**SYMBOLISM AND WOMEN REPRESENTATION AS SEEN IN “FAKE PLASTIC TREES” AND “LOTUS FLOWER”, SONGS BY RADIOHEAD**

**Januari Rizki Pratama Rusman**

**(januaririzkipratamar@yahoo.co.id)**

**ABSTRACT**

Dalam sebuah karya sastra**,** Pesan yang terkandung di dalamnya sangat beragam. Ada banyak gagasan dan pemikiran-pemikiran yang dapat disampaikan melalui sebuah karya sastra. Dalam kaitannya dengan hal tersebut, Lagu sebagai salah satu bagian dari karya sastra mengandung lirik yang membawa banyak isu dan pesan dalam segala aspek di hidup kita. Kemudian, lagu dengan lirik yang terkandung di dalamnya menyampaikan pesan dalam balutan kata-kata yang indah dan juga dengan simbol. Karena lagu memiliki pengaruh yang kuat dalam membentuk persepsi orang banyak, maka lagu tersebut dapat digunakan untuk menyampaikan gagsan atau pemikiran. Lagu “ Fake Plastic Trees” dan “Lotus Flower” yang dinyanyikan oleh Radiohead adalah contoh dari lagu-lagu yag memiliki makna mendalam. Lagu tersebut menggambarkan keadaan sebenarnya dari masyarakat dan mengandung banyak simbol untuk menyampaikan pesan-pesannya. Bagaimana kondisi perempuan dalam koteks sosial digambarkan melalui kedua lagu tersebut. Fenomena yang terjadi di masyarakat direfleksikan melalui kedua lagu tersebut. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan seperti apa bentuk representasi perempuan yang terkandung dalam kedua lagu tersebut dan juga untuk menemukan simbol-simbol apa saja yang ada di dalamnya. Selain itu juga untuk menemukan persamaan yang ada antara lagu “Fake Plastic Trees” dan “Lotus Flower”. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mengolah data. Data-data yang diperluan diambil dari kedua lagu tersebut ( sumber data primer ) dan dari perpustakaan serta pencarian di internet ( sumber data sekunder). “ Fake Plastic Trees” dan “Lotus Flower” mengandung isu mengenai representasi perempuan dan penyimbolan. Secara umum, kedua lagu tersebut membahas objek yang sama. Kedua-duanya membahas mengenai perempuan. Khususnya, kondisi perempuan di dalam konteks sosial dan posisinya yang hanya sebagai komoditas social di masyarakat.

In a literary Work, message that is conveyed is very various. There are so many ideas that can be delivered by a literary work. In relation with that, song as a kind of literary work contains lyrics that bring many issues and messages in all aspects of our life. Then, song with its lyrics delivers message in beautiful words and symbols. Because song has strong influence in making society’s perception, it can be used to deliver an idea or thought. “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead are the examples of the song that has strong meaning. It describes the real condition in society and contains so many symbols to convey the messages. How the women position in context social is described in these songs. The phenomena in society are reflected by these songs. The objective of this research is In order to found what kind of women representation which is brought by the songs and what symbols that exist in these songs. Also, to find what the similarities between the songs “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower”. In this research, the writer use qualitative method to process the data. The data is taken from the songs (primary data) and from library and internet browsing (secondary data). “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” contain issue about women representation and symbolism. Generally, both of the songs have same object. Both of the songs try to describe woman. Especially ,the condition of women in social context and as sexual commodity in society.

Key Words: Symbols, Women Representation, Interpretation, Feminism, Women, Gender.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the Study**

Song is one kind of entertainment that almost all people in the world know. Song can be amusement device for someone who is bored about one condition in his / her life. Song is very popular in human life.

 Furthermore, Song in its progress grows and develops not only as ordinary entertainment but more than that, song as a part of music can be a device which can deliver and send messages. Nowadays, we can find so many varieties of songs that deliver many messages like life messages, moral messages, politics, etc.

 In relation to that, many songs use imagery or metaphor through the arrangement of beautiful words. That’s very interesting when we can enjoy the song with beautiful words arrangement. Then, the object of song that’s usually taken by composer of the song is various and dynamic. The object that is taken by song composer is reaching woman sides, Even though the song composer himself is a man. It shows us that nowadays women are the chosen topics which are brought by musician, in their work. Feminism is an issue that often covered by musician. It is interesting to find out the reason why so many songs covered feminism issue. Why women nowadays often becoming an object of the message that is delivered by musician. We can find many things that intersect about women issues. It becomes popular topics in society, and much less is possible to influence women position in society. It will be possible, because song has strong role in creating and building people’s opinion.

 In line with that, there are so many music and songs that are influenced by many thought. It has so many hidden meaning and covered by metaphor words that make the songs can not be understood easily by the listeners. It means that .the listeners have to do their best effort to understand the song. The example of the song that has unique characteristics is “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead. Radiohead is a band from England. Fake plastic tress and Lotus Flower by Radiohead are kind of songs that have strong meaning. Its lyric has deep meaning with good metaphors and word choices. There are so many hidden meanings and symbols in its lyric that make these songs very interesting and unique.

 That’s why the writer is interested to see deeply and analyze the lyric of Radiohead’s songs “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower”. The writer thinks that in this song there are so many things that related with women position in our daily life. Also, there are so many symbols that used by writer of this song that make this song more interesting and unique.

* 1. **Research Question**
1. How are women represented in the songs “ Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead?
2. What symbols are used in “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” songs by Radiohead?
3. What are the similarities between “Fake Plastic Tees” and “Lotus Flower” songs by Radiohead?
	1. **Objective of the study**
4. To know how the women are represented in the songs “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead.
5. To find what symbols are used in “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” songs by Radiohead.
6. To find out the similarities between “Fake Plastic Tees” and “Lotus Flower” songs by Radiohead.
	1. **Scope of the study**

To specify this research, writer would like to delimitate the discussion of the research only in feminism delineations and symbolic imagery that consist on “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower”, songs by Radiohead.

* 1. **Significance of the study**
1. In theory, this study is expected to give theoretical contribution and also significant information in appreciating and analyzing a literary works especially in symbolism and feminism field within songs.
2. Practically, Writer hopes that this study is useful to people who interested in feminism issue and symbolism, especially in lyrics of the song.

* 1. **Definition of key terms**
1. Feminism

According to dictionary in [www.polycimic.com](http://www.polycimic.com), feminism is defined as the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. Also, feminism is an organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.

Talking about feminism issue, we can not separate that with gender. Because what will we discuss is about feminism gender. Furthermore, it means that feminism is related to gender. Especially gender difference, which is to analyze the position of men and women in society, politic and in general life.

Baunmann (2000) defines gender socially as the way people in society differ rights, responsibilities, and identities of men and women in relation to one another.

1. Symbol

Etymologically, symbol is derived from Greek verb, “Symballo” is typically used to indicate a presentation of abstract ideas via concrete entity to produce meaning ( in Fitriana,2005).

In every literature works, the possibility of symbol’s appearance is often because many literary works will be more beautiful if added by symbolic words that can represents the real situation of the tings that represented. Webster Dictionary (online) defines symbol as something that stands for or suggest something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.

In the other sides, symbol also defined as something which means something else (<http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/>).

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

* 1. **Review of Related Study**

Inthis research the writer brings two main issues those are: Women Representation and Symbolism. For the second issue, there are some previous researches that the writer found. But for the first issue there are no specific researches that describe about feminism, especially women representation in a song. It means that, the writer can not found a research that is related to women representation issue. So, in this sub chapter the writer would like to describe about the research that discuss about symbol. One of them is a research by Eka Siswantara (2013) entitled an analysis of symbolism in Tennessee Williams’ play the glass menagerie. Although have same field that is about symbolism, the basic difference from this research is the object. In this research, the object is a song. Then, In Siswantara’s research the object is a play script.

In his research, Siswantara found the symbols that implied in the characters, the settings, and the properties in the play. Then, in this thesis all symbols is implied in lyrics of the songs. More specific, in the writer’s research the symbols are represented by natural object. There are two kinds of symbols those are contextual symbol and universal symbol. In the writer’s research, there are so many universal symbols. In Siswantara’s research, there are more contextual symbols that exist than universal symbols.

* 1. **Nature of Feminism**

Feminism is an issue that often appears in our social life. Widely, many things in our social life and our social communication have relation with this issue. According to oxford dictionary.com, feminism is the advocacy of women’s right on the ground of the equality of the sexes. The issue or rights for women first became prominent during the French and American revolutions in the late 18th century in Britain it was not until the emergence of the suffragette movement in the late 19th century that there was significant political change. A second wave’ of feminism arose in the 1960s with an emphasis on unity and sisterhood ([www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com) definition/English/feminism).

Talk about feminism, of course it couldn’t be separated from gender. Gender has strong relation with feminism. Even though generally talking about feminism it is same with talking about something in women sides, but it will be interesting if we see this feminism issue in men’s point of view .

 In relation with that, we need to know the terminology of gender stereotypes. Stereotype is a popular belief or point of view about specific individual or group. Gender stereotype is a generalization about men and women in relation to their attributes, differences, and role in a particular people or group. Actually gender stereotypes often happen in our daily life. We can see in our near environment, placement or differentiation about men and women position is very high. This things is also happens in literary works. We can see many literary works like poetry, prose, even a song are influenced by gender stereotypes issue. This condition soon or late can create peoples’ assumption and perception about position of gender itself. In fact, we can find so many literary works which describe and talk about gender. Aware or not, in many literary works place feminism or women in “different place” or “different treatment”, where women position is always in unlucky way.

Also, the writer thinks that it is important to know about gender equality. Gender equality is considerably equal representation of men and women. It is not just about men and women are the same but instead it implies that men and women have the same rights, same value, and as a result, should be treated equally.

Gender is social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between women and men, girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes (www. Itu.net).

* 1. **Symbolism**

According to oxford dictionary, symbolism means the use of symbols to represent things especially in art and literature.

A symbol is something such as an object picture, written word, sound, and a piece of music, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represents something invisible. Symbol indicates and represent ideas, concepts, or other abstractions (rapoport in khalia,2002:2004). A symbol is an object, action, or idea that represents something other that itself, often of a more abstract nature (<http://wikipedia.org/symbolism>).

A word, phrase, image, or the like having complex of association and perception as having value that is not the same as that which is symbolized. It is also considered as part of that which it symbolizes, and performs its normal function of standing for representing that which is symbolized. Those are usually conceived as deriving it is meaning chiefly from the structure in which it appears, and generally distinguished from a sign (Berger,1984).

Siswantara (2012) in his unpublished thesis said that symbol creates a direct, meaningful equation between a specific object, scene, character, action, idea, value, person or way of life. Symbol might be expressed by the author as a cultural or universal symbol. The symbols which are known by most people or contextual symbols which are private and created by the author (authorial).

Chandler (2007) in Surahwelly (2010) gives an advice to comprehend the symbols within literature. Firstly, grasp the meaning of “the symbol”. Then, try to recognize the sign used in literary work. What should be done is to see how frequent a name, an object, a character or a situation is mentioned in the work. What is hard after that is to be familiar with the work of the author. To sharpen your feeling about the use of symbol in literary, one should trust his feeling about the existence of a symbol. Lastly, see the opinion and evaluate whether it is applicable.

Then, Reaske (1966:108) cited in Minderop (2010) in Siswantara (2012) states when do we decide that something is no longer an image and instead a symbol? The usual answer is that if some picture or representation is repeated over and over again it becomes a symbolic; if a poet uses the word “sun” every time obviously is speaking about goodness, the sun may be said to be a symbol of goodness. If there is some sunlight in the background setting every time something good happens, or sunlight is, in anyway, consistently associated with good, we can speak as well about the symbolism of sunlight.

A literary symbol is something that means more than what it is; an object, person, situation, or action that in addition to its literal meaning suggests other meanings as well. Often, the thing or idea represented is more abstract, general, non- or super-rational; the symbol is more concrete and particular (users.humboldt.edu).

In order its role in literary usage, symbol has a manner of representation in which what is shown (normally a reference to something material) means, by virtual association, a description or a representation.  Symbolism is often found in names, objects or actions in some of literary work settings.

* 1. **Kinds of Feminism**

Because we talk about women representation, we have to talk about feminism. Because both of them have strong relationship and can not be separated. Cited in <http://www.uah.edu/woolf/feminism_kinds.htm>, there are some kinds of Feminism that exist. Those kinds of feminism such as :

1. Amazon feminism
2. Anarcho-feminism
3. Cultural feminism
4. Difference feminism
5. Erotic feminism
6. Ecofeminism
7. Equality feminism.
8. Essentialist feminism
9. Feminazism
10. Feminism and women of color
11. Fourth-world feminism
12. French feminism
13. Individual/libertarian feminism
14. Lesbian feminism
15. Liberal feminism (equality feminism
16. Marxist/socialist feminism
	1. **Types of Symbol**

Symbolin literary works can be defined as something that means more than what it is; an object, person, situation, or action that in addition to its literal meaning suggests other meanings as well. Often, the thing or idea represented is more abstract, general, non- or super-rational; the symbol is more concrete and particular

(<http://users.humboldt.edu/tduckart/Symbolism.htm>).

 As cited in <http://users.humboldt.edu/tduckart/Symbolism.htm>, Symbol can be categorized into two kinds, those are : universal or cultural symbols and contextual symbols. Universal or cultural symbol is a symbol that embody ideas and emotions that writers and readers share: snake as temptation and evil, water as life and sexuality, egg as rebirth, night as death, etc. then, contextual symbol is a symbol that is made by the author within individual works; there is no carry-over to other works: chrysanthemums in Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums," the furpiece in Mansfield's "Miss Brill," etc.

.

**CHAPTER** **IV**

**FINDING** **AND** **DISCUSSION**

* 1. **Findings**

The data is taken from lyrics of the song which is divided into several stanzas. It means that the primary source is taken from the songs. The lyrics of the two songs are divided into 14 stanzas.

* 1. **Discussion**

**4.2.1 Symbols**

**Symbols in “Fake Plastic Trees”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NO.** | **Symbol** | **Meaning** |
| **1.** | **Fake Plastic Trees** | **Women/girls who are doing plastic surgery.** |
| **2.** | **Fake Plastic Love** | **The love that is given to the woman that has fake beauty which she got from plastic surgery. This feeling seems so fakes, because only see physical appearance.**  |
| **3.** | **Fake Plastic Earth** | **Environment that fulfilled by so many fake things, especially fake beauties.**  |
| **4.** | **Rubber man** | **Men or a group of persons that love women or girls who are doing plastic surgery, and cause women or girls do the plastic surgery.** |
| **5.** | **Rubber plants** | **Women or girls who do plastic surgery.**  |
| **6.** | **Green**  | **Something that in young age, in this case is for describing young girls.**  |
| **7.** | **Broken man** | **Same as no.4** |
| **8.** | **Cracked Polystyrene man** | **Same as no.4** |
| **9.** | **Crumbles** | **Showing a destruction** |
| **10.**  | **Burns** |  **Refers to someone who Losing his/her hopes** |
| **11.** | **Blow trough Ceiling** | **Hopeless**  |
| **12.** | **Turn and run** | **Showing the sign of surrender.****Showing a condition of someone who stay away from the fact.** |
| **11.**  | **Girls in the eighties**  | **Young girls/young women.**  |
| **12.**  | **Gravity**  | **Faith, destiny, Sin.**  |

**Symbols in “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NO.** | **Symbol** | **Meaning** |
| **1.** | **Pocket** | **- Someone’s willing.****- Symbolizes wealth.**  |
| **2.** | **Invisible** | **The condition when someone just can see someone else without known by him/her.** |
| **3.** | **Shrink and disappear** | **The position of someone that shows his/her feeling is hopeless and his/her hope is fading out.** |
| **4.** | **Slip into the groove** | **Struggle to fight the destiny and the reality.** |
| **5.** | **The weeds** |  **Unexpected person/ person who doesn’t appropriate to love someone.**  |
| **6.** | **Unfurl** | **Symbolizes long space that separates two peoples.**  |
| **7.** | **Lotus Flower** | * **Describes the girl that hard to be reached.**
* **Materialist girl.**
 |
| **8.** | **Moon upon a stick** | **Describes a thing that almost impossible to happens.**  |
| **9.**  | **Fast ballooning head** |  **Materialist girl, who always feeling not enough about something that is given to her.**  |
| **10.** | **Be quiet as a mice** | **Powerless lunatic person.**  |
| **11.** | **The cat** | **Fate or destiny.** |
| **12.**  | **Dance around the pit** | **Pretend to be happy in hurt feeling.** |
| **13.**  | **Darkness** | **Frustration and hopelessness.**  |

 **4.2.2 Women Representation**

 In “Fake Plastic Trees”, women are described as sexual commodity. Also, this song also describe how the role of women in social context. Then, in “Lotus Flower” women are described as materialist creature that have important role for certain group.

**4.2.3 Similarities**

 The main similarity in these songs is the object which is discussed is same. In the lyrics, the author of the song often use natural thing to symbolize something.

**CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

**5.1 Conclusion**

The song “Fake plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” by Radiohead contain some symbols and feminism issue as the representation of women in society. These songs show that women are posited as commodity and thing for satisfy men’s desire. Environment and society make them should follow the rules. But, we can not deny that all of us love the beauty and perfectness even it is fake, and we can blame the women because what makes them like them is the society or the men. They force them to be like that. the kind of feminism that consist in the songs “ Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” is “Difference Feminism” because it emphasize in uniqueness and traditionally “feminine” characteristics and also sees that value is more important to be considered by women in society and social context.

**5.2 Suggestion**

This thesis is aimed to find and analyze symbols and women representation (feminism issue) in a literary works, in this case is in “Fake Plastic Trees” and “Lotus Flower” Song by Radiohead. In analyzing a literary works, it needs logical reasoning and deep thinking. It makes our thinking become sharper and critics. So, the writer suggest to the other students for learn about symbols because it is very challenging and interesting. Beside that, analyze a literary works is very amused, because we can share thinking with the author and we can get many knowledge and new issues about our surroundings. Our thinking will be sharper and our logical reasoning will be developed. Also, our imagination will be improved.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Berger, Arthur. 1984.*Sign in Contemporary Culture*. New York. Longman.

Fitriana, Eka. 2005.*Race Relation Symbolism, and the Australian Environmentin Katherine Susannah*. Unpublished Disertation. University of Queensland.

Kalia, H.L.2002. Encyclopedia *of the World psycholinguistics: Volume 3, Delhi*: Global Vision Publishing House.

Minderop, Albertine.2010. *Psikologi Sastra: Karya Sastra, Metode, Teori dan Contoh Kasus*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.

Siswantara,Eka.2013. *An Analysis of Symbolism in Tennessee Wiliams’ Play the Glass Menagerie*. Unpublished Thesis. FKIP.University of Mataram.

Surahwelly, Lale Rean. 2010. *Symbolic Features in George Elliot’s Novel “The Mill on The Floss”*. Unpublished Thesis. FKIP.University of Mataram.

…..2010.Taken from <http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/>. Accessed on 18th February 2014

…..2012. Taken From www. Itu.net. Accessed on 2014

[www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com) definition/English/feminism

…..2011. Taken From www.users.humboldt.edu. Accessed on 2014.

…….2011. Taken From [www.uah.edu/woolf/feminism\_kinds.htm](http://www.uah.edu/woolf/feminism_kinds.htm). Accessed on Accessed on 25th May 2014