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AN ANALYSIS OF FEMINISM IN THE LYRICS OF THE SONG 'WOMAN' BY KESHA: SEMIOTICS PERSPECTIVE

Analisis Feminisme Dalam Lirik Lagu 'Woman' Karya Kesha: Perspektif Semiotika

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh data dan menguraikan lebih lanjut mengenai unsur feminisme yang terdapat dalam lirik lagu 'Woman' Kesha. Lirik lagu dapat digolongkan sebagai salah satu bentuk karya sastra karena cara penciptaannya dengan bentuk sastra lainnya, yaitu puisi. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif dimana teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini berupa tabel kolom. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori semiotika yang dikemukakan oleh 'Ferdinand De Saussure' dimana penelitian ini akan mengumpulkan data berdasarkan Signifier (Penanda): Bagian fisik atau bunyi dari tanda yang kita kenal, seperti kata tertulis atau diucapkan dan Signified (Pemaknaan): Konsep atau makna yang diasosiasikan dengan signifier yang terkandung dalam lirik lagu 'woman' karya Kesha. Lagu ini dipilih sebagai bahan penelitian karena dianggap mengandung banyak unsur feminisme.

Kata Kunci: *Feminisme, Semiotika, Lirik Lagu.*

Abstract

This mini research aims to obtain data and further elaborate on the elements of feminism contained in the lyrics of Kesha's song 'Woman'. Song lyrics can be classified as a form of literary work because of the way it is created with other forms of literature, namely poetry. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method where the data collection technique used in this research is a column table. The theory used is the semiotic theory put forward by 'Ferdinand De Saussure' where this research will collect data based on the Signifier: The physical or sound part of a sign that we recognize, such as the written or spoken word and the Signified: The concept or meaning associated with the signifier contained in the lyrics of Kesha's song 'woman'. This song was chosen as research material because it is considered to contain many elements of feminism.

Keywords: *Feminism, Semiotics, Song Lyrics.*

INTRODUCTION

Song is a work of art consisting of sounds arranged in vocal or instrumental form. It can be a combination of melody, rhythm, harmony, and lyrics that produce an aesthetic or emotional experience for the listener. Various genres of music have different characteristics, ranging from pop, rock, jazz, classical, to world music. Songs are often used as a means of artistic expression, to convey a particular story, emotion or message

to the listener. In addition, songs are also an important part of popular culture and can influence and reflect social, political and cultural trends in society.

It is almost certain that everyone loves listening to music and songs, from children to adults. People generally like music and songs in terms of the rhythm of the music, the music, the voice of the singer, the style of the singer, or the lyrics of the song.

Kesha is one of the most popular singers in the United States. Kesha is a Native

American rock singer who has unique characteristics with unique voice characteristics, so many call her the best rock vocalist America has today. One of her popular songs is 'Woman'. "Woman" by Kesha is a song released in 2017 as part of her album titled 'Rainbow'. The song shows Kesha in a stronger and more confident style, portraying a message of female strength and independence.

The lyrics describe how Kesha expresses her sense of freedom, takes control of her own life, and rejects the stereotypes that bind women. The song blends elements of pop with energetic rock, creating an uplifting and motivating atmosphere. "Woman" is known for its sense of courage and freedom, making it one of the most important songs in Kesha's artistic journey after a difficult time in the music industry. This research aims to analyze the feminism contained in the song 'woman' by Kesha, because there are many elements of feminism in the lyrics of the song.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lyrics

Lyrics refer to the words or text of a song, typically sung over a melody or musical composition. They are the written expression of the song's message, emotions, story, or theme, often crafted to fit rhythmically and melodically within the music. Lyrics can vary widely in style and content, ranging from poetic and abstract to narrative and straightforward, depending on the songwriter's intent and the genre of music. They play a crucial role in conveying the meaning and mood of a song, connecting the listener to the music on an emotional and intellectual level.

Feminism

Feminism is a social and political movement that aims to achieve gender equality in

various aspects of life, including political, economic and social rights. The movement fights for the elimination of discrimination and injustice based on gender, and advocates for the recognition and respect of women's rights, which are often ignored or undervalued in society.

Fakih (2001:84-98) Feminism has four most prominent, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism, marxist feminism, and social feminism.

a. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is a view to place women who have full and individual freedom. Alison Jaggar in her book *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, argues that in liberal thought, the unique human nature is the ability of rationality.

b. Radical feminism

Radical feminism is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women or, more specifically, the social domination of women by men. Radical feminism views patriarchy as dividing societal rights, privileges, and power primarily along the lines of sex, and as a result, oppressing women and privileging men. Radical feminism opposes existing political and social organization in general because it is inherently tied to patriarchy. Thus, radical feminists tend to be skeptical of political action within the current system and instead tend to focus on culture change that undermines patriarchy and associated hierarchical structures.

c. Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism is a branch of feminist theory which argues that the main cause of women's oppression is capitalism. This type of feminism is based on the understandings of Marxism, proposed by Karl Marx and collaborator Friedrich Engels in the 19th century. Marx demonstrated how capitalism was able to grow through the exploitation of

labor. Social classes were described to explain how one class controls the other as a means to produce goods. People who are of a high-class level of economic condition are the bourgeoisie, whereas people who are of a low-class level are claimed as the proletariat since they become the labors of the bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Marxist feminists regard classism, rather than sexism, as the fundamental cause of women's oppression. They explore how ideas of gender structure production in capitalism and argue that women are exploited by a capitalist society. While some Marxist themes may not be as relevant today, Marxist feminists can still be used to explore how the political economy is gendered in late-stage capitalism and how the social reproduction of people and communities renews capitalism (Armstrong, 2020).

Social Feminism

Social feminism is a feminist movement that advocates for social rights and special accommodations for women. It was first used to describe members of the women's suffrage movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were concerned with social problems that affected women and children.

Semiotics Theoretical by Ferdinand De Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) described semiotics in *Course in General Linguistics* as "the study of the role of signs as part of social life". There is a sign system and there is a social system, both of which are interrelated. In this case, Saussure talks about social conventions that regulate the social use of signs, namely the selection of combinations and use of signs in a certain way so that they have social meaning and value (Alex Sobur, 2016: 7).

The most important discussion in Saussure's theory is the principle that says that language is a system of signs, and each sign is composed of two parts, namely signifier and signified. Signifier and signified, which is quite important in an effort to capture the main thing in Saussure's theory is the principle that says that language is a system of signs, and every sign is composed of two parts, namely signifier and signified. A sign is the unity of a form of signifier (signifier) with an idea or signified (signified). In other words, signifiers are "meaningful sounds" or "meaningful strokes". So, the signifier is the material aspect of language: what is said or heard and what is written or read. A signifier is a mental image, thought, or concept. So the sign is the mental aspect of language (Bartens, 2001: 180).

What must be noted is that in language signs always have two aspects; signifier or signified; signifier or signified; signifiant or signifie. Although the signifier and signified appear as separate entities, they only exist as components of the sign. It is the sign that is the basic fact of language. Therefore, any attempt to explain Saussure's theory of language must first discuss Saussure's view of the nature of the sign.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. Qualitative descriptive method is a research methodology that focuses on the detailed description and exploration of phenomena in their natural settings. According to Meoleong (2005:9) It's possible you may be referring to a particular researcher, theorist, or a specific approach that isn't widely recognized or known in mainstream qualitative research methods. Analysis in descriptive qualitative research involves a systematic approach to organizing and synthesizing data. The focus is on identifying patterns, themes, and key

concepts in the data, while maintaining a close connection to the original context and language used by the participants. This research uses data collection techniques through analyzing the lyrics of the song 'woman' sung by Kesha. Then the data is collected in the form of a table.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the lyric fragment of the song "Woman" by Kesha using Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, we need to understand the two main concepts in Saussure's semiotics: signifier and signified. Kesha's song "Woman" through the lens of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory in the context of feminism reveals how language constructs and conveys meanings related to gender identity and empowerment. This analysis emphasizes the relationship between signifiers and signifieds, the arbitrariness of signs, and the differential nature of meaning, all of which contribute to a feminist interpretation of the lyrics.

Through Saussure's semiotic lens, Kesha's "Woman" serves as a feminist statement that critiques and redefines traditional gender roles:

- 1) The lyrics illustrate how language can be used to construct and assert identity. Kesha's confident declarations challenge passive roles often assigned to women, promoting a narrative of strength and self-assertion.
- 2) The song critiques societal norms that restrict women's identities to traditional

roles. By using language to assert a new meaning of womanhood, Kesha encourages listeners to embrace a broader understanding of femininity that includes empowerment and independence. To analyze the lyrics of Kesha's song "Woman" through the lens of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, we can focus on the concepts of signifier and signified that Saussure introduced. This approach allows us to explore how Kesha's lyrics convey meanings that challenge social norms and reflect feminist ideals.

Signifier and Signified in "Woman" Key Elements

Signifier: The actual words and phrases used in the lyrics, such as "I'm a motherfucking woman" and "I don't need a man to be holding me too tight."

Signified: The concepts and meanings these words evoke, which include empowerment, independence, and a rejection of traditional gender roles.

Saussure's theory emphasizes that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary and shaped by cultural context. In the context of contemporary feminism, Kesha's lyrics reflect a growing movement that seeks to redefine what it means to be a woman. The song's upbeat, celebratory tone, combined with its assertive lyrics, creates a powerful anthem that resonates with many listeners who identify with its themes of independence and strength.

Kesha "Woman" Song Lyrics	Result
<i>"I buy my own things, I pay my own bills"</i>	For example, in the passage that states "I buy my own things," the signifier here is the phrase itself, while the signified is the concept of financial independence and individual power. This creates a positive image of a woman who is capable of taking care of herself. The lyrics of "Woman" by Kesha depict resistance to social stigma by challenging patriarchal norms that view women as dependent and weak. Kesha emphasizes women's independence through phrases like "I buy my own things," which shows that women are able to meet their own needs without relying on men.
<i>"I'm a motherfucking woman"</i>	Kesha uses metaphors to represent a strong and independent female identity. For example, a phrase like "I'm a motherfucking woman" not only confirms that she is a woman, but also contains a deeper meaning of courage and independence. This metaphor creates an image of a woman who not only accepts traditional roles, but also takes control of her life.
<i>"I don't need a man to be holding me too tight"</i>	The lyric stating "I don't need a man to be holding me too tight" uses a metaphor to emphasize that women do not need support or validation from men to feel worthy. This is an empowering statement that challenges patriarchal norms that often place women in a position of dependence on men. Using strong and direct language, Kesha encourages women to celebrate their independence.
<i>"Don't touch my weave, don't call me honey"</i>	The use of this metaphor shows a rejection of the patronizing treatment and gender stereotypes that women often face. By insisting that she does not want to be called "honey" or touched without permission, Kesha emphasized the importance of respecting personal boundaries and rejecting
	objectification. This is a feminist statement that demands respect for women as individuals who have rights to their own bodies and identities

Through the application of Saussure's semiotic theory, we can see how Kesha's "Woman" uses language to convey complex meanings that challenge societal norms and

promote feminist ideals. The interplay between signifier and signified in the lyrics illustrates a broader cultural conversation about gender, empowerment, and identity,

making the song a significant contribution to contemporary feminist discourse.

The use of metaphor in the lyrics of the song "Woman" by Kesha is very influential in shaping the meaning of feminism contained in the song. Through metaphorical analysis, we can see how Kesha uses language to express female strength, independence and identity. Below are some important points regarding the use of metaphor in the lyrics of this song and its impact on the meaning of feminism.

Impact on the Meaning of Feminism

1) Women's Empowerment

The metaphors used in "Woman" as a whole serve to empower women. Kesha not only expresses individual strength, but also invites other women to celebrate their identity and reject restrictive norms.

2) Challenge Gender Stereotypes

By using powerful metaphors, Kesha challenges gender stereotypes that often limit women's roles in society. She shows that women can be independent, strong, and not dependent on men, which is at the heart of many feminist discussions.

3) Raising Social Awareness

These lyrics also serve to raise social awareness about the issues women face, such as gender inequality and discriminatory treatment. In this way, Kesha contributes to the broader feminist narrative, encouraging listeners to think critically about women's roles and rights in society.

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4) Overturning Gender Stereotypes

The use of metaphors in "Woman" helps dispel gender stereotypes that are often attached to women. By presenting women as strong and independent figures, Kesha contributes to a feminist narrative that rejects traditional views that define women only as caretakers or objects.

5) Encourage Discussion of Modern Feminism

These metaphor-filled lyrics also encourage discussion about modern feminism and how women can express themselves. Kesha shows that feminism is not just about equality, but also about celebrating individual differences and strengths. This reflects postmodern feminist thinking which emphasizes the importance of personal experience and diversity in women's struggles.

6) Emotional Empowerment

The powerful metaphors in the lyrics of "Woman" not only serve to convey the message, but also provide emotional power to the listener. By using provocative and bold language, Kesha creates a space for women to feel empowered and inspired to take action in their own lives.

CLOSING Conclusion

By using Saussure's semiotic theory, we can see that the lyrics of "Woman" by Kesha are not just words, but also contain deep meaning about women's empowerment. Through this analysis, we understand how Kesha uses language to convey a strong message about the identity and power of women in society. Analyzing Kesha's "Woman" through the lens of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory illuminates the intricate relationship between language, meaning, and feminism. The song's use of signifiers related to femininity and empowerment illustrates how Kesha redefines womanhood by challenging traditional gender roles. Kesha's use of

metaphor in the lyrics of "Woman" greatly influences the meaning of feminism contained in the song. Through strong and symbolic language, Kesha succeeded in expressing themes of independence, empowerment and rejection of gender stereotypes. The metaphors used not only enrich the meaning of the lyrics, but also serve as a tool to encourage social change and increase awareness of feminist issues in society.

This analysis highlights the powerful role of language in shaping social meanings and advancing feminist discourse. The message of radical feminist ideology that is intended to be communicated in the lyrics of Kesha's song "Woman" is Kesha's attempt to

eradicate all forms of patriarchy circulating in society. This is to elevate the identity of women who will be able to express and have power over themselves.

Suggestion

The research conducted by researchers hopes that song listeners can make it a favorite song, because the more songs that convey the struggle and strength of a woman, the greater the possibility that society's view of women will improve. It is hoped that songs that tell stories about women and men (gender) can be portrayed in a balanced way, not just favoring one gender.

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