

REPRESENTATION OF EXISTENTIAL FEMINISM IN THE LYRIC OF 'I MADE YOU LOOK' SONG BY MEGHAN TRAINOR

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ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive qualitative study that aims to describe how existential feminism is represented in the lyrics of a popular song entitled 'I made you look' sung by Meghan Trainor. Lyrics are a series of related poems in which some sort of broad narrative is tantalizingly offered (Culler, 2017). The aims of the research are 1) to find out the meaning of the lyric of 'I made you look' song and 2) to describe the existential-feminism represented in the lyric of 'I made you look' song. The method used in this research is descriptive with the approach of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation by Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) and the theory of existential feminism by Beauvoir (1949). The results obtained are from the 5 stanzas of the lyrics, there are phrases containing existential feminism that is being self-confidence about femaleness, about sexual roles, about community, and about body.

Keywords: lyric, existential-feminism, syntagmatic and paradigmatic

1. INTRODUCTION

Lyric is not just a sequence of words. As a text, lyrics is the art of poetic language; there is a rhythm with a unified sound and a selection of figurative words that involves the melody and the singer's voice. It has several functions; In a song, the lyrics is a complement so that the meaning of the song can be more internalized. Song lyrics can be used to share experiences and feelings, or to express a point of view. Lyric is also can be used as the foundation genre for the poetics or literary assumptions of cultures all over the world (Miner, 2000, in Culler 2017). By interpreting the lyrics, the audience can distinguish the nuances of the song, whether it is about sadness, happiness or anger. Lyric can also provide the audience the culture of the song for it contains language.

Apart from the functions of lyrics in general, there is an even more extreme function regarding lyrics, namely as a driving force. A lyric can be very powerful so that it can influence someone to do something. In line with those which were stated by Smith (1979, in Culler 2017), lyric is a speech act. It is a dramatic monologue which places a character to speak to an audience or to himself or herself. It is 'a fictional imitation or representation of a real-world speech act' (p.17).

Currently, there are many singers performing songs with lyrics which, when examined, contain complex meanings and ideologies. Other than the topic of love or life issues, the song lyrics also contain the meaning of social movements, one of them is related to the women's movement or feminism.

Feminism is a social movement and ideology that fights for women's rights. Feminists believe that men and women are equal and that women deserve the same rights as men in people's lives. Feminism is an awareness of women's oppression and exploitation in the family, the workplace, and society, as well as conscious action by both men and women to change that situation (Tong, 2009). Feminism is a liberation ideology based on the belief that women face injustice because of their gender. Feminism provides various analyses of the causes and perpetrators of female oppression.

Feminism has several types. One of them is existential-feminism. Existentialism itself is a school of thought, proposed by Aristotle and popularized by Sartre (1946), that holds that each person is ultimately responsible for giving their own lives meaning or purpose. We do not receive our unique purpose and meaning from Gods, governments, instructors, or other authorities. In terms of feminism, existentialism places a strong emphasis on ideas like freedom, kinship, and the feeling of being a human body.

Beauvoir (1949) existential-feminism appears based on the thought that woman has traditionally been viewed as man's opposite. Woman is only defined in relation to man, who serves as the subject and the ideal. In addition to the view of existentialism, Beauvoir had a notion that woman cannot be unambiguously subdued because she preserves her existential freedom even though she is coerced into a submissive role by society.

Beauvoir (1949, in Tong, 2010) explains four strategies done by woman to exist: 1) women can go to work like men does so she can regain her transcendence; 2) women can become intellectuals, that is, become members of groups that will build change for women; 3) women can work to achieve the socialist transformation of society; and 4) women can identify themselves through the views of the dominant group in society by doing activities that are more creative and more service oriented.

Herlianto (2021) has previously conducted a study on feminism in song lyrics, which investigated the representation of feminism in the lyrics of the Javanese dangdut koplo song using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach. The results of the study show that Javanese dangdut koplo songs represent the equality of women to men. The role of women is expressed no longer as a second sex, which is entirely as a housewife, but they have the opportunity to choose a future independently. Meanwhile, feminism is expressed directly and indirectly in the song by using figurative language in the form of metaphors.

Made You Look is a song sung by Meghan Trainor. This song is included in his album Takin' It Back. Made You Look was first released on October 21, 2022. According to Meghan Trainor, the inspiration for this single was based on her struggle to feel sexy again after giving birth. In writing this song, Meghan Trainor paid attention to the shape of her body in the shower. According to him, (quoted from one of her interviews in one of music podcast on YouTube, name Genius, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SV5Ij0FXft0>) this song means loving yourself, even after having a baby, she's confident that she can get through it and she still has sex appeal.

Before understanding the meaning of the lyric in existential-feminism view, the meaning of the lyric itself must be obtained. One of the approach to understand the meaning structurally is by seeing the relations of the components in syntagmatic and paradigmatic. In order to distinguish between two types of signifiers, Saussure (1974) developed two relations: the syntagmatic relation, which concerns positioning, and the paradigmatic relation, which concerns substitution (paradigmatic). Thesaurus and other knowledge organization systems frequently use paradigmatic relations, whereas syntagmatic relations are typically connected to co-occurrences in some context. For example

Relation	Syntagmatic		
Paradigmatic	I	learn	English
	You	study	Math

Based on the background above, the problem formulations of the research are:

What is the meaning of the lyric of 'I made you look' song?

How existential-feminism is represented in the lyric of 'I made you look' song?

Therefore, the aims of the research are:

To find out the meaning of the lyric of 'I made you look' song

To describe the existential-feminism represented in the lyric of 'I made you look' song

2. RESEARCH METHOD

According to Creswell (2009, p. 3) there are three types of research designs for data collection and analysis, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. In accordance with this research need, the researchers use qualitative method. Creswell (2009, p. 4) stated that qualitative research is used to analyze those related to social problems both individuals and groups. Furthermore, the data collected in qualitative research namely words. The researchers uses descriptive qualitative method in this research since it focuses on the analysis or interpretation of the written material in the form of sentences rather than numbers and statistics. The source of the data used in this research is the lyric text from the song 'I made you look' sung by Meghan Trainor.

The data that is uses in this research are all the words, phrases, clauses, or utterances representing feminism. In collecting the data, the researchers 1) listen to the song to find out what this song is about, 2) search and learn the lyric to understand deeply the meaning, 3) select all the words, phrases, clauses, or utterances to investigate the feminism representation in the lyric.

To analyze the data, the researchers start from learning and understanding what is feminism, then selecting the data, after that the researchers analyze the meaning by applying syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the text, and analyze the data in feminism point of view.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Meaning from syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of the stanza

The following presents the result of investigating the structural meaning of 5 stanzas in the song lyric of 'I made you look' by Meghan Trainor by applying syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. The data found are analyzed in the following:

Stanza 1

*I could have my Gucci on
I could wear my Louis Vuitton
But even with nothin' on
Bet I made you look (I made you look)*

Syntagmatic relations of the stanza:

I could have my Gucci on
top branded fashion items on

I could wear my Louis Vuitton
top branded fashion items

But even with nothin' on
clothless

Bet I made you look
stun

Paradigmatic relation of the stanza:

The capability of a woman to posses and put on anythings she wants and whatever she wears, she still stuns the interlocutors.

Based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the stanza, in the first two lines, the singer mentions some of top brands in woman fashion namely 'Gucci' and 'Louise Vuitton', those brands indicate glamour and luxury as they are expensive, internationally famous, and only worn by rich people with a certain status, with famous people as their spokespersons. It indicates that the singer is a glamorous and luxurious woman. The phrases 'I could have' and 'I could wear' indicate that she has capability to posses and put on those branded items anytime she wants. The following two lines; 'even with nothin' on' and 'I made you look' indicates the singer's confidence about her natural apperance and her conviction that she can stun the interlocutors with or without those top branded fashion items.

Stanza 2

*I'll make you double take soon as I walk away
Call up your chiropractor just in case your neck break
Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh
'Cause I'm 'bout to make a scene, double up that sunscreen*

*I'm 'bout to turn the heat up, gonna make your glasses steam
Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh*

Syntagmatic relations of the stanza:

I'll make you double take soon as I walk away
look at me again immediately after I pass by

Call up your chiropractor just in case your neck break
practitioner of joint problem you hurt your neck

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh

'Cause I'm 'bout to make a scene, double up that sunscreen
will make you excited, put on again

I'm 'bout to turn the heat up, gonna make your glasses steam
will make the situation be more exciting feel hot

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh

Paradigmatic relation of the stanza:

The interlocutor will immediately take a look at the woman again after she passes by and it will make injury to the neck for the interlocutor intensely turn his/her head to look at her. The woman will cause the situation more exciting so she warns the interlocutor to prepare him/herself. If those cases happen, the woman asks what the interlocutor will do.

Based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the stanza, in the first three lines, the clause **'I'll make you double take soon as I walk away'** indicate the confidence of the singer for her existence which will attract the interlocutor. The phrase of **'your neck break'** shows the intensity of the effect of the singer's attraction as if the interlocutor could injure his/her neck for turning his/her head too intense to look at the singer. The next three lines indicates the power of the singer that she can change the situation in the level where the interlocutor has difficulty to handle it, so the interlocutor should brace him/herself. It is shown in the phrase of **'I'm 'bout to make a scene'** and **'I'm 'bout to turn the heat up'**.

Stanza 3

*When I do my walk, walk (oh)
I can guarantee your jaw will drop, drop (oh)
'Cause they don't make a lot of what I got, got (ah, ah)
Ladies if you feel me, this your bop, bop (bop-bop-bop)*

Syntagmatic relations of the stanza:

When I do my walk, walk (oh)

I can guarantee your jaw will drop, drop (oh)
I'm very certain your mouth will widely open, drop (oh)

'Cause they don't make a lot of what I got, got (ah, ah)
'Cause they don't treat me well, got (ah, ah)

Ladies if you feel me, this your bop, bop (bop-bop-bop)
understand, this your song, bop (bop-bop-bop)

Paradigmatic relation of the stanza:

The woman is very certain that interlocutor will stun and amaze seeing her walk. Other people do not treat her well and she offers the song for other woman who understand her feeling.

Based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the stanza, in the first two lines, the clause **'When I do my walk, I can guarantee your jaw will drop'** indicate the confidence of the singer for her existence which will attract the interlocutor. The phrase of **'your jaw will drop'** shows the intensity of the effect of the singer's attraction. The next two lines indicates the offer of the singer to interlocutors, who are the **'ladies'** who experience the same thing as she does, that is receive unpleasant treatment from others as in the clause **'they don't make a lot of what I got'** to listen to the song as in the clause **'Ladies if you feel me, this your bop'**.

Stanza 4

...

*Yeah, I look good in my Versace dress (take it off)
But I'm hotter when my morning hair's a mess
'Cause even with my hoodie on
Bet I made you look (I made you look)
Mhm-hm-hm*

Syntagmatic relations of the stanza:

Yeah, I look good in my Versace dress (take it off)
I'm beautiful top branded outfit

But I'm hotter when my morning hair's a mess
more beautiful I'm not dressed up

'Cause even with my hoodie on
casual outfit

Bet I made you look
stun

Paradigmatic relation of the stanza:

The capability of a woman to possess and put on anything she wants and whatever she wears, she still stuns the interlocutors.

Based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the stanza, in the first two lines, the singer mentions another of top brand in woman fashion namely **'Versace'**. The brand indicates glamour and luxury as they are expensive, internationally famous, and only worn by rich people with a certain status, with famous people as their spokespersons. It indicates that the singer is a glamorous and luxurious woman. The following two lines; **'I'm hotter when my morning hair's a mess'** and **'even with my hoodie on'** indicates the singer's confidence about her natural appearance and her conviction that she needs any fashion and pretty items to stun the interlocutors.

Stanza 5

*And once you get a taste (woo), you'll never be the same
This ain't that ordinary, this that 14 karat cake
Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh (what you gon' do, ooh, ooh)*

Syntagmatic relations of the stanza:

And once you get a taste, you'll never be the same

feel it, you'll get addicted

This ain't that ordinary, this that 14 karat cake
normal, high quality

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do,

Paradigmatic relation of the stanza:

The persuasion and seduction of a woman about the addiction the interlocutor gets once he/she experience the woman's action for she is not like any other woman and that she is a high quality woman.

Based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the stanza, in the first line, '**once you get a taste, you'll never be the same**' it indicates the confidence of the singer to seduce the interlocutor to feel her action and how the interlocutor will not have capability to not like the action. The next line, 'This ain't that ordinary, this that 14 karat cake' indicates the claim of the singer that she is not like any other common woman, that she is a high quality woman. In the final line, she challenges the interlocutor by asking what he/she will do after that.

Existential-Feminism represented in the lyric

Observing from existential-feminism view, the dictions, phrases and clauses in the lyric indicates existential-feminism for the singer, as a woman, needs nothing to show off herself as it can be seen from the use of modal of capability '**could**', and the phrase of '**even if with nothing on**'. She has power to subdue her opposite gender only with her natural self as in the phrase '**I'll make you double take soon as I walk away**'. It is also shown that the clause signifies the consciousness of the singer about her femaleness and her body. She is confidence about her whatever the form of her body is that she does not need any branded items, such as '**Gucci**', '**Louis Vuitton**' or '**Versace**' to give any improvement of herself. She values herself high, as she is the '**14 karat cake**'.

The existential-feminism also exists in the form that the singer, as a woman has power to attract her opposite gender only by her existence. The use of words and phrases that are associated with 'hot' such as '**sunscreen**', '**glasses**', '**steam**' and '**heat up**' indicates a sexual appeal of the singer to tempt the interlocutor. It signifies the consciousness of the singer about sexual roles she has, that she is no longer as subordinate, but she also can dominate her counterpart too by causing his '**neck break**', that he has to '**double up that sunscreen**' and gives him a warning that his '**glasses steam**' will appear.

The concern about the community as one of characteristics of existential-feminism also appear in the stanzas, especially in the third stanza. The clause '**they don't make a lot of what I got**' indicates the consciousness that some people do not treat them well, regarding their body changes and the singer realizes that she was not alone experiencing that thing, so she invite other women who get the same treatment to regain the spirit by listening this song as shown in '**Ladies if you feel me, this your bop**'.

4. CONCLUSSION

'I made you look' is a song sung by Meghan Trainor and was popular in 2022. The lyric of the song contains words, phrases, and clauses signifying a confidence as a woman. Based on syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of the text and as viewed in existensial-feminism idea, it can be concluded that the lyric calls out self-confidence about femaleness, about sexual roles, about community, and about body.

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