

REPRESENTATION OF FEMINISM IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S SONGS

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Abstract:

Feminist language reform or feminist language planning refers to the effort, often of political and grassroots movements, to change how language is used to gender people, activities and ideas on an individual and societal level. The language in terms of words, phrases, and clauses to portray women as either the instigations or objects of domestic violence. The objectives of the study are to find out what kinds of feminism and how the feminism depicted in Taylor Swift's song lyrics. The present study employs qualitative descriptive methods and use content analysis technique to interpret the data. The source of data is taken from seven Taylor Swift's song entitled: 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. the data are the phrases or sentences contains portrayal women as objects. The steps of the procedure of the data analysis are: 1) highlighting the phrases or sentences contains women's roles, 2) classifying the phrases or sentences based on the types of feminism, 3) interpreting the data, and 4) drawing conclusion. Results show that most of Taylor Swifts' songs depicts liberal feminism and Taylor Swift expresses the liberal feminism through lyrics showing women struggles to combat domination, pursuing her goals, and expressing women emancipation .

Keywords: *Feminism, Gender, Song lyrics, Taylor Swift*

Abstrak:

Reformasi bahasa feminis atau perencanaan bahasa feminis mengacu pada upaya, seringkali gerakan politik dan akar rumput, untuk mengubah bagaimana bahasa digunakan untuk gender orang, kegiatan dan ide pada tingkat individu dan masyarakat. Bahasa dalam bentuk kata, frasa, dan klausa untuk menggambarkan perempuan sebagai pemicu atau objek kekerasan dalam rumah tangga. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apa saja jenis feminisme dan bagaimana feminisme tersebut tergambar dalam lirik lagu Taylor Swift. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan menggunakan teknik analisis isi untuk menginterpretasikan data. Sumber data diambil dari tujuh lagu Taylor Swift yang berjudul: Look What You Made Me Do, The Man, I Forgot That You Existed, You Need to Calm Down, I Did Something Bad, Mad Woman, dan Long Story Short. Data-data tersebut adalah frasa atau kalimat yang mengandung penggambaran perempuan sebagai objek. Langkah-langkah prosedur analisis data adalah: 1) menyoroti frasa atau kalimat yang mengandung peran perempuan, 2) mengklasifikasikan frasa atau kalimat berdasarkan jenis feminisme, 3) menafsirkan data, dan 4) menarik kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar lagu Taylor Swift menggambarkan feminisme liberal dan Taylor Swift mengekspresikan feminisme liberal melalui lirik yang menunjukkan perjuangan perempuan untuk memerangi dominasi, mengejar tujuannya, dan mengekspresikan emansipasi perempuan.

Kata Kunci: *Feminisme, Gender, Lirik lagu, Taylor Swift*

Introduction

Songs are one of the literatures familiar for listeners. According to Jamalus (1988: 5) a song can describe a work of art sung with an instrument. In addition, Hornby (1995) explained that songs can be defined as short rhymes or sentences meaning to be sung with musical poetry. Based on the explanation, the song is the form of poetry represented by musical instrument songs and accompaniment. Some of the lyrics are composed in a poetic form that makes it resemble many lyric poems written in figurative language. It uses words or expressions that have a different meaning than the literal meaning (Arp, 2011:73).

Songs can be a place where someone can express what they think and feel. For example, at the level of feminism is intensifying at the present time. Based on Bhasin and Khan (1995: 5), feminism is the perception of women being dominated by men in many ways and a range of actions to combat it. Feminism is a theory that explains the emancipation of women in some aspects such as political, economic and other social aspects in which women are not allowed to participate. According to Judith Lorber (2010), feminism is a social movement whose primary goal is equality between women and men. Different waves of feminism in America come together in conversations about women making music. There are numerous celebrities who increase the subject of feminism in their works and certainly considered one among them is the artist who has been recognized in the world, Taylor Swift. Since becoming a successful singer-songwriter, Swift has become a hot topic in celebrity feminist discussions. Not only has her own views on feminism changed throughout her career, but the way women are represented in her songs has also changed.

Taylor Swift was born on December 13, 1989. She is a ten-time Grammy Award winner, the youngest person to receive the highest honour in the history of the music industry, the Grammy Award for Album of the Year, and she is the only woman in Grammy history to win album of the year twice. The researcher chose this album because there are a lot of feminist depictions in some of the lyrics of Taylor Swift songs. The research aim is to answer all the questions mentioned in the research problem is to describe the representation of feminism in Taylor Swift's songs.

A number of study have been conducted by some researchers such as Meredith Taylor Du Bon (2014), Ronjoo Seodu Herr (2014), Morakot Areerasada and Patarapern Tapinta (2015), Tina Wold (2018), and Tita Marlina, Siti Nurjanah, and Wikanengsih (2020) in analyzing about feminism in various discourses from various aspects. Meretdith Taylor Du Bon (2014) discussed about through the ears of Libby Larsen: Women, Feminism and Song in America. He found that about the wave of feminism gains women's suffrage, women in music are also moving towards gender equality in America. Ronjoo Seodu Herr (2014) Reclaiming Third World Feminism: or Why Transnational Feminism Needs Third World Feminism. He discussed about Transnational feminism has become the dominant position of feminism for Third World women, overshadowing Third World feminism, and its rejection of nations and nationalism for not being related to feminism has become fashionable. Against this current trend, this article argues the relevance of states and nationalism to transnational feminism and the urgency of reclaiming Third World feminism. Morakot Areerasada and Patarapern Tapinta (2015) Feminism Through Figurative Language in Contemporary American Songs of Leading Contemporary Feminist Music Icons. They discussed about a common genre of contemporary literary work can effectively convey feminist messages to society, and the intended messages appear powerful due to the use of figurative language. Tina Wold (2018) Representation of Femininity and Masculinity in Nordic Noir: An Analysis of Forbrydelsen and Broen. She discussed about representation a different kind of femininity from what we are used to seeing in other mainstream dramas. Because female

detectives accept personality traits commonly associated with masculinity and masculinity, they may be transposed to the pariah feminine category, as they may be seen as contaminating the relationship between male and female detectives feminine and masculine. And the new earlier is Tita Marlina, Siti Nurjanah, and Wikanengsih (2020) *Feminism through Figurative Language in Contemporary American Songs of Leading Contemporary Feminist Music Icons*. They discussed about feminist values, including (1) Ambition; (2) Survival; (3) Arrogance; (4) Individualism; (5) Liberalism; (6) Women's lower social status and struggle for quality of life.

This research discusses about a representation of feminism in Taylor Swift's Songs. It focuses on kinds of feminism found in Taylor Swift's song lyrics and explain how the feminism expressed in the song lyrics mostly about women's social aspects.

Literature Review

Bhasin and Khan (1995:5) described that feminism is an awareness of women who are under man's domination in many aspects and set of action to resist it. According to Ritzer (2004), Feminism is kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice people. Feminism is a concept that emerged when women wanted equal rights to men. In the late nineteenth century, the term was originally used in a political dispute in France. According to June Hannam (2007:22) in the book of feminism, the word feminism can be defined: 1) Recognition of an imbalance of power between the sexes, with woman in a subordinate role to men. 2) A belief that woman condition is social constructed and therefore can be changed. 3) An emphasis on female autonomy. According to the aforementioned theory, feminism was founded in order to achieve gender equality. Feminism is a feminist movement that opposes racism, stereotyping, sexism, female oppression, and phallogocentric.

In the context of a particular culture, gender balance is aligning the masculine and feminine positions. This is because in one particular feminine culture, women are frequently regarded as inferior, non-independent, and solely subject. As a result, feminism can also be seen as a movement fighting for women's independence. Based on the aforementioned definition, the researcher concludes that feminism is a theory that explains women's emancipation in several areas such as politics, economics, and other social elements where they are not permitted to participate.

Tong (2009:18) classified feminism into four types, namely: 1) Liberal feminism, 2) Radical feminism, 3) Marxist feminism, and 4) Socialist feminism. Liberal feminism promotes women's rights to independence. It means that women have the same freedom as men, that they can do whatever men want and that they may express themselves freely in society. Women can express themselves by doing whatever they want because they are equal to males and have no limitations. They are free to express themselves through their choices. Since the 1960s - 1970s, this brand of feminism has grown across the United States. They believe that both women and men need to be trained to recognize tradition as oppressive and encouraged to develop a new one from a feminine perspective. Radical Feminism is a branch of feminism that considers women's oppression (dubbed "patriarchy" by radical feminists) as a fundamental system of power that shapes human relationships in society. It rejects traditional gender roles and male oppression in order to undermine this structure. Radical feminism thinks that being a woman is a beneficial trait in and of itself, but that this isn't recognized in patriarchal society where women are oppressed. Physical violence is identified as the root of patriarchy, but they believe patriarchy can be overthrown if women understand their own worth and strength, develop sisterhoods of trust with other women,

challenge oppression critically, and form female separatist networks in the private and public realms. Many of the concepts that emerge from feminism are bred in radical feminism.

Marxist feminism claims that the only way to achieve gender equality is to destroy our capitalist society. This viewpoint addresses issues such as unequal compensation, barriers to gaining tenure or excelling in specific disciplines, and the frequent lack of family-friendly policies at many higher education institutions and national organizations. Gender-inequality theories acknowledge that women's social situations and experiences are not just different, but also unequal to men. Women's oppression is linked to Marxist notions about exploitation, oppression, and labor in socialist feminism. Socialist feminism believes that women are oppressed as a result of their unequal status in the workplace and at home. Prostitution, domestic work, childcare, and marriage are all perceived as ways in which patriarchal systems exploit women and the significant work that they accomplish. Socialist feminists concentrate their efforts on large-scale changes that influence society as a whole, rather than on particular issues.

Research Methodology

The explanation is grounded upon feminism theory specifically at Bhasin and Khan's theory of feminism. The written data are taken from some sources which contain the theory of feminism, along with the assumptions from the experts related to the topic of this research. The method used to analyze the Taylor Swift's songs: *'Look What You Made Me Do'*, *'The Man'*, *'I Forgot That You Existed'*, *'You Need To Calm Down'*, *'I Did Something Bad'*, *'Mad Woman'*, *'Long Story Short'*, in this study is qualitative descriptive method, which is a research procedure that generates descriptive data in a descriptive form. Qualitative research is a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning (Shank, 2002:5). Based on Shank's opinion, the researcher can conclude that qualitative research is a form of research that can be observed by human senses, so that others can experience the methods used in the study and is carried out according to a scheme that makes the study workable, effective and efficient. Berg and Howard (2012) define qualitative research as the meaning, concept, definition, metaphor, symbolism, and description of something. The definition clearly shows that qualitative research contains important tools that can stimulate memory to help solve a problem.

Based on the explanation above, the type of research used in this study is qualitative descriptive type. This type of qualitative descriptive research is used as the basis of the research as it is intended to describe feminism in Taylor Swift's songs, and then the data will be presented by word or sentence form based on fact. Furthermore, this study tries to explain the questions that have been described above by using the theories presented by Basin and Khan.

The main data in this research is in the form of various song lyrics represented in Taylor Swift's songs: *'Look What You Made Me Do'*, *'The Man'*, *'I Forgot That You Existed'*, *'You Need To Calm Down'*, *'I Did Something Bad'*, *'Mad Woman'*, *'Long Story Short'* through the Musixmatch application which is an application for the lyrics of various songs. In this study, data collection and data analysis are conducted as follows : 1) listening Taylor Swift's Songs comprehensively, 2) reading the lyrics of the songs, 3) highlighting phrases or sentences contains feminism expressions, 4) classifying the expressions based on the types of feminism, 5) validating the data by doing analytical consultation to some lecturers, 6) interpreting the data, and the last 7) drawing conclusion.

Results

Taylor Alison Swift, commonly known by her stage name Taylor Swift (born December 13, 1989) is an American singer-songwriter. Taylor Swift becomes the first female solo artist to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year twice and has three number-one songs on the Billboard Hot 100. He again incorporated pop-electronic sounds on his next two studio albums: *Reputation* (2017), which combined elements of hip hop and produced the Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles, "Look What You Made Me Do", and *Lover* (2019), which is the world's best-selling album of 2019. The researchers examined several Taylor Swift's songs from her album 'Reputation' and 'Lover', specifically: *'Look What You Made Me Do'*, *'The Man'*, *'I Forgot That You Existed'*, *'You Need To Calm Down'*, *'I Did Something Bad'*, *'Mad Woman'*, *'Long Story Short'*.

The first lyrics are taken from *'Look What You Made Me Do'*. The lyrics itself shows that she is becoming stronger and tougher as she mentioned in the first sentence. Because of what she suffered, she changed and focused more on survival and revenge. *But I got smarter, I got harder in the nick of time. Honey, I rose up from the dead, I do it all the time.* In the lyrics this time, Taylor Swift shows that she unfortunately needs to change and grow to stay strong. She explained that she was 'becoming smarter' and 'tougher'. Even when it looks like her enemies will win over her, she 'rises from the dead' and does it 'all the time' because she has to. The lyrics of this song tell a lot about how women don't give up no matter how difficult the situation they are in.

"When everyone believes ya, what's that like?" Her lyrics emphasize the difference between men and women, especially in how the general public perceives their success and power. She is increasingly expressing her feminism in a public way. "The Man" is one of the most obvious ways she does. She isn't afraid to hide it, and she's not afraid to put a punch behind it. *"I'd be a fearless leader, I'd be an alpha type"*. In the pre-chorus, Taylor talks about the benefits men enjoy in society. They were considered a "fearless leaders", "alpha men", and societies often tended to believe in men more than women. As a 29-year-old woman, Taylor Swift has accumulated and claimed immense power over the music industry and society in general.

Third, we have Taylor Swift's song entitled *"I Did Something Bad"*. Many people call Taylor Swift a narcissist, that is, someone who is too self-obsessed. Her act of dropping verses and symbols from the "1989" era largely fueled these hateful comments. Taylor Swift says here that she's not a narcissist, but they are the ones who did this to her. She can handle them very easily through the lyrics: *"I never trust a narcissist, but they love me. So I play 'em like a violin". "I never trust a playboy, but they love me. So I fly 'em all around the world. And I let them think they saved me. They never see it comin', what I do next"*. During the song's chorus, we can see Taylor Swift trying to cause controversy. She makes it clear that she feels good doing what others call "bad". She wonders why she feels so good and happiest, if it's something bad. Taylor Swift went back to commenting on the "long list of exes" she is known to have in the second verse of "I Did Something Bad". She made it clear that she wouldn't trust a player, but because they liked her innocent and pretty look, they hit her.

Fourth lyrics are taken from *"I Forgot That You Existed"*. The lyrics describe about a specific statement emphasizes how freeing it is for women to stop worrying about what other people think of them. First verse of "I Forgot That You Existed" about someone damaged her so badly that she was forced to live "in the shade" of the criticism they were hurling at her. It took away her delight. She was in excruciating pain after their treatment of her, and their "name [was] on [her] lips" constantly. The discomfort served as a continual reminder of their previous influence in her life.

During the song's chorus, we can see Taylor Swift wants to express her feeling from this lyric. She discovers that she hasn't given them a single thought one "magical night". Because of the excruciating anguish, she "through it would kill" her to let go of the person. She also believed that without the sadness of the failed relationship haunting her, she may even be a different person. However, "it didn't". She enjoys the sensation of forgetting about them. She no longer feels resentful and finds comfort in forgetting the suffering. She now sees them with "isn't love, it isn't hate, it's just indifference". And the second verse Taylor Swift recalls her friendship with this person from her fading memories. They started mocking her as soon as she fell and her "as soon as [she] tripped up" and her "rep started going down". Despite how she was treated, she remained by them even if no one else did and "would've fought the whole town" for them. Even though she would have defied the crowd to be there for them, they were ready to join the mob in making fun of her. She is grateful that they were upfront about their identities so she could break up the relationship.

Fifth song is "Mad Woman". The singer portrays the tale of a hysterical lady in "Mad Woman" who, despite being viewed as mad, vows to fight back against her detractors and foes. Her usage of the word "mad" in this song indicates that she is both irate and perceived as insane by others. Taylor challenges the widely accepted belief that women overreact to problems when, in reality, they are only defending their own interests and doing what they think is right. It appears that the song is addressed to her detractors. These are those who have harmed her yet portray her as a crazy person for wanting to exact retribution. She claims that she has used up all of her patience, and as a result, she is now agitated and prepared to strike. She observes that the same individuals who drove her to this point of insanity also blame her for being overly defensive. In the chorus, the lyric: "*No one likes a mad woman, you made her like that*" tells that woman always grossly underrated by social. This lyric depicts a narrative of both metaphorical and real-life witches being pursued by the patriarchy, which is made up of both men and women. And in the second verse that Taylor Swift makes it apparent that this time she is not going to simply forget about it and go on by emphasizing the line, "*Every time you call me crazy, I get more crazy*", which describes how she felt abused. Even if she is branded as crazy, she is determined to fight back.

Sixth lyric is "Long Story Short". Finding the inner fortitude to carry on in the face of widespread uncertainty is the theme of this song. Definitely a message that all ladies can get behind in the first verse, Taylor relates how, when confronted by all of the aforementioned and defeated in battle, she found her savior. And he didn't even choose these wars. The wars had only begun to affect her. She would not wager that anybody could relate to what she experiences on a daily basis. "*If the shoe fits, walk in it 'til your high heels break*", she encourages everyone to do. She is aware that they will try to break the heels, as the song's lyrics imply. In the Chorus, Taylor claims to have plummeted from her lofty perch to the lowest point possible. "*Long story short, it was a bad time*", was also said. She devoted the whole "Reputation" stage of her career to accepting everything that was thrown at her. And the second verse, Taylor Swift also exhibits a strong defensiveness over her relationship. She claims that after meeting the right guy, she put down her weapons and stopped battling everyone. But she wouldn't just stand by and watch if some random individual or member of the media barged into their idyllic existence—she would fight. This implies that she is aware of the fact that some of her relationships ended because of her notoriety and popularity.

The last, we have Taylor Swift's song with title "*You Need to Calm Down*". The lyrics of this song reveal about LGBT. First verse Taylor Swift felt like "Why are you even spending your time criticizing me?!" since she was being disparaged by individuals, who were most likely random strangers from the internet. Given that a patron is a type of tequila and that it is "only 7 am", the

phrase "shot like a Patron" is a play on the fact that she is being mocked at all hours of the day. The fact that they are tweeting these comments at her feels like a sop-out; as if they are too frightened to say it to her face. She claims that they can say it to her face-to-face on the street, even if it would be rather uncomfortable. And second verse in the third line, The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLADD), an organization founded by members of the community to fight for LGBTQ+ rights, is the acronym for the word joyful. The music video and song are primarily about her explaining why she doesn't want people to approach her while simultaneously empathizing with the community and putting her hardships on par with that of those who are mocked for their sexuality. Don't get furious, get glad is also the tagline for the large waste bag, so I guess it's a small cultural allusion.

Discussion

It can be said that most of the songs performed by Taylor Swift have liberal feminism in them. The songs that Swift sings mostly carry the notion that women can freely express themselves, whether they are heartbroken, fall in love or about expressing injustice towards differences with the other gender. Seen from the first song entitled 'Look What You Made Me Do'. Swift emphatically stated that she would change and choose to become stronger which she explained by saying to be smart and strong. Swift also makes it clear in the lyrics that she won't give up easily if someone has dragged her down. This is a good example when women are able to rise above the difficulties faced in their lives and women are able to express themselves freely through the song.

That also applies to the second song analyzed, entitled 'The Man'. Here Swift clearly states that what if he becomes a man. As we know, men take over more roles in many things in life, Swift freely expresses how women emphatically disapprove of this by imagining that if women become men themselves in the advantages they have of being men.

Followed by the next song, the researchers found similarities in the songs 'I Did Something Bad', 'I Forgot That You Existed', 'Mad Woman' and 'You Need To Calm Down', namely that these songs tell the story of Taylor Swift's struggles in fighting for her freedom. in work. As many people know, Taylor Swift often gets hate speech from many parties. However, Swift responds with works, through what she conveys through the lyrics of the songs she creates. Once again, Swift very clearly shows that she adheres to liberal feminism through these songs.

Conclusion

The conclusion that researchers can draw from this research is that Taylor Swift is a feminist who uses her songs as a channel for her aspirations about feminism. Through the songs that the researchers researched here, most of the songs that Taylor Swift conveys reflect liberal feminism in which Liberal Feminists want women to be free from oppressive gender roles. They argue that in a patriarchal society suitable job for women are associated with feminine traits such as teachers, nurses, secretaries, cashiers at banks, etc. The opposition to these stereotypes must be carried out through androgynous education - which has male and female dimensions - both at school and at home. Androgyny has helped them in achieving freedom, equality and justice. Taylor Swift clearly and manages to convey her meaning through her songs.

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