

Exploring Feminism Through the Symbolic Meaning of *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin* By Ali Zulfikar

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ABSTRACT

This research has explored feminism through the symbolic meaning in the poem *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin* by Ali Zulfikar. The aim of the study is to analyze the symbols in the poem using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach and to understand the representation of women's experiences in the context of feminism. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques of reading and notes-taking. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that symbols such as *pohon*, *hujan mawar*, and *rantai yang dipatahkan* represent strength, resilience, and resistance to patriarchal oppression. This poem not only serves as an aesthetic work but also as an effective medium to voice issues of gender injustice. Zulfikar's work significantly contributes to the feminist discourse in Indonesian literature, providing new insights into the representation of women in a socio-cultural context.

Keywords: *Feminism, Symbol, Poetry, Semiotics, Women's Experiences*

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the issue of gender equality and women's representation remains a significant challenge that society is grappling with. Women frequently find themselves marginalized in many areas of social and cultural life. This includes obstacles to accessing quality education and securing fair job opportunities. Many women encounter discrimination and face stereotypes that restrict their roles and contributions in society. As a response to these challenges, feminism has emerged as a vital social and ideological movement. Its primary goal is to promote gender equality and empower women across different facets of life. Feminism seeks to highlight the importance of women's rights and strives to create an environment where women can fully participate and thrive, whether in education, the workplace, or in political arenas. By advocating for these changes, feminism plays a crucial role in working towards a more just and equitable society for everyone.

According to hooks, feminism is fundamentally a movement aimed at eliminating sexism, as well as the exploitation and oppression that often accompany it (hooks, 2000, p. xii). This movement strives to address and rectify the various injustices that women face in society, while also challenging the patriarchal structures that maintain male dominance (Sugihastuti, 2010, p. 10). Feminism goes beyond just advocating for gender equality; it emphasizes the importance of empowering women so they can engage fully in all aspects of life, including social, economic, and political spheres (Tong, 2014, p. 25). One vital avenue for this empowerment is literature, which serves as a powerful platform for expressing feminist struggles and illuminating the social realities that women encounter. Through literature, the voices and experiences of women can be shared, helping to raise awareness and foster understanding of the issues they face.

Literature is a unique form of human expression that can be found in both written and oral forms. It encompasses a diverse array of thoughts, opinions, experiences, and emotions, all presented in imaginative ways that reflect reality. As noted by Sumardjo and Saini, literature is characterized by its aesthetic qualities, which enhance its ability to convey meaning and emotion (Sumardjo & Saini, 1997, p. 4). Moreover, that literature serves as a disclosure of facts, functioning as an artistic and imaginative representation of human life and society through the medium of language, which in turn has a positive effect on human experience (Esten, 1978, p. 4). In addition, literature is regarded as a social institution, utilizing language as its primary means of communication and expression (Damono, 1979, p. 1). This allows individuals to express their feelings and thoughts about life in unique and personal ways. Therefore, in their literary works, authors aim to create specific effects through their use of language, striving to leave a lasting impression and evoke a sense of wonder in their readers. Through this process, literature not only reflects our realities but also invites us to explore and understand them more deeply.

Literary works, particularly poetry, possess the remarkable ability to convey deep and intricate messages. Poetry often serves as a powerful medium for authors to express their emotional experiences and social realities. According to Valls et al. in their article explain if symbols found in literary pieces can carry multiple meanings and can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the social and cultural contexts in which they are situated (Valls et al., 2022, p xx). This highlights the idea that poetry is not merely an aesthetic creation; it also functions as a critical tool for understanding and examining the social structures that shape our lives. By engaging with poetry, readers can gain insights into the complexities of human experience and the cultural dynamics at play, making it a valuable resource for both personal reflection and social critique.

Poetry, as a distinct literary form, possesses unique characteristics that set it apart from prose. One of the defining features of poetry is its use of rich and symbolic language, which enables writers to convey deeper meanings and evoke profound emotions. Ferguson notes that the symbols found in poetry can establish a powerful emotional connection between the reader and the text, allowing the reader to truly feel the experiences expressed by the author (Marrewijk, 2017, p 45). This idea can be applied to the poem *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin*, as it can be analyzed to reveal how the symbols utilized within the poem reflect the broader experiences of women. By examining these symbols, readers can gain insight into the complexities of women's lives and the societal contexts that shape their experiences.

This study utilizes the semiotic approach established by Charles Sanders Peirce, which provides a solid framework for analyzing the meanings of symbols within poetry. In his work, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, particularly in Volume 2, Chapter 2 (1931), Peirce proposed that symbols are composed of three essential elements: the representation, the object, and the interpretant. In the context of Zulfikar's poetry, the representation pertains to the symbols themselves, while the object refers to the meanings that are embedded within those symbols. The interpretant, in contrast, is the understanding that the reader gains from engaging with the poem. By applying this semiotic approach, the study aims to delve into and uncover the deeper meanings associated with the symbols in Zulfikar's work, thereby enhancing our understanding of the themes and emotions that his poetry conveys.

Muhammad Ali Zulfikar, the author of this poem, has a profound background in the literary field. He gained recognition as one of the top three finalists in a poetry competition focused on commemorating women's independence, organized by the Great Collection of Ireland in Indonesia. His literary works often address pressing social and cultural issues, particularly those concerning women. Zulfikar is celebrated for his sensitivity to social conditions and his ability to articulate women's experiences through powerful symbols in his poetry. His poem, *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin* was awarded 3rd runner-up in the poetry creation competition hosted by the Irish Embassy in Indonesia. This poem explicitly portrays the experiences of women within a patriarchal social and cultural framework, offering a profound perspective on the struggles faced by women against injustice.

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and oppression. Furthermore, the poem's use of rich language and strong symbolism allows for a deeper analysis of feminist meanings and themes, inviting readers to explore the complexities of women's experiences and the societal contexts that shape them.

Previous studies relevant to this topic was by Farras and Nurmaily (2020) which analyzed semiotics in Edgar Allan Poe's poem *Eldorado* providing a relevant framework. The research uses a semiotic approach to identify symbolic signs in poetry and relate them to social and cultural backgrounds. This research shows how semiotic analysis can reveal the deeper meanings of symbols in poetry, which can also be applied to Zulfikar's poetry to explore feminist themes. With this approach, researchers can understand how the symbols in Zulfikar's poems function in the context of feminism and reflect women's experiences. In addition, Krisna and Qur'Ani's (2021) research in *Social Criticism in Bouquet Poetry* by Taufik Ismail shows how poetry can function as a medium to convey social criticism, including gender and feminism issues. From the two studies, they analyzed the symbols in poetry that reflect the suffering and struggle of the people, which can be linked to the symbolism in Zulfikar's poem which depicts the experience of women in a broader social context. Thus, this study provides a perspective on how poetry can be used to convey feminist messages through symbols.

Previous studies has discussed the theme of feminism in literature, but there are still research gaps that need to be filled, especially in the context of contemporary poetry in Indonesia. Most of the existing research is more focused on classical authors or more famous works, while the works of new writers such as Ali Zulfikar have not been much explored. Thus, this study aims to fill this void by analyzing the poem *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin* and how these symbols reflect women's experiences in a broader social and cultural context.

The focus of this research is to explore the meaning of symbols in Zulfikar's poetry through Peirce's semiotic approach, as well as to understand how the symbols contribute to feminism. The benefits of this research include providing a deeper understanding of how poetry can be used as a tool to convey feminist messages, being a reference for other researchers interested in studying literary works with a feminist approach, providing new insights for readers about the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in society, and contributing to the development of feminist theories in the context of Indonesian literature.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the symbolic meanings present in Ali Zulfikar's poem *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin*, selected for its rich feminist symbolism and relevance to social issues surrounding women's experiences in a social cultural context. According to Creswell (2014, p 4), qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of complex social and cultural phenomena, making it an appropriate choice for this analysis.

Data collection was conducted using the reading and note-taking technique as recommended by Bowen (2009, p 28), which involved multiple readings of the poem to identify and highlight symbols that resonate with feminist themes. This method ensures that significant symbols are thoroughly examined and documented, capturing nuanced insights into the poem's symbolic language.

The analysis is grounded in the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, as outlined in his *Collected Papers* (1931), which categorizes signs into three essential components: representamen, object, and interpretant. In this context, representamen refers to the symbols used in the poem, while the object signifies the meanings embedded within these symbols; the interpretant is the understanding that the reader derives from engaging with the poem. By applying this semiotic approach, the study aims to uncover the deeper meanings behind the symbols in Zulfikar's work, thereby enhancing comprehension of the themes related to feminism and women's empowerment.

Data analysis follows the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994, p 12), consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, symbols identified in the poem are categorized based on their relevance to feminist themes, streamlining the data for focused analysis. The findings are then presented in analytical descriptions elucidating the meanings of the identified symbols, leading to conclusion drawing, which synthesizes insights gained from the analysis and reinforces the connection between the symbols in the poem and overarching feminist themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the poem *Perempuan Yang Memeram Sunyi Pada Jantung Angin* by Ali Zulfikar was analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach (19311). The results of the analysis show the existence of strong and profound symbols, which represent the experiences and struggles of women in the context of feminism. There are several main symbols found in the poem, which can be grouped into several categories based on their meaning and representation. The researcher found 15 data from this poem.

Pierce's semiotic table		
1.	Representation	<i>Pohon-pohon dan bunga</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, Line 1) Translated: Trees and flowers
	Object	The Strength and Resilience of Women, and the Beauty that Often Remains Hidden.
	Interpretant	<i>Pohon-pohon dan bunga</i> are often used as symbols to represent women. These symbols show that women possess incredible natural strength and resilience. However, in a patriarchal society, this strength and resilience are often overlooked or ignored. This reflects how women often have to hide their power behind a gentle and beautiful appearance. In the sign theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, these symbols can be seen as icons because they resemble the objects they represent – strong women who appear gentle.
2.	Representation	<i>Perang pada jantung angin.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 3) Translated: War within the heart of the wind
	Object	The Internal and External Struggles Faced by Women
	Interpretant	This symbol represents the various conflicts faced by women, including internal struggles that come from within themselves and external conflicts caused by pressures from their surroundings. It shows how women must fight against patriarchal norms that oppress and limit them. In this context, the symbol can be categorized as a cultural symbol because its meaning is shaped by conventions and agreements within society. In other words, the meaning of this symbol comes from the shared understanding present in that culture.
3.	Representation	<i>St. Brigid.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 4) Translated: St. Brigid
	Object	The Spiritual Strength and the Long History of Women's Unrecorded Struggles
	Interpretant	St. Brigid as a symbol represents the spiritual strength of women and the long history of their struggles that are often unacknowledged or unrecorded in official history. This symbol critiques how history, written within a patriarchal context, frequently overlooks or undermines the significant contributions made by women. In this sense, St. Brigid becomes a symbol whose meaning heavily relies on cultural and historical knowledge. This means that to fully understand this symbol, one must have an understanding of the cultural and historical context behind it.
4.	Representation	<i>Kertas kering</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 7) Translated: Dry paper
	Object	The Dry and Difficult Conditions Faced by Women
	Interpretant	<i>Kertas Kering</i> as a symbol represents the difficult conditions often faced by women in a patriarchal society. This symbol reflects how women frequently have to struggle hard in unsupportive and challenging situations. The dry paper

		illustrates that women often find themselves in harsh and arid conditions, where they must endure and strive to remain strong despite many difficulties. In this sense, dry paper can be considered an icon because it resembles the object it represents – dryness and hardship. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural understanding of women's struggles in facing unfavorable conditions.
5.	Representation	<i>Hujan Mawar</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 8) Translated: The rain of roses
	Object Interpretant	The Love and Sacrifice of Mothers Around the World <i>Hujan Mawar</i> symbolizes the love and sacrifice given by mothers around the world. This symbol shows how women, especially mothers, provide sincere love and support even when they face many difficulties and challenges in their lives. The rain of roses represents the tenderness and beauty of mothers, as well as their strength to continually give their best for their families. In this sense, the rain of roses can be considered an icon because it resembles the qualities it represents – tenderness and beauty found in mothers. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural knowledge and understanding of the role of mothers in society.
6.	Representation	<i>Mata seluruh ibu di dunia</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, lines 9-10) Translated: The eyes of mothers worldwide,
	Object Interpretant	Solidarity and the Collective Experiences of Women <i>Mata seluruh ibu di dunia</i> symbolize the solidarity and collective experiences of women. This symbol shows how women from different parts of the world share their life experiences and support one another. The eyes of these mothers reflect the unity and strong understanding among women, who often face similar challenges and difficulties. In this context, the eyes of all mothers become a symbol whose meaning heavily relies on cultural conventions regarding solidarity and collective experience. This means that the symbol reflects a shared understanding in culture about the importance of support and togetherness among women in facing various life situations.
7.	Representation	<i>Api Kecil</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 9) Translated: Small fire
	Object Interpretant	The Warmth and Support Given by Women to One Another <i>Api kecil</i> as a symbol represents the warmth and support that women give to one another. This symbol reflects the solidarity and collective strength that women possess when facing challenges and pressures from a patriarchal system. The small fire shows how women support each other and provide emotional warmth, helping them endure and thrive despite various difficulties. In this sense, the small fire can be considered an icon because it resembles the qualities it represents – warmth and support shared among women. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural understanding of the role of women in society.
8.	Representation	<i>Dingin yang memburu dada para hawa.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 10) Translated: Hunts the hearts of all women.
	Object Interpretant	The Pressures and Difficulties Faced by Women <i>Dingin yang memburu dada para hawa</i> is symbolizes the pressures and difficulties often faced by women in a patriarchal society. This symbol reflects how women must confront various heavy challenges that frequently suppress their emotions. The chill that hunts the heart illustrates the burdens that women must bear, often having to fight hard to overcome social obstacles and pressures. In this sense, the chill can be considered an icon because it resembles the object it represents the pressures and difficulties experienced by women. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural understanding of women's struggles in facing life's pressures and challenges.
9.	Representation	<i>Dewi danu</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 11) Translated: The Goddess Danu

	Object	The Strength of Women to Resist Oppression and Free Themselves
	Interpretant	<i>Dewi danu</i> is symbolizes the strength that women possess to resist all forms of oppression and free themselves from the shackles of patriarchy. This symbol shows that women have the power and ability to change their own fate and determine their life paths. Goddess Danu represents the courage and determination of women in facing various challenges and injustices present in society. In this context, Goddess Danu is a symbol whose meaning heavily relies on mythological and cultural knowledge. This means that to fully understand this symbol, one must have an understanding of the mythology and culture that underpin it.
10.	Representation	<i>Hari-hari buruk.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 12) Translated: The dark days
	Object	The Challenges and Obstacles Faced by Women
	Interpretant	<i>Hari-hari buruk</i> is symbolize the various challenges and obstacles faced by women in their struggle against the patriarchal system. This symbol shows how women must fight hard through many difficulties and barriers that often block their paths. Bad days reflect the reality that women frequently have to confront tough and stressful situations, yet they strive to overcome all these obstacles with determination and courage. In this context, bad days become a symbol whose meaning heavily relies on cultural conventions regarding challenges and hurdles. This means that the symbol reflects a shared understanding in culture about the importance of women's struggles in facing and overcoming various life difficulties.
11.	Representation	<i>Nyanyian daun-daun.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, lines 12-13) Translated: The song of leaves
	Object	The Peace and Tranquility Sought by Women
	Interpretant	<i>Nyanyian daun-daun</i> as a symbol represents women's efforts to seek peace and tranquility in their lives. This symbol reflects how women strive to find ways to achieve inner peace, even while facing pressures and challenges from the patriarchal system. The song of the leaves shows that women seek calm and serenity through various means, whether through self-reflection, meditation, or connection with nature. In this sense, the song of the leaves can be considered an icon because it resembles the object it represents – peace and tranquility, which is evoked by the gentle sound of leaves swaying in the wind. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural understanding of how women seek and find peace in their lives.
12.	Representation	<i>Dipatahkannya rantai-rantai</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, lines 14-15) Translated: breaking the chains that bind.
	Object	Liberation from Patriarchal Norms
	Interpretant	<i>Dipatahkannya rantai-rantai</i> is a symbolize liberation from the patriarchal norms that have constrained and limited women. This symbol shows how women fight hard to achieve freedom and equality in society. The broken chains represent women's efforts to free themselves from the shackles of unfair rules and traditions that have long oppressed them. In this context, the symbol heavily relies on cultural conventions regarding freedom and oppression. This means that the meaning of this symbol comes from a shared understanding in culture about the importance of freedom and the struggle against oppression. Thus, the broken chains serve as a visual representation of women's strength and determination to attain freedom and equality.
13.	Representation	<i>Terkamam diri sendiri</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 17) Translated: The claws of their own despair.
	Object	The Internal Struggles of Women Against Self-Doubt and Fear
	Interpretant	<i>Terkamam diri sendiri</i> as a symbol represents the internal struggles experienced by women in fighting self-doubt and fear influenced by patriarchal norms. This symbol reflects how women often have to confront and combat the fears and

		insecurities that arise from social and cultural pressures demanding them to meet certain standards. The self-clawing illustrates that women must work hard to overcome feelings of fear and self-doubt in order to achieve freedom and independence. In this context, the symbol heavily relies on cultural conventions regarding internal struggles, highlighting the importance for women to fight against and overcome the internal barriers that hinder them from reaching their full potential.
14.	Representation	<i>Napas hidup.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 18) Translated: The breath of life The Importance of Women's Role in Life <i>Napas hidup</i> as a symbol represents the importance of women's role in life. This symbol emphasizes that women are the source of life and the future, as they have the ability to give birth and nurture new generations. The breath of life reflects the vitality and energy that women possess, which is crucial for the continuation of life. In this sense, the breath of life can be considered an icon because it resembles the object it represents – vitality and life itself. This symbol reminds us that without the role of women, life would not continue, and the future would not come to fruition. The meaning of this symbol heavily relies on cultural understanding of the importance of women's roles in creating and sustaining life.
15.	Representation	<i>Masa depan yang telah lama ditundukkannya.</i> (Zulfikar, 2024, line 19) Translated: The future they have long subdued. The Struggle of Women for a Better Future <i>Masa depan yang telah lama ditundukkannya</i> symbolizes the long struggle that women have undertaken to achieve a better and more equal future. This symbol shows that women have a clear vision and great strength to change their own future and society as a whole. Women have long fought against various forms of injustice and discrimination to create a fairer and more equitable world. In this context, the subdued future becomes a symbol whose meaning heavily relies on cultural conventions regarding struggle and hope for the future. This means that the symbol reflects a shared understanding in culture about the importance of women's struggle to achieve equality and justice in the future.

The symbols in Zulfikar's poem have complex and layered meanings. For example, the symbols of *trees and flowers* represent not only strength and beauty but also hint at the many layers of women's identities that society often overlooks. In a feminist context, this suggests that women have potential and power that are frequently ignored. These symbols encourage readers to look deeper and recognize that women's identities are not one-dimensional; they consist of various interconnected aspects that contribute to their rich experiences.

Through the symbol of war present in *the heart of the wind*, the poem strongly critiques the patriarchal structures that oppress women. This symbol raises awareness of the conflicts and challenges women face in their struggle for equality. From a feminist perspective, this critique is very relevant, highlighting the importance of addressing the injustices and discrimination women encounter. The emphasis on the symbol of war indicates that this struggle is significant and requires resilience and courage to change the existing conditions.

Additionally, Zulfikar's poem highlights the representation of women in history through the symbol of St. Brigid, reminding us of the need to recognize the contributions of women that are often overlooked in official narratives. Many women's experiences and stories are not recorded in formal history, and by bringing this symbol to light, Zulfikar gives a voice to the marginalized. On the other hand, the symbol of the rain of roses depicts women's experiences as mothers, showcasing their strength and sacrifices in supporting their families. In many cultures, the role of mothers is often underestimated, and this poem seeks to elevate and honor that position. Through these symbols, Zulfikar's poem not only celebrates women's strength but also encourages us to appreciate and understand their struggles and life journeys.

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Ali Zulfikar's poem "Perempuan yang Memeram Sunyi pada Jantung Angin" effectively conveys a feminist message through powerful symbols. Zulfikar creates not only beautiful literature but also uses this poem as a tool to express women's struggles in a society still influenced by patriarchal norms. By analyzing the symbols in the poem, we can see the often-overlooked experiences of women and the importance of their representation in various social and cultural aspects. These symbols invite readers to understand the challenges women face and to value their diversity and strength. Thus, this poem is not just a work of art but also a call for social change, emphasizing the need for women's voices and experiences to be acknowledged in society. Overall, Zulfikar's poem contributes to the discussion of feminism and gender justice, inspiring hope for better change in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze the poem "Perempuan yang Memeram Sunyi pada Jantung Angin" by Ali Zulfikar in the context of the feminist message conveyed through its symbols. The findings indicate that this poem serves not only as a literary work but also as a tool to voice women's struggles in a patriarchal society. The analyzed symbols provide deep insights into women's experiences and emphasize the importance of their representation in a broader social and cultural context. Thus, Zulfikar's poem successfully encourages readers to reflect on and appreciate the strength and diversity of women's identities. Based on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed: first, future researchers should explore other literary works that address feminist themes to enhance understanding of gender issues in a broader context; second, educators should incorporate poetry and literary works that highlight gender issues into the curriculum, allowing students to better understand and appreciate women's struggles through literature. Additionally, further research could develop new theories regarding the representation of women in literature, focusing on works by authors from diverse cultural backgrounds. In this way, discussions about feminism and gender justice can continue to evolve, raising awareness of the importance of women's voices in society. These suggestions are expected to contribute positively to research and practice in the fields of literature and gender studies.

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