

Natural Methapors of Symbols and Social Impact in Sakura Song Lyrics By Ikimono Gakari

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Abstract. Music is something that is universal and does not know the class of society, anyone can appreciate music even though he is not educated in the field of music. Music is used by many people as a medium to express themselves, as well as entertainment because it contains lyrics that match the emotions that are being felt by someone. In this study, the author will discuss the metaphorical description of natural symbols and how the social impact of the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari on Japanese society. This study uses a semiotic approach. The method used is descriptive analysis. The source of data in this study is the lyrics of the song sakura. The data is then analyzed and interpreted, after that the data is presented in the form of a description and then concluded. The results of this study are natural symbol metaphors consisting of sakura (cherry blossoms), haru (spring), and sora (sky). The social impact of the lyrics of the sakura song is that although these lyrics tell about someone who is left behind by a lover in spring when the cherry blossoms are falling a lot. But cherry blossoms for Japanese people actually make many people happy because they can do hanami, picnic with family or eat together, dance and sing together under the blooming cherry blossoms. Cherry blossoms that appear in spring have a very important influence on Japanese people's lives, such as strengthening affection with family, making friendships closer, establishing good communication with colleagues/company partners and others. His short life and frailty carry deep meaning to life. If it is associated with Buddhism, then Sakura becomes a symbol of mortal life. Sakura can only bloom beautifully in a very short time like human life is beautiful but runs short. The cherry tree has also become a symbol for renewal and rebuilding after the death and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami.

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1 Introduction

Music is something that is universal and does not know the class of society, anyone can appreciate music even though he is not educated in the field of music. Music is used by many people as a medium to express themselves (can be in the form of ideas or values that they believe in), as well as entertainment because it contains lyrics that match the emotions that are being felt by someone, such as happy, sad, angry, jealousy, and so on [1]. If the music in poetry is formed by words and word composition, the music in songs is formed by elements such as melody, rhythm, and harmony. Apart from that, both of them have the same text, the basic similarity between poetry and song, which is that they both have musical elements. The elements of music are rhythm, melody, and harmony. So, the delivery of poetry through music is one way to make it easier for readers to understand a poem [2]. A song is a work of art consisting of elements of melody, lyrics or poetry, and notation [3]. A person's preferences in listening to music differ depending on the individual's personality characteristics, problems, and/or specific needs that are reflected in the music. Based on this opinion, a fan also likes music or songs whose stories in the song represent his feelings [4].

Japanese music or J-Pop (Japanese Pop) has many unique and interesting genres. One of the Japanese band groups that has many fans and quality music is Ikimono Gakari. Ikimono Gakari is a Pop-rock band consisting of 3 members. The band was formed in Kanagawa Prefecture in February 1999 by Hotaka Yamashita and Yoshiki Mizuno as an indie based band, and Kiyoe Yoshioka joined as vocalist in December of the same year. The word Ikimono-gakari (生き物) refers to a group of children who are responsible for looking after plants and animals in Japanese elementary schools. On March 15, 2006, the band released their first single entitled "Sakura", produced by Masanori Shimada. The single managed to peak at number 17 on the Oricon weekly charts for 31 weeks. The single also reached number 182 on the annual chart for 2006. "Sakura" was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of Japan (digital download single). The single was also certified gold for physical copies shipped in May 2011, and double platinum for download on ringtones. There are 4 songs in this single, including: "Sakura", "Hot Milk" (ホットミルク Hotto Miruku), "Sotsugyō Shashin" (卒業写真 "Graduation Photo"), and "Sakura" (Instrumental). The song which became the main song as well as the most famous is Sakura. The song Sakura was written by Yoshiki Mizuno who is the guitarist and leader of the band Ikimono Gakari. The song "Sakura" is about a person who is left behind by a lover in the spring when the cherry blossoms are falling a lot.

In metaphor, it is formed from a series of words. These words are metaphorical markers in the form of symbols and symbols. Symbols are words that contain lexical meanings so that their reference meanings do not refer to various possibilities, denotative meanings; Symbols are words that have multiple or connotative meanings, that meaning must be interpreted so that semantic features can be determined through the projection (refraction) rule. Symbols can be in the form of basic words, task words (linkage markers), or invented words, while symbols are words in the form of figurative words that mark metaphors. Understanding the meaning in the symbol is mutually agreed upon between the speaker (author) and the recipient (reader or listener) which requires the acceptance of the meaning based on the knowledge possessed by the recipient or listener. Symbols are the basic elements that make up metaphors, while symbols appear after being involved in the context, giving rise to presuppositions which can then be determined with adequate implicatures. There are 3 kinds of symbols, namely blank symbols, natural symbols and private symbols. Metaphors with Natural Symbols are if the words created express symbols of natural reality as a projection of life. This symbol is in the form of animal life, phenomena of water, air, plants, and soil. [5]. In this study, the author will discuss the metaphorical description of

natural symbols and how the lyrics impact the Japanese society the social impact of the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari on Japanese society.

2 Methods

This study uses a semiotic approach initiated by C. S. Peirce. The method used is descriptive analysis. Human life is characterized by a "mixing of signs". That is, every day humans are always associated with signs and it is the task of semiotics to identify, document and classify or classify existing signs and how to use them in representative activities (representing something) [6]. Signs have various types based on the relationship between the sign and the signifier. The three main types of signs are icons, indexes and symbols [7]. The word symbol also comes from the Greek, namely *symbollon* or *symballo* which means meaningful or memorable. Arbitrary symbols or symbols – changing or not fixed and conventional can also be referred to as language signs. There are three kinds of symbols, namely:

- a. Blank Symbol; If words are used as metaphorical symbols, their meanings are often used and are known in general.
- b. Natural Symbol; If the spoken words use natural reality as a projection material for life, in the form of animal life, phenomena of water, soil, plants, and air.
- c. Private Symbol; If the words expressed have a special meaning and are used to evoke uniqueness in their work [8].

3 Discussion and Result

Words that express symbols of natural reality as a projection of life. The symbol can be in the form of animal life, water, air, forest phenomena, and so on.

The following are the lyrics to the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari.

- (1) さくら ひらひら 舞い降りて落ちて
揺れる 想いのたけを 抱きしめた
君と 春に 願ひし あの夢は
今も見えているよ さくら舞い散る
- (2) 電車から 見えたのは いつかのおもかげ
ふたりで通った 春の大橋
卒業の ときが来て 君は故郷(まち)を出た
色づく川辺に あの日を探すの
- (3) それぞれの道を選び ふたりは春を終えた
咲き誇る明日(みらい)は あたしを焦らせて
小田急線の窓に 今年もさくらが映る
君の声が この胸に 聞こえてくるよ
- (4) さくら ひらひら 舞い降りて落ちて
揺れる 想いのたけを 抱きしめた
君と 春に 願ひし あの夢は
今も見えているよ さくら舞い散る
- (5) 書きかけた 手紙には 「元気であるよ」と
小さな嘘は 見透かされるね
めぐりゆく この街も 春を受け入れて
今年もあの花が つぼみをひらく
- (6) 君がいない日々を超えて あたしも大人になっていく

- こうやって全て忘れていくのかな
「本当に好きだったんだ」 さくらに手を伸ばす
この想いが 今 春に つつまれていくよ
- (7) さくら ひらひら 舞い降りて落ちて
揺れる 想いのたけを 抱き寄せた
君が くれし 強き あの言葉は
今も 胸に残る さくら舞いゆく
- (8) さくら ひらひら 舞い降りて落ちて
揺れる 想いのたけを 抱きしめた
遠き 春に 夢見し あの日々は
空に消えていくよ
- (9) さくら ひらひら 舞い降りて落ちて
春のその向こうへと歩き出す
君と 春に 誓いし この夢を 強く
胸に抱いて さくら舞い散る

3.1 Natural Symbol

The Natural Symbols contained in the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari are:

1. さくら(Sakura)(the cherry blossoms)

The word (Sakura) is found in all of the above stanzas, except in the second and fifth stanzas. This symbol is the word that appears most often, besides that this symbol was also chosen as the title of the song in the lyrics of the song. Sakura is the representative flower of Japan, this flower has been popular since ancient times. There are many varieties such as Yamazakura, Satozakura, and Oshimazakura, and there are also many horticultural varieties. Currently, many Yoshino cherry trees are planted. The flowers bloom in spring and are pink or white. Since ancient times, cherry blossoms have been the subject of waka poetry. When referring to cherry blossoms, it is also known as Kazashigusa, Adanagusa, and Tamukegusa. The flowers are salted and used for Sakurayu, the leaves are salted and used for Sakuramochi, and the sweet cherries are edible [9]. Cherry blossoms are flowers that are most often associated with the country of Japan, even this flower is symbolized as the country of Japan. The various meanings held by Japanese people regarding Sakura Flowers, make Japanese people celebrate the blooming of Sakura Flowers which is called the Hanami festival. In the festival, all Japanese people feast in order and dissolve in happiness. The meaning of cherry blossoms for Japanese society itself is quite deep. Cherry blossoms for Japanese people are a symbol of life, death and renewal philosophically symbolized as the cycle of life. Philosophically, which is said to be a cycle of life, it means that where there is happiness, it ends with sadness, where there is birth, it ends with death. This is in harmony with the spiritual side where life is short but beautiful. In addition, Sakura is also symbolized as memories, happiness and farewell.

In the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari, sakura has a symbol of separation and memories. The symbol of separation is evidenced in the second stanza, where it is told that after high school graduation, the woman left the city and it was the same as leaving the man. The lyrics read卒業のときが来て君は故郷を出た (Graduation time came, and you left this city). At that moment, the cherry blossoms were blooming and falling, as evidenced in the first stanza, namely (The

cherry blossom petals fall down) and 今も見えているよさくら舞い散る (Even now, the cherry blossoms are still visible. scattered). In the first and second stanzas there is a farewell symbol where the atmosphere of high school graduation is depicted. In Japan, high school graduation is usually held in April, which is spring, and at that time the cherry blossoms are in full bloom. High school graduation and the blooming of cherry blossoms signify the moment of farewell for high school students who have graduated and are preparing to move to the next level. In the song, it is told that after graduation the woman chooses to leave the city, which also means having to part with the male character. From there, it can be proven that the symbol has the meaning of separation. Then the symbol in the form of memories can be proven in verse 1, namely 君と春 (The dream with you in the spring that I hoped for, even now I can see the cherry blossoms scattered). Then verse 3 is 小田急線の窓に今年もさくらが映る (In the window of the train on the Odakyuu line, this year's cherry blossoms are also pictured). In stanza 5, namely 今年もあの花がつぼみをひらく (This year the flowers will open their buds again), here the word さくら is not mentioned directly, but there is a pronoun in the form of 花がつぼ (Flower bud). Then in stanzas 4 and 7, the lyrics are almost the same as verse 1. In the lyrics of the song, it describes a symbol of memory, namely when the boy sees the scattered cherry blossoms, he immediately remembers his memories with his girlfriend who had left the city. The memories are in the form of wishes/dreams, the voice of the girl, as well as the words that boys always remember from their female friends. From this explanation, the symbol in the lyrics of the song *Sakura* by Ikimono Gakari is implied or has a hidden meaning behind it.

2. 春 (はる) (Haru) (Spring)

The symbol (Spring) is also quite dominant in the lyrics of the song, this symbol appears in all stanzas except the seventh stanza. This symbol has a relationship with the previous symbol, namely the symbol (Sakura). Spring and cherry blossoms are indeed two things that are related and cannot be separated from each other in Japan. Therefore, the meaning between spring and cherry blossoms seems quite similar. But in spring, not only cherry blossoms bloom, there are various other types of flowers that are no less beautiful that also bloom including Tsubaki (Camellia), Suisen (Daffodil), Nanohara (Rape blossom), Fuji (Wisteria), Tsutsuji (Azalea), etc. These flowers have different growing periods, some even longer than cherry blossoms. To take advantage of this moment, Japanese people also hold many celebrations/festivals that are always held when spring arrives, in addition, in spring, it is the time when graduation, school holidays, and new student admissions take place. Therefore, spring has its own meaning for Japanese people.

Spring is hope entwined in mind, body and soul. In spring, nature conspires with biology and psychology to trigger the basic needs that underlie hope: attachment, mastery, survival, and spirituality. That is, spring has a strong bond with one's hopes / desires [10]. This can be seen from the lyrics of the song *Sakura* by Ikimono Gakari, the first and fourth stanzas which read 君と春 (Dreams with you in the spring that I hope for), verse 8 which reads 遠き春に夢見しあの日は、 (The day I dreamed of in that distant spring, now disappears in the air), then verse 9 which reads 君と春に誓いしこの夢を強く (Clutching tightly to the dream I promised in that spring). In the lyric quote, the song shows the symbol of spring in the form of hope, namely the boy who always remembers the hopes/dreams he made with his girlfriend in spring, but since the girl left, the boy began to doubt that hope and intend just to forget it, he thought if his girlfriend must have forgotten

that hope. But in the end, the man held on to this hope and believed that one day he would be able to grant it, either with his girlfriend, or he alone would fight for it. From this explanation, the symbol in the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari is implied or has a hidden meaning behind it.

3. 空 (そら) (Sora) (The Sky)

The symbol (Sky) only appears once in the lyrics of the song, namely in verse 8 which reads (The day I dreamed of in the distant spring, has now disappeared in the sky) . The sky is always depicted as something beautiful, but far away. The sky is often associated with someone's dreams or aspirations. There is even a saying that says "Reach for your dreams as high as the sky". The sky as a vast expanse of space that stretches far above often motivates dreamers to achieve their dreams, but sometimes the fact that the sky is too high and difficult to reach makes people give up and just let go of their dreams. In the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari, it is depicted a male character who makes a dream with his girlfriend in spring, but after his girlfriend leaves, the boy doubts that dream, even at one point he intends to forget the dream. The sky symbol can be seen in verse 8 of the line which reads (Now disappears in the sky). The dream is described as gone and lost in the distant sky and it is impossible for him to reach again. From this explanation, the symbol in the lyrics of the song Sakura by Ikimono Gakari is implied or has a hidden meaning behind it.

3.2 Social Impact of Ikimono Gakari's Sakura Song Lyrics by Japanese Society

1. Hanami

Hanami is actually a religious ritual that is held on a certain day in spring, namely the ceremony before planting work is carried out. The fullness of cherry blossoms dangling from the trees is said to be analogous to a bountiful rice harvest, which should be celebrated by eating and drinking. However, in the past, hanami was only practiced by the nobility and rulers, only at the end of the 17th century it was practiced by ordinary people. Originally, hanami was an open air party to enjoy the flowers of the Japanese apricot tree (ume). Before the Heian period, many people appreciated the wild cherry blossoms on the mountain. During the Heian period (794-1192), cherry blossoms were moved to the royal city and could be enjoyed together. The custom of hanami dates back to the emperor at that time who held a banquet in his palace courtyard planted with cherry blossoms. After that, this custom spread from the court to the Bushi/Samurai and commoners, and then spread from the royal city to other areas in Japan. Flower Tree Ume Hanami is a happy moment with loved ones and closest to enjoy the beautiful blooming cherry blossoms. This means that the blooming of cherry blossoms is a symbol of happiness that spring has arrived. In addition, hanami also means picnic by laying out mats for a dinner party under the cherry blossom trees. Group after group of picnickers spread out mats and sit under the cherry blossom trees to have fun together, drink sake, eat Japanese specialties, and so on like a garden party. Everyone rejoices. There are family groups, there are corporate groups, organizations, schools and others. Enjoying Hanami, the appearance of cherry blossoms also marks the start of a new school year for schools and the end of the old fiscal year and the start of a new fiscal year for the financial and business

world. This shows that the blooming of the cherry blossoms brings a new spirit to achieve good hopes and desires.

2. Sakura as a symbol of mortality

If it is associated with Buddhism, then Sakura becomes a symbol of mortal life. Sakura can only bloom beautifully in a very short time like human life is beautiful but runs short. The appearance of the beautiful cherry blossoms will eventually fall and gradually begin to wear off until the end of April. Sakura is indeed a kind of reminder for humans how short our lives are and how precious and beautiful the life we experience is. In modern times like today, Sakura has indeed become a symbol of hope for Japanese society. In the documentary, entitled the tsunami and the Cherry Blossom, which won an Oscar nomination in 2012, it has been described how the strength of the cherry tree in dealing with the natural disasters that befell Japan in 2011 has been past. Everything on land including the cherry trees at that time had been swept away by the tsunami. But in just 1 month, many new shoots have sprouted, the cherry tree has become a symbol for renewal and rebuilding after the death and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami.

4 Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the natural symbol metaphor consists of sakura (cherry blossoms), haru (spring), sora (sky) and hana (flowers). The social impact of the lyrics of the sakura song is that the lyrics tell about someone who is left behind by a lover in the spring when the cherry blossoms fall a lot. But for the Japanese people, cherry blossoms actually make many people happy because they can have a picnic with their family or eat together same dance and sing together under the blooming cherry blossoms. Cherry blossoms that appear in spring have a very important influence on Japanese people's lives, such as strengthening affection with family, making friendships closer, establishing good communication with colleagues/company partners and others. His short life and frailty carry deep meaning to life. Sakura does have a very high position in Japanese society because the flower is a symbol of a cycle of life in which there is death and rebirth. If it is associated with Buddhism, then Sakura becomes a symbol of mortal life. Sakura can only bloom beautifully in a very short time like human life is beautiful but runs short. The appearance of the beautiful cherry blossoms will eventually fall and gradually begin to wear off until the end of April. Sakura is indeed a kind of reminder for humans how short our lives are and how precious and beautiful the life we experience is.

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