounds that may be difficult to articulate directly. Similarly, Baker et al. (2018) noted that lyrics help individuals reconstruct personal narratives, reinterpret painful experiences, and initiate the healing process.

This discussion is especially relevant today, as trauma has become a global mental health concern. According to the World Health Organization (WHO),

approximately 70 percent of the world's population has experienced at least one traumatic event in their lifetime. However, only around 5.6 percent develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with the global prevalence estimated at 3.9 percent (WHO, 2024). In Indonesia, the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) reported that one in three adolescents (33 percent), or about 15.5 million young people, experienced mental health issues within the last 12 months (Salma, 2022).

These statistics highlight the urgent need for better understanding, identification, and treatment of trauma especially among adolescents. Unfortunately, many young people lack safe and expressive outlets to process their emotions, which puts them at risk for long-term psychological difficulties. In this context, music becomes a relevant and accessible medium, particularly for the younger generation, to understand, express, and reflect on their emotional states.

Motivated by this concern, the researcher is interested in exploring how trauma and healing are represented through song lyrics specifically through the work of a contemporary artist whose music resonates strongly with young audiences.

One such artist is Olivia Rodrigo. Born in 2003, Rodrigo is known for her emotionally raw and honest songwriting. Her second album, GUTS, released in 2023, was described by Rodrigo herself as "a diary about extreme emotions" (Remnick, 2023). The album features recurring themes such as betrayal, identity crisis, rage, and emotional vulnerability, making it a rich object of study for both literary and psychological analysis.

Many of the lyrics in GUTS reflect emotional patterns that are closely related to trauma responses and the healing process. Listeners are taken through experiences of confusion, denial, anger, sadness, and reflection stages that align with the psychological journey from trauma toward emotional recovery.

Despite its relevance, research combining trauma theory and popular music analysis remains limited. Previous studies on Olivia Rodrigo's lyrics have focused primarily on linguistic features such as figurative language, similes, and deixis. For example, Zahara et al. (2024) analyzed the use of figurative language in GUTS, while Jamila et al. (2024) examined Rodrigo's use of similes. However, no study to date has explicitly connected her lyrics to psychological trauma theory.

Meanwhile, Judith Herman's Trauma and Recovery has been widely used in both literary and psychological research. Her theory identifies three core symptoms

of psychological trauma: hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction. She also outlines three stages of trauma recovery: safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection. Scholars such as Dubois (2023) and Rezaeian et al. (2024) have applied this framework to analyze female narratives in novels and spiritual texts. However, this theory has yet to be applied to the lyrical content of popular music—especially Rodrigo's GUTS album.

Therefore, this study, entitled Analyzing the Emotional Journey from Trauma to Healing in the Album GUTS by Olivia Rodrigo, is conducted to fill this gap. It aims to offer a literary and psychological perspective on how contemporary music, through its lyrics, can reflect and represent the stages of trauma and the path toward healing.

### 1.2. Problem Of Research

How is the Emotional Journey from Trauma to Healing represented in the album GUTS by Olivia Rodrigo?

### 1.3. Objective Of Research

To analyze the Emotional Journey from Trauma to Healing represented in the album GUTS by Olivia Rodrigo

### 1.4. Significance of Research

This research has theoretical and practical purpose.

#### 1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to literary scholarship by affirming song lyrics as valid literary texts that reflect emotional journeys, especially from trauma to healing. It demonstrates how psychological theories particularly Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* can be applied to contemporary music.

#### 1.4.2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research provides insight for students and scholars interested in interdisciplinary studies involving literature, music, and psychology. It also helps listeners recognize how music can narrate emotional struggles and become a meaningful tool for emotional processing and healing.