

SYMBOLISM IN SOUNDTRACKS OF *THE LION KING MOVIE*

Sri Susilawatin^{1*}, Baharuddin², Eka Fitriana³

^{1 2 3} English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Mataram, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: sri.susilawatin@gmail.com

Abstract: The research was aimed to find out the kind of symbol in soundtracks of The Lion King Movie in 2019. This research follows a descriptive and qualitative approach with a purpose to identify, describe and analyze the phenomenon of symbolism. The data was taken from seven songs of soundtracks of film The Lion King Movie in 2019 containing symbolism; the data was analyzed along with Jung's (1964) theory of symbolism, and semiotics theory to interpret the data. The discussion showed that there are found 24 symbols in seven soundtracks of The Lion King Movie in 2019, which are divided into two kinds; conventional symbol and contextual symbol. There are 18 conventional symbols in seven soundtracks, while there are only 6 contextual symbols that exist in five soundtracks of The Lion King Movie. The division of types depends on the situations. It is portrayed through scene by scene in the different situations in the movie in which it impacts its meaning.

Keywords: Soundtrack; Symbolism

Received: Sep 6, 2020

Accepted: Feb 14, 2021

Published: Jun 3, 2021

How to cite (in APA style):

Susilawatin, S., Baharuddin, & Fitriana, E. (2021). Symbolism in soundtracks of The Lion King Movie. *JEEF (Journal of English Education Forum)*, 1(1), 29-35.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is an artistic writing as an expression of human feelings, experiences, ideas, spirit or beliefs (Subhan et al, 2019). Literature is a place where the authors can express many things in the form of literary works such as poetry, song lyrics and novels. Nowadays song lyrics are the most widely enjoyed in literary work. Awe (2003) stated that song lyrics are an expression of a person about something that has been seen, heard or experienced. In expressing experiences, the authors choose beautiful attractive and distinctive words and combine it into a lyric. Pradopo (1990) in Daewoo (2012) said that song lyrics are similar to poetry which is created based on expressions, expressions of feelings that are based on experience and based on human life. It should be known what the poem means when the song's lyrics definition is considered the same as poetry. The words of the lyric are occasionally difficult to interpret because the author does not directly share their ideas to the point instead he has symbols. Through symbolism the author has a freedom to add double meaning to his work which cannot easily be understood by the audience unless they focus on finding further to know. In the Oxford dictionary the word "symbol" means an image, object, etc. that suggests more than itself or refers to something else. In everyday life we find so many songs with the lyrics that imply indirect meanings. Even the new songs were sometimes adapted from the movie or in other words the song was deliberately created specifically as a soundtrack of a particular movie. Of course the lyrics of the song have a meaning which is related to the movie. Talking about the meaning of lyrics, it is not conveyed directly but through symbols or signs. To be able to enjoy a song of course we must understand the meaning of the lyrics of the song first, the submission of implied meanings through the symbol then we have to learn what the symbol is.

Symbolism is the use of symbols that aim to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that differ from their literal significance (Nuriadi, 2016). The authors use symbolism to connect certain things that initially might seem insignificant with more general themes. For example, an author can use a particular colour but that is not merely a colour, but suggests a deeper meaning. Symbols can change in their meaning depending on the background. The symbolic meaning of an object or action is understood by when, where and how it is used. It also depends on who reads it.

Based on Jung's theory, symbol is a term, name, or image, which is quite prevalent in everyday life, but has a specific connotation beyond its real and conventional meanings (Jung, 1964:6). It refers to something vague, incomprehensible, or hidden for example the monument of a train civilization featuring a double-edged axe; it depicts objects that we know, but the symbolic cues contained behind them we don't know precisely. In other words something becomes symbolic when a word or object suggests something else beyond its near and real meaning.

1. Types of Symbol

A literary symbol can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings. Literary critics typically draw a distinction between "conventional" (or "universal") symbols, and "contextual" (or "literary") symbols.

1. The meaning of "conventional" (or "universal") symbols is symbols that have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture. Writers use conventional symbols to reinforce meaning. Some conventional symbols are the Christian cross, the Star of David, a swastika, or a nation's flag.
2. In contrast, "contextual" (or "Literary") symbols are aesthetically contingent, characteristic of particular artists, and only emerge in context of a particular literary work. A literary or contextual symbol can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings. Such symbols go beyond conventional symbols; they gain their symbolic meaning within the context of a specific story.

Literary work is a reflection of the community, therefore literary work has a symbolic meaning to be revealed with a semiotic approach (Lustyantie, 2012). We cannot predict the meaning of a work without the underlying theory; therefore we need semiotics as the fundamental. Eco (1976) as cited in Berger (2010), stated that Semiotics relates to all things that can be interpreted as signs. A sign is anything that can be attached as a significant replacement for something else. It means that the semiotics themselves were born amid society and become unified.

In semiotics there are terms of denotations and connotations that play a very important role. Based on Berger (2010) the meaning of the denotations is straightforward, and can be referred to as a representation of a sign. Thus, if we look at an object, for example Wayang, then the meaning of the denotation contained is "This Wayang is 67centimetress long and has a width of 31centimetress. Wayang was first created 1500 BCE". The meaning of the context will differ slightly and will be associated with the culture implied (Berger, 2010). In other words an explanation of the implied meanings therein will be different and more widespread. The meaning will be attributed to the Indonesian culture, about the imagery to be transmitted

and the consequences caused, and others. Semioticians thus not only study what a symbol implies, but also how it got its meaning and how it functions to make meaning in society. Symbols allow the human brain continuously to create meaning using sensory input and decode symbols through both denotations and connotation.

In this case the researcher took the soundtracks on *The Lion King Movie* as the object of the study based on several reasons and consideration: First, The soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie* contains many symbols or signs that must be considered and comprehended thoroughly by the listeners in order to get the message or meaning from the song. Secondly, this movie has several soundtracks that contain many symbols. Thirdly, symbolism is part of literature since literature never escapes from human life. Literature particularly symbolism is not much learned by people when it is closely related to our daily lives. For that reason the researchers are very interested in lifting the title of *Symbolism in Soundtracks of the Lion King Movie*.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method because the researcher focused on findings symbols and interpreted its meaning. Moleong (2017) said that, qualitative research is a study that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research e.g., attitudes, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistic, and by descriptions in terms of words and language, in a specific context that is natural and by utilizing various natural methods. So, qualitative researchers investigate meanings, interpretations, symbols, and the processes and relations of social life. This research applies the theory of symbolism by Jung (1964) and theory of semiotics by Saussure theory in Berger (2010) to interpret it. Using this theory is expected to help English learners and listeners to understand deeper and find the symbolism applied to both education and daily life.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are two types of symbol found which are conventional symbols and contextual symbols. The division into types depends on the situations. It is portrayed through scene by scene in the different situations in which it impacts its meaning. The meaning of conventional symbols is symbols that have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture. While contextual symbols can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings. Such symbols go beyond conventional symbols; they gain their symbolic meaning within the context of a specific story. The following are symbols found in soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie*;

Conventional Symbol

The Sun

In line 10 there is a piece of lyric “*from the day we arrive on the planet, and blinking step into the sun*”, a phrase *the sun* has the implied meaning. The sun commonly known as the star that shines in the sky during the day and gives the earth heat and light. In ancient times many nations worshiped the sun in religious settings as an example in ancient Turkish myths, Mithras was the sun god who was believed to be the Aryans in India, Persia, and the Turans. This god is believed to be up to six centuries, spread from Iran, Egypt, and Rome, Greece to

England. The Persians called it the sun god, light, truth, the universe and human creator. While In another history it is known that ancient Egypt, which stood thousands of years BC, was a sun worshipping community. One of the ancient Egyptian kings who were known to be very loyal to *Lord Ra* (sun god) was Ramses II. When governing in 1279-1213, he developed the sun worship sect. Meanwhile, in this lyric *the sun* symbolizes the lion king who is strong as the god sun, and the king for various kinds of animals in Pride Lands.

In the film, Muphasa is a king who is greatly admired by all the people of pride lands, even enemies (herds of wolves) subservient to Muphasa. As exempted in the scene of the song "Circle of Life", in the morning, when sunrise appears, all the inhabitants of the Pride Lands race eastwards to "the sun", where the king, Muphasa is about to introduce his son to the public. The lyrics read "From the day we arrive on the planet, and blinking step into the sun", Phrase "The sun" in this context actually refers to The Lion King, portrayed the enthusiasm of the inhabitants of the pride lands on the run east it shows how much they respect their King. Their respect comes from the belief that The Lion is the most powerful, capable of keeping them from enemy attacks. On the basis of this sense of security, pride lands residents glorify and worship lions as their kings. As with the sun worshippers, they believe that the sun is a protector for them. This symbol belongs to a conventional symbol. Because it's been a long time since people recognized the power of the sun.

Wing

On "I Just Can't Wait To Be King" song, in line 20 there is a piece of lyric "*I wouldn't hang about... The Aaagh! This child is getting wildly out of wing*" the word "Wing". Wings relate to cognitive abilities, imagination, mind, freedom and victory. In the Greek Hermes has winged heels, traveller's coat of arms and messengers, dreams, impulses, movements. The Greeks represented love and victory with wings. According to Plato, wings represent a symbol of intelligence, which is why some fabulous animals are winged. In this context, "Wing" is included into the conventional symbol seen through the scene when Zazu is mad because Simba manages to trick him; Simba is so agile and smart, so that Zazu said "*I wouldn't hang about... The Aaagh! This child is getting wildly out of wing*", Zazu felt annoyed because he lost. Simba insists he wants to go anywhere without an escort. In this scene, Simba's curiosity at the boundary outside the pride lands, which makes him trick Zazu by passing and jumping over a group of animals. That works; it shows that Simba has intelligence.

In Greek mythology, it is known that the god Hermes is the messenger god. Hermes is also considered an inventor of language and speech, translator, liar, thief, and con artist. These roles make hermes an ideal representative figure for hermeneutics. One of Hermes' signature features is "Wings", as it uses winged heels at the time of sending messages. As the messenger, Hermes, also considered an inventor of language and speech, translator, wild, thief, and con artist. These roles make Hermes an ideal representative figure for Hermeneutics (the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts). One of Hermes' signatures is "Wings", as he uses winged heels when he sends messages. The Greek representation of the "wings" as a symbol of intelligence begins with the mythology above. If we refer to the conventional symbol, the Greeks are a society, and they recognize this symbol. This is why the symbol "Wing" in this song belongs to the conventional symbol.

Hakuna Matata

When little Simba was forced to leave the pride lands, he brought with him his grief and guilt. Sadly, because of Mufasa, his beloved father is dead. He is feeling guilty, because of his father's death in order to save himself from the rampage of a herd of bulls running around in panic. Even little Simba doesn't care if he almost dies in the wilderness. Were it not for the appearance of Pumba and Timon, his body would have been torn apart by a group of Votive birds, Timon and Pumba as his saviour, who then took him home with them in the beautiful wilderness with various animals living inside. And this is where Simba are taught about the philosophy they hold tightly "Hakuna Matata".

On "Hakuna Matata" song, in the first line there is a piece of lyric sung by Timon; "*Hakuna Matata! What a wonderful phrase!*" a phrase "*Hakuna Matata*" comes from the Swahili language which means "don't worry" which is later adapted into the Lion King movie. Hakuna Matata has a symbol of beam notes on the music. As for the Hakuna Matata symbolizes luck in Africa. The Africans are accustomed to use the Hakuna Matata symbol that is why the symbol is included in the conventional symbol. It is recognized by society, and also has the same implied meaning both in society and the context. In the Lion King Movie, Hakuna Matata symbolizes "*Fortune*" also for Timon, Pumba and Simba. Over the time, Simba grew up not as much as a lion preying on antelopes or deer as a meal, but he grew up with a habit of eating insects living on land or logs as a daily menu. That's what all the wilderness dwellers taught him. Simba is really not worried, even though he is far from where he came from, pride lands. The philosophy really worked on him.

Contextual Symbol

The Planet

On "Circle of Life" song, in line 9 there is a piece of lyric "*from the day we arrive on the planet*" a phrase *the planet* is one of the symbols. The planet is commonly known as a large object in space that moves around star (such as the sun) and receives light from it; the planet of our solar system i.e. Earth/Venus/Mars. Furthermore the planet used to mean "*the world*" and it commonly symbolizes "*Life*" especially when talking about the environment. As we know the earth is a place for various types of living things. The scene seen in this lyric passage is of various animals walking and running towards Pride Rocks, where the lion king will introduce his new-born son, future king, successor himself, Simba.

A phrase "*the planet*" in the circle of life lyric is symbolizes "*diversity*", this belongs to contextual symbol because the author refers to a variety of living things that are live side by side without attacking each other, whereas we know in real life animals have no sense and generally they pounce on each other. Meanwhile in *The Lion King Movie*, a pride lands is a place where various kinds of creatures coexist which live in peace because of the protection and rule of their king. In real life, "*the planet*" is identical to earth while the earth is symbolized as "*life*" because creatures can only live on earth. We coexist with differences, but on the condition that we are one population, that is, a human population, even if humans are one population, they are more often in conflict, war and murder. While in the life of pride lands, all animals even with various populations can live peacefully. That's why "the planet" that refers to the pride lands symbolizes diversity, it is more tolerant than in humans themselves. The

meaning of "the planet" as "diversity" applies only to this context, certainly based on the story. That's why this symbol belongs to the contextual symbol.

Leonine

In Line 9 on "Be Prepared" song there is a word "*Leonine*" which comes from "*yes Leonine times are changin'* ". *Leonine* is associated with a lion or commonly known as a herd of lions (a designation for herd lions). In *The Lion King Movie*, *leonine* is a herd that holds power over the Pride lands. While Scar, one of the herd of lions separating himself because he was ambitious to be king in place of king Muphasa, this was seen in the piece of the lyrics "*Yes, leonine times are a-changin'* ". Just like in real life, the king only can give the throne to his eldest son. While scar itself is the brother of king Muphasa, so it is impossible for Scar to ascend to the throne. Based on the case above, "*Leonine*" is symbolized "*Royal family*".

The Royal family is the title given to the ruling family. As a form of appreciation for the dedication to the State, however, in common parlance members of any family who reigns by hereditary right are often referred to as royalty or "royals". It is also customary in some circles to refer to the extended relations of a deposed monarch and his or her descendants as a royal family for example i.e. in countries that are still in the form of Monarchies; British, European, Spanish, Swedish, Belgian, etc. This symbol is included into contextual symbol, as the movie adapted the conflict of the kingdom in real life; it is same with the *leonine* on this movie, which as the royal family because they are the ruling in the Pride Lands

The Heaven

On "spirit" song in line 10 there is a piece of lyrics "*spirit, watch the heavens open (open). Spirit, can you hear it callin'? (callin) yeah*" a phrase The Heaven, in this scene, Muphasa appears behind a cloud up the heavens. People especially who is believed in religion commonly equate the function of the heavens (sky) as heaven; they believe that the deceased will surely live in heaven, as for heaven is above. Regarding "*The Heaven*" symbol of peace, end, harmony and satisfaction. It is something that no one has experienced. But everyone wishes to experience in their life. Heaven is a symbol that reminds of good deeds and alerts us from doing wrong things. It is also related to inner guilt that makes fearful as lack the guts to enter the gate of heaven. In this case "*heaven*" symbolizes Simba's father, "*Muphasa*". Because at the time when Simba is trauma, feeling scared, had no direction and wanted to give up. The spirit of his deceased father appeared in front of him as a reminder that he was the true king.

"*Muphasa*" is symbolized as "*Heaven*" because in this scene Simba's father tried to warn Simba to return to the pride lands and take his throne back. This lyric confirms that Muphasa calls Simba, it's like a call of duty; it's time for Simba to take back his place. This symbol belongs to the contextual symbol, because only in this movie that *the lion* symbolizes *heaven*, both serving as reminders. In real life "*heaven*" warned human, while "*Muphasa*" warned his son, Simba.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings and data analysis, there were 24 symbols found in seven soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie* in 2019, with two types of symbols which are conventional symbol and contextual symbol. Conventional symbol has meanings that are widely recognize by a

society or culture, and there are 18 conventional symbols found in seven soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie*, which are; (in “Circle of Life”; *The sun, Circle, The path*), (in “I Just Can’t Wait To Be King”; *Little hair, Roar, Wing, The Spotlight*), (in “Be Prepared”; *Teeth*), (in “Hakuna Matata”; *Hakuna Matata*), (in “The Lion Sleep Tonight”; *The village, The Lion, The Jungle*), (in “Can You Feel The Love Tonight”; *Twilight, The air, Love*), (in “Spirit”; *The wind, Flame, and The stars*). Meanwhile, contextual symbols are aesthetically contingent, characteristic of particular artists, and only emerge in context of particular literary work. This type only exists in five soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie*, that is only six symbols, which are; (in “Circle of Life”; *The planet, Sapphire sky*), (in “I Just Can’t Wait To Be King”; *Mighty king*), (in “Be Prepared”; *Leonine*), (in “Hakuna Matata”; *Sensitive soul*), (in “Spirit”; *The heaven*). So, it can be concluded that conventional symbol is mostly dominant used in seven soundtracks of *The Lion King Movie* in 2019.

REFERENCE

- Awe, M. (2017). *Iwan Fals: nyanyian di tengah kegelapan*. Ombak.
- Berger, A. A. (2010). *Pengantar semiotika: Tanda-tanda dalam kebudayaan modern* (new ed.) Penerbit Tiara Wacana.
- Daewoo. (2012, January). Pengertian lirik lagu. 1412. <https://daemoo.blogspot.com/2012/01/pengertian-lirik-lagu.html>
- Jung, C. G. (2018). *Manusia dan simbol-simbol*. Basabasi.
- Lustyantie, N. (2012). Pendekatan semiotik model Roland Barthes dalam karya sastra Prancis. *Seminar Nasional FIB UI*. 1-15. Retrieve from <http://pps.unj.ac.id/publikasi/dosen/ninuk.lustyantie/16.pdf>
- Lustyantie, N. (2012, December). *Pendekatan semiotik model Roland Barthes dalam karya sastra Prancis*. Seminar Nasional FIB UI. <http://pps.unj.ac.id/publikasi/dosen/ninuk.lustyantie/16.pdf>
- Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (36th ed.). Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nuriadi. (2016). *Theory of literature: An introduction*. Arga Puji Press.
- Subhan, Y. A. & Calvin, J. F. (2019). Symbol analysis in The Who song selective lyrics. *Eralingua: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Asing dan Sastra*, 3(1). 1-9.