

AN ANALYSIS OF WOMAN REPRESENTATION IN *MILK AND HONEY* POETRY BY RUPI KAUR

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ABSTRACT: The aims of this study was to show the representation of the woman and the struggles to resolved the oppression in collection of poetry of *Milk and Honey*. The researcher established two objectives of the study to get the purpose, they were: analyzed the description of oppression experienced by women and analyzed the struggles of what women did to overcome oppression in the collection poetry of *Milk and Honey*.

The researcher used a feminist approach, especially radical feminism in literature to analyze the representation of woman such as the type of oppression that experienced and the resistance taken to solve oppression and other literature studies. The researcher observed a collection of poetry books *Milk and Honey* by read and then analyzed the data with text and image as research instruments.

The researcher found that the representation of women contained in the *Milk and Honey* poetry collection book was a woman who experienced physical oppression in the form of rape, violence that made her weak. Than psychological oppression experienced by the women, she had trauma due to endless pain but besides that she remained a patient person and someone who easy to fall in love. The last was the social oppression that came from the cruel society around the woman that made her have to live by *women's standards* and the rules that women a dishonor to family. All the oppression experienced by the woman character resolved with a hidden struggle that she did individually by forgetting all the painful memories and loving herself more by giving self-affirmation that she was destined for many better things.

Keywords: *Representation of Woman, Radical Feminism, Poetry*

ABSTRAK: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menunjukkan representasi perempuan dan perlawanan yang diakukannya dalam kumpulan puisi *Susu dan Madu*. Peneliti memiliki dua tujuan untuk mencapai target: menganalisis gambaran penindasan yang dialami perempuan dan menganalisis perlawanan apa yang dilakukan perempuan untuk mengatasi penindasan dalam kumpulan puisi *Susu dan Madu*.

Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan femnisme khususnya radikal feminisme dalam karya sastra untuk menganalisis representasi perempuan seperti jenis penindasan apa yang dialami dan perlawanan yang diambil untuk menyelesaikan penindasan. Dalam meneliti kumpulan puisi *Susu dan Madu*, peneliti menggunakan teori radikal feminism (Tong, 2009) dan beberapa penelitian tentang karya sastra yang lain. Peneliti mengobservasi buku kumpulan puisi *Susu dan Madu* dengan membaca kemudian menganalisis data dengan analisa teks dan gambar sebagai instrumen penelitian.

Peneliti menemukan bahwa representasi perempuan yang terdapat dalam buku kumpulan puisi *Susu dan Madu* adalah perempuan yang mengalami penindasan fisik berupa pemerkosaan, kekerasan yang membuat ia lemah. Selanjutnya representasi kejiwaandan adalah perempuan mengalami trauma karena kesakitan tanpa henti tetapi disamping itu ia tetap menjadi seorang yang sabar dan mudah untuk jatuh cinta. Terakhir adalah penindasan sosial yang berasal dari masyarakat yang kejam di sekitar tokoh perempuan yang membuat ia harus hidup dengan standar perempuan dan peraturan bahwa perempuan ialah aib keluarga. Semua penindasan yang dialami tokoh perempuan diselesaikan dengan perlawanan tertutup yang ia lakukan secara individu dengan cara melupakan semua kenangan sakit dan lebih mencintai dirinya dengan memberi afirmasi diri bahwa ia ditakdirkan untuk banyak hal yang lebih baik

Kata Kunci: *Representasi Perempuan Radikal Feminisme, Puisi.*

BACKGROUND

Poetry is one of the literary works which had characteristics. The characteristics such as theme, meter, rhythm, rhyme, etc. It was make poetry different from another literary works. Beside, that make poetry special from the other literary works was written in different ways, it can be a media to express the author feelings based on the situation, condition, and imagination. Poets have their own characteristics, some of them usually use nature as the object of their writing poems, love experiences, affection, and friendship as the object.

Nowadays, there was poets who write poems by using feminism touches. For example, the image of woman in the society, the position of women among the men, and the discriminations which occur in the women's life. In discussed feminism, people talked about women. Feminism indeed, identical with women, especially in their struggle to gained the equality with men. Feminism was a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanded an amelioration in their social position (Freedman, 2001:3). Feminism cannot be separated from woman representation, how women portrayed was very important to know the struggles of women faced the problems, then female figures can also be identified through the portrayal of women. Woman representations was different types of collective cognitions, common sense or thought systems of women. How a woman described in various aspects according to the woman's identity that already exists in society.

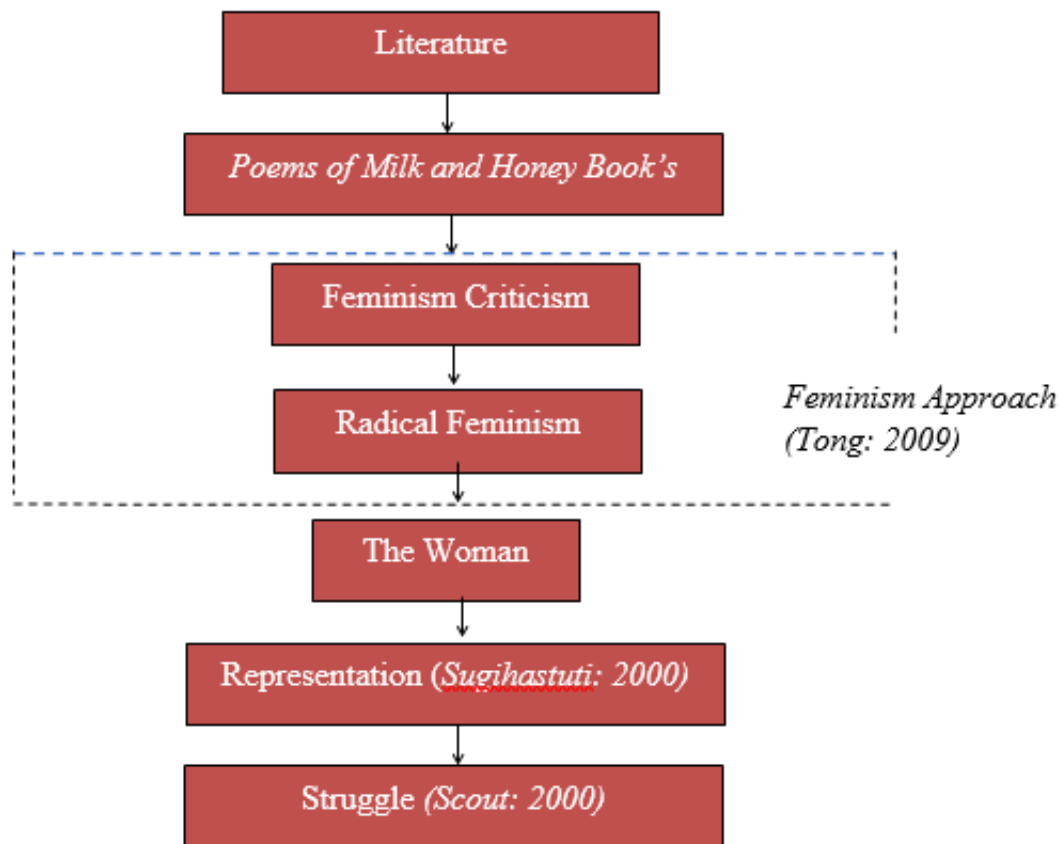
One of poets who used feminism touch in their poetry was Rupi Kaur. Many Rupi Kaur's works contain feminism. One of the most discussed was the representation of a woman as outlined in her works, which interested from the poetry Rupi Kaur there was a message portrayed clearly in language that easily understood. Rupi Kaur used words that often used in daily life to expressed the message contained in her writing. She wrote the poetry with narrative technique so the reader can feel experienced the emotions contained in poetry step by step. The first book that was publish by Rupi Kaur Kaur's was a collection of poems titled *Milk and Honey* was sold over two and a half million copies worldwide and spent one year on New York Time Best Seller List.. In this study the researcher explains the woman representation of poetry in *Milk and Honey* Book's by Rupi Kaur by using the feminism approaches focus on radical feminism related to the woman identity and her struggle of oppression/ discrimination. The researcher choosing these Rupi Kaur works because these poems are about women discrimination with detail representation of woman and those four chapters are the narrative poems of Rupi Kaur. The forms basis of this poetry is interesting to study starting from the appreciation given by the public in the milk and honey book is higher, this book has also been translated into twenty-five languages, one of which is Indonesian language. It proves this poem was worth to studying. Researcher interested in how the representation of women depicted, it can attract extraordinary readers interest, whether it might be related to the topic of feminism, or women representation, or there are other elements that support the book *Milk and Honey* so phenomenal.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher formulates the problems of the study as follows:

1. How the woman represented in the poems of *Milk and Honey* by Rupri Kaur?
2. How the women resolved the oppressions in the poems of *Milk and Honey* by Rupri Kaur?

RELATED THEORY AND LITERATURE

Theoretical Framewok



Theoretical framework (Eagleton, 1996: 18; Wellek & Warren, 2016: 3; Tong, 2009: 48; Sugihastuti, 2000; Scout, 2000)

Literature is any kind of writing which for some reason or another somebody values highly (Eagleton, 1996: 18). Literature in this term is a creative activity, a work of art as stated by

Wellek & Warren in their book *Theory of Literature* (2016:3). There are three kinds of literary work, including; poetry, prose and drama. However, in this study will analyze poetry.

Milk and Honey is book collection of poems written by Rupi Kaur, published in 2014 by Andrews McMeel Publishing. Kansas City. This is a collection of poems that is narrative tells about a woman who has a painful experience as a woman is poured into writing through four chapters, each of chapter is a life stage that must be passed by *I* character or the woman. There are four parts on the *Milk and Honey Book's*: the hurting, the loving, the breaking and the healing. In the first chapter *the hurting*, Rupi Kaur tells the story of a woman who had a trauma in her childhood. As the next chapter *the loving*, Rupi Kaur tells us that the woman finally grew up and began to recognize the feelings of love. The third chapter *the breaking*, surely tells the woman's attempt to forget her ex-lover. The final chapter *the healing*, tells the woman's awareness that she must move on and begin to respect herself as a woman.

In this research, the researcher focus to analyze the character of the woman (*I*) deals with the woman representation and her struggles to resolve the oppression. Representation is to interpret the concept that is on our minds by using language, whereas in representing women in the poem the researcher will use the feminism approach that focus on the elements that exist in radical feminism which include oppression, patriarchy, gender roles and struggles (Tong, 2009:48).

Scoot (2000) in the journal *Idayatiningsih* divided two forms of resistance which consists of public or open and hidden struggle/resistance. Public struggle was resistance that easily occurs in a particular environment or community that had the potential to carry out a mass movement spontaneously and continuously (such as the campus environment, workers, farmers, and so on). This resistance is due to structural stresses (structural strains) that will accelerate people to make spontaneous mass movements because of their desire to break away from miserable situations. Hidden struggle also called surreptitious resistance can be characterized as resistance that is: (1) irregular, not systematic and occurs individually, (2) is opportunistic and selfish, (3) has no revolutionary consequences, and / or (4) more accommodating to the system of domination. In conclusion, the researcher wants to analyze the woman (*I*) representation in *Milk and Honey* collection of poems book's and how she resolves the oppression.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

Researcher used qualitative methods namely content analysis to overcome the problems mentioned. According to Ary (2002: 426) qualitative methods was research designed to obtain information about current status phenomena. The data that used by researcher was a collection of poetry books *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur. Qualitative methods had a natural setting as a direct data source and researcher had a role as the main or key instrument. This means that the researcher had authority in deciphering what found in the source and applied the appropriate theory to answer the research question.

2. Approach

The research utilized feminism approach dealing in analyzing the woman representation and her struggles to resolved the oppression. The researcher used feminism approach because feminism was ideology that focused on woman and the researcher focused on analyzing woman representation as woman character in the poems of *Milk and Honey* book. Researcher took the data in poetry by classifying based on indicators in the theory of radical feminism, data collection divided into two parts, namely woman representation (physical, psychological, social) and struggle to resolve the oppression. Next, the researcher analyzed and concluded the representation of woman and her struggle chose by the woman to carry out the oppression that experienced based on the classification data.

Answering first questions the researcher took the data that had collected based on the radical feminism woman representation by using table 1.1 classification of woman representation below. Therefore, if the data classified according to the radical feminism theory aspects. Researcher look for the woman representation such as those contained in books ranging from physical portrayal, oppression experienced, imagery that women have in their family and environment. It easier to interpreted or analyzed and make the readers easier to read.

Table 1.1 Classification of Woman Representation

No	Data		Analysis of Woman Representation	Indicator		
	Poetry	Pictures Illustration		Physical	Psycho- logical	Social

1.						
2.						

Answering second questions the researcher took the data collected based on the woman struggles two aspects, namely; hidden and public by using table 1.2 the struggle of women to resolve the oppression below. Therefore, if the data classified according to the appropriate aspects. The hidden struggle was motivation that arises from within the woman herself while public is the motivation that arises because of outside encouragement for example; family members, boyfriend, neighbors etc. It easier to interpreted or analyzed and make the readers easier to read.

Table 1.2 The Struggle of Women to Resolve the Oppression

No	Data		Analysis of the Woman Struggles	Indicator	
	Poetry	Pictures Illustration		Hidden	Public
1.					
2.					

The researcher used indicators to facilitate the analysis of the data a collection of poems on the *Milk and Honey* Book. Table 1.5 was the indicators of woman representation and table 1.6 was the indicators of the struggles of women to resolve the oppression. The indicator tables below were equipped with descriptions and examples to addition facilitating the researcher. The indicator tables can enrich the reader to understand systematically according to the feel in each poem.

The indicators used by researchers in this study were drawn from several sources. First, indicator table 1.5 adapted from the theory of radical feminism *Tong* (2009) and types of representation of women *Sugihastuti* (2000). The researcher applied the elements that exist in radical feminism to be categorized into three types of representation according to *Sugihastuti's* representation theory. Next to table 1.6 the researcher adapted the theory struggle from *Scout* (2000) in *Idayatiningsih* (2017) in the journal entitled (*Lingua Franca: Journal of Language, Literature, and Teaching Vol. 5 No.2*) which explains the division of resistance and in the theory

explains that resistance is divided into two namely hidden and public. Here are the table indicators adapted from several sources:

Table 1.5 Indicators of Woman Representation

No.	Indicator	Description
1.	Physical	An adult woman is a figure individuals formed by the biological processes of baby girls who are on their way to adulthood. -Example; menstruation, pregnant, sexual harassment, oppression, give birth and breastfeed their children, etc.
2.	Psychological	A characterization or an attitude among others. Psychologically women are represented as human beings who prioritize feelings rather than ratios -Example; self-esteem, self-respect, stress, falling in love, depression, admire, revenge, trauma, etc.
3.	Social	The role of woman in the society. Example; education, patriarchy, status of woman in the family/society, gender identity, gender role etc.

Sources: Sugihastuti (2000) and Tong (2009).

Table 1.6 Indicators of The Struggle of Women to Resolve the Oppression

No.	Indicator	Description
1.	Open/Public	The characterization such as; 1) Organic, systemic, and cooperative 2) Principled or selfless 3) Revolutionary concentration 4) Includes ideas / intent to negate the basis of domination.
2.	Hidden	The characterization such as; 1) irregular, not systematic and occurs individually 2) is opportunistic and selfish

		3) has no revolutionary consequences 4) more accommodating to the system of domination.
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Source: Scout (2000) in Idayatiningsih, Rini (*Lingua Franca: Journal Bahasa, Literature, and Teaching Vol. 5 No.2*)

FINDINGS DISCUSSION

1). The first is the woman representation in the collection of poetry *Milk and Honey*. The researcher found that the woman representation was the woman who experienced physical oppression, psychological pressure and stuck with woman roles in family/ society. They are same with what *Sugihastuti* (2000) stated that the representation of women can be interpreted that all forms of mental and spiritual depictions and daily behavior expressed by women. The theory of *Sugihastuti* makes the researcher is easier to analyze the woman representation.

The physical is individual figures formed as a woman. In this case, physical concern in The Woman (I character) who experiences a lot of oppression in her body. He experienced a lot of abuse, harassment, oppression to her body by uncle, cousin and all the wrong people. The psychological, mostly found in this movie. It is because he lives in an environment full of women roles which makes her able to only harbor what he feels and never dare to speak up so that in this poem most of what is found is the taste experienced by the woman and included in psychological representation. The psychological of the woman (I character) is feeling unwanted and invisible to her family, she is hurt and has trauma due to being a sex object, disappointed in all the people she has loved, and hopeless because of the betrayal she received.

The social representation, it is how the woman in the society. The woman (I character is depicted as a person who lives by the rules of the family / community that strangles her. She learns to live with her mouth closed and is subjected to violence by men, lives with many standards of beauty that make her unappreciated, and a society that always underestimates all people's efforts others to become better personal versions of themselves.

2) The second problem statement was the struggle to resolve the oppression in collection poetry book *Milk and Honey*. The researcher analyzed the collection of poetry and the woman struggle that she did to resolve the oppression. The researcher used the theory from Scout in Idayatiningsih (2000) about resistance to help the researcher easier in determining the struggle of the woman in the collection poetry. It began from the breaking chapter. When the woman

chose to take up space and forget the past, next she tried to understand and be grateful for she already had and she had left. The last she found herself as a woman who wants to live free and happy by loving herself and useful to many people.

The researcher used radical feminism and make a simple table classification in facilitating her to analyze the woman representation and the struggle to resolve the oppression in the collection poetry. These cases had accordance with the theory from Tong (2009) that radical feminism is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchal roots inequality between men and women, or specifically social dominance of women by men. The researcher used the theory because the woman representation and her struggle were the parts of feminism elements and had a relation each other.

Based on the data analysis, the researcher concluded that the woman (I character) as the main character in the poetry collection of *Milk and Honey* that used Rosemary Tong's theory of radical feminism applied to this study. In this research, the researcher found out some difficulty and deficiency. Feminism theory is a very broad scope of literary and was still growing. So, the researcher had difficulty to find the theory of feminism that developed that was appropriate to examine woman representation. The researcher found several poems in the book *Milk and Honey* a collection of poetry that showed the woman's representation in feminism the way possessed by the woman (I character), including: physical representation 6 poems, psychological representation 3 poems, social representation 11 poems, and hidden struggle 47 poems.

CONCLUSION

1. The first is the researcher found that the woman had three representations in the poetry. The woman was experienced physical oppression, psychological pressure and stuck with woman roles in society. In the physical representation, researcher found that the woman experienced exploitation (raped) since she was five years old. The woman became a sexual object by her own family, her uncles and cousins, she also experienced sexual abuse to her body by all the wrong men. In the psychological representation, the researcher found that the woman suffered mental sickness and trauma because of her oppression since childhood. Last, social representation, the woman was a person who brings dishonor to her family and lives in the woman role owned by the family / community around her. The woman lives in an

environment that has made her live with her mouth closed because if she had issued an opinion and talked about what was thought it was felt dishonor behavior that made the family ashamed, burdened with the standard of beauty and woman roles that exist in society and could not grow into the best version of herself.

2. *The* researcher found one type of struggle, the hidden struggle carried out by the woman to opposed the oppression that she experienced. Hidden struggle was a struggle that carried out individually, not systematically and not systematically. The woman did her personal struggle with take up space and convinces herself to be more courageous in expressed what she felt, rising from the pain that almost made her down and felt emptiness. Then, the woman tried to love herself first, she starts trying to understand what makes her happy, comfortable, and free by refusing to become a sexual object and oppose the exploitation she was experiences. Furthermore, after experienced a broken heart the woman tried to make people around her accepted as herself, without any standard of beauty, gender roles, etc, Realizing that she deserved better and get lots of love from around and she wants to be useful for many people.

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