# Feminism Representation in *Black Widow (2021)*: A Semiotic Approach

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**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk menemukan representasi feminisme yang digambarkan dalam film *Black Widow (2021)* dengan menggunakan teori Semiotic oleh John Fiske. Teori semiotika merupakan ilmu yang mempelajari tentang tanda dan bagaimana makna dari tanda yang dibentuk di dalam teks media dari jenis karya apapun dalam masyarakat yang meliputi level realitas, level presentasi, dan level ideologi. Film *Black Widow (2021)* mengisahkan tentang perjuangan perempuan untuk mendapat identitasnya sendiri dengan cara keluar dari kediktatoran kaum laki-laki sebagai pihak yang berkuasa dalam ranah publik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kode-kode dalam film *Black Widow (2021)* merepresentasikan nilai feminisme pada level realitas melalui kode penampilan, kostum, tata rias, lingkungan, perilaku, gaya berbicara, gestur, dan ekpresi. Level representasi untuk menandakan feminisme terlihat pada perpindahan kamera, latar dan pencahayaan, musik dan narasi, dialog, karakter dan aksi, serta konflik. Pada level ideologi tergambarkan nilai feminisme yang menunjukkan ideologi feminisme dengan aliran feminisme eksistentialisme karena konflik utama dalam film ini adalah perampasan identitas perempuan oleh laki-laki dengan tujuan memperbudak perempuan agar hanya patuh pada pihak laki-laki yang memiliki kuasa atas dirinya. Setelah menganalisis Black Widow menggunakan Semiotika oleh John Fiske, peniliti dapat menyimpulkan bahwa feminisme terutama membahas tentang perjuangan melawan perbudakan dan perampasan identitas dengan melalui cara berpenampilan, menyusun rencana, menjalankan aksi, dan penyelesaian konflik, yang terepresentasikan dari kode-kode dalam teori *The Codes of Television* oleh John Fiske yang mengandung level reality, level representasi, dan level ideology.
**Kata Kunci**: Representasi Feminisme, Semiotika, Film

**Abstract**

This study aims to find a representation of feminism depicted in the film *Black Widow (2021)* using the Semiotic theory by John Fiske. Semiotic theory is the study of signs and how the meanings of signs are formed in media texts from any type of work in society which includes the level of reality, the level of presentation, and the level of ideology. The film *Black Widow (2021)* tells the story of a woman's struggle to gain her own identity by getting out of the dictatorship of men as the ruling party in the public sphere. The results of the research show that the codes in the *Black Widow (2021)* represent the value of feminism at the level of reality through codes of appearance, costumes, make-up, environment, behavior, speech styles, gestures, and expressions. The level of representation for representation of feminism can be seen in the movement of camera, setting and lighting, music and narration, dialogue, character and action, and conflict. At the ideological level, the value of feminism is depicted which shows the ideology of feminism with the flow of existential feminism because the main conflict in this film is the usurpation of women's identities by men with the aim of enslaving women so that they only obey men who have power over them. After analyzing *Black Widow (2021)*, researchers can conclude that feminism mainly discusses the struggle against slavery and deprivation of identity through appearance, planning, action and conflict resolution, which are represented by the codes in The Codes of Television theory which contains a level of reality, level of representation, and level of ideology.

**Keywords**: Feminism Representation, Semiotics, Film

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the term feminism origin from the Latin word femmina, which means woman. The word is adopted and used by various languages in the world. In French, feminism comes from the word femininity or femininity. Feminine is an adjective that means femininity or shows the nature of women so that it can be interpreted that feminism is a movement of women who fight for women's rights. In this case, the term feminism feels closer to feminine, so it is not uncommon for feminism to be interpreted as a social movement for feminists. The definition of feminism, according to Yunahar Ilyas' as quoted Kamla Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan, is a knowledge of the oppression and exploitation of women in society, at work, and in the domestic, as well as the deliberate acts by both women and men

to improve this situation.

The objective of feminism as a social movement is gender equality. Gender is a crucial analytical tool for understanding its place in society's social structure. Gender in this case includes expression, identity and role. Gender identification is useful for determining roles in society. These roles exist to form structures for perpetuating power. Meanwhile, patriarchy emerged as a term to explain why men dominate important roles and positions in society, ranging from legal, political, economic to social institutions. Feminism exists to change it, against patriarchy to make women and other non- masculine genders recognized as fully human. Michael Ryan (2012) in his book "An Introduction to Criticism Literature/Film/Culture" says that feminist scholars argue that women's lives have been limited by the limitations placed on them by a male-dominated society. In addition, the book explains that feminist critics and cultural historians have noticed or found that women are often portrayed in very negative or very positive stereotypes.

The thing that must be prioritized in feminism is non-competitive, which means that in a society where gender equality is the norm, cooperation should take precedence over rivalry. Misconceptions are often accused of interpreting feminism as an attempt to make men the enemy that must be defeated. Because the purpose of feminism is for women, men, and other genders to coexist fairly and equitably, feminism cannot function in a competitive environment. The fight for fair laws and policies that bar women from experiencing complete equality with men in all spheres of private and public life is known as feminism. The fight against the beliefs that encourage these discriminatory behaviors, however, is more significant. Feminism is a political and social movement having the same ideological objectives as meeting gender equality. There are many ways to do this movement, one of them with film.

The representation of women in the film industry is often associated with negative stereotypes, both nationally and internationally. Women are supposed to provide only the beauty, sexuality, and behavior that men want in movies. As a result, women were more likely to feel powerless in the world of cinema (Irawan, 2014, p.2.). In addition, women are often repressed in the cinematic world, portrayed as sexual objects, victims, underdogs, and even seducers of men. Generally,

films with superhero characters always feature men as heroes and will save weak women, Marvel Cinematic Universe Series has started to eliminate this stereotype by releasing films with female superhero characters.

Female characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe have shown the most progress in roles since their debut. Starting from the emergence of Papper Potts big role as the first woman in the first MCU film, Iron Man released in 2008. Acting as Tony Stark's personal assistant, Virginia Papper Potts, who in each film gets character development to become a woman who can match Tony Stark the Iron Man as his wife. Paper joins the "End Game" battle which automatically turns him into a hero. Not long after the appearance of Potts, still in the sequel to the second film with the same title, namely Iron Man 2, appears the second strong female character, Natasha Romanoff. In Avengers (2012), Natasha Romanoff, played by actress Scarlet Johansson, is a spy and assassin who tries to make amends for all the mistakes in her big book. In the end, Natasha and Clint Barton work together to build a hero alliance spearheaded by Nick Furry, an agent from SHIELD who tries to recruit Tony Stark and Bruce Banner aka The Hulk. Followed by the joining of Steve Roger or Captain America and finally for the first time Avenger was successfully formed with only Natasha Romanoff as the only woman on the team.

Several previous studies that discussed feminism in Natasha Romanoff. Peyton Barranco (2021) in his article entitled Sexy, Sterile, Sacrificed: Black Widow in the Marvel Cinematic Universe mentions the female nature of Natasha Romanoff. This article explains Natasha Romanoff's femininity cannot be experienced and exercised at the same time. Because Natasha Romanoff must complete training for an assassination agency and give up her desire to have a partner and children. Despite being a superhero, she still possesses a feminine side that allows her to love a man and feel compassion for those she deems family. Additionally, Natasha is a person who is willing to make significant sacrifices for the ones she loves.

Elizabeth G. Michalenko (2016) in her article entitled Black Widow: Avenger of Feminism discusses gender issues in American society and culture. In the world of Marvel comics and films, the Black Widow's reputation is both strength and temptation. As the only female member of the Avengers, Natasha Romanoff brings a feminine touch to a plot that relies on the overall masculinity

of the main character. This article explains how Black Widow defies stereotypes of women and superheroes by living within the boundaries of both worlds without giving in to either. Placing Black Widow in the context of her society and how audiences perceive the hero.

Black Widow's background revealed in Avengers: Age of Ultron (Joss Whedon, 2015) combines Natasha's inability to be a mother with her moral blunder as a spy to present her as a highly feminine figure. The main subject of Natasha's character journey is her desire to atone for the wrongs and crimes she did prior to joining the Avengers, and her self-sacrificed death in Avengers: Endgame (Anthony Russo and Joe Russo, 2019) further connects her penance to themes surrounding this. These aspects of Natasha's persona display a number of problematic traits that feminists should criticize. Black Widow, a standalone movie starring Natasha Rumanoff, was released in 2021 by the Marvel Cinematic Universe. A lady named Natasha Romanoff plays the primary role in this movie. She is a quantity person who discovers that working with men and women makes her feel independent and conflicted.

Natasha does have no super powers but she join the superhero's team with her unique skills include martial arts skills, speed, extracting information, and neutralizing people. Making her even more special and worthy of the nickname superhero because as a woman, she is provento be able to carry out tasks or missions that usually only men can do. She is portrayed as a love interest or a sex object in every movie since the characters are all created with her sex appeal in mind. Natasha, however, employs sexist tactics in an effort to finish her task. Romanoff demonstrates that women are capable of having strong personalities, good judgment, and a strong sense of leadership. Natasha is also described as an ordinary woman with no superpowers but she managed to have an above average physique, speed and intelligence through extreme training while she was still in the Red Room. The character of Natasha Romanoff also unique proven by she still portrayed with the stereotype of female characters in films in general, but Natasha can also equate her character with male characters in the film.

In the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the Black Widow movie is hands-down the most independent (MCU). It is possible to comprehend and enjoy the tale without having to watch 10

Marvel movies. A peek of a 12-year-old named Natasha, her fictitious parents Alexei and Melina, Soviet operatives played by David Harbor and Rachel Weisz, and Yelena Belova as Natasha's sister, are seen in this genesis story, which skilfully avoids tedious rehashes. After the task was accomplished, they escaped to Cuba from Ohio. The Red Room, a clandestine Soviet assassination and training facility for KGB covert program agents, is then where Natasha and Yelena are assigned. The superhero Black Widow, played by Natasha Romanoff, plays a significant role in the Marvel universe.

This study uses a semiotic analysis approach from John Fiske which is contained in The Codes of Television by John Fiske which explains the three levels of semiotic theory, namely the level of reality, the level of representation and the level of ideology. Semiotics is the study of signification and meaning of codes systems; the science of codes; about how meaning is constructed in media "texts"; or the study of how codes of any type of work communicate meaning. The codes and meanings shown in the film are social realities that exist in society. Everything that has a communication sign system, such as that contained in written text, can be considered text, for example films, soap operas dramas, electronic cinema, photography, quizzes contained in advertisements, football match shows (Fiske, 2007: 282). John Fiske's semiotic analysis was chosen because of its suitability with the research being analyzed, namely to look for signs and descriptions of feminism in the character of Natasha Romanoff in *Black Widow (2021).*

Semiotic analysis basically discusses the meaning of signs. John Fiske argues that in semiotics the main focus is text. Text in this case can be interpreted broadly, not just written text. Semiotics has three main areas of study:The sign itself. It consists in the study of the different signs, the way the different signs convey meaning, and the way they relate to the people who use them. Signs are human constructions and can only be understood in terms of humans who use them. These signs themselves display the Reality of events in the appearance of clothing, environment, behavior, conversation, gestures, expressions, sounds and so on. In the sense that, all forms of impressions really show something real. After that, there is the Representation level which is the act of presenting or presenting something through something other than itself, usually in the form of a sign or symbol.

Representations in shows are related to technical codes, such as cameras, lighting, editing, music and sound, these elements are then transmitted into representational codes that can actualize reality in the shows.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the representation of feminism in the film Black Widow 2021 using John Fiske's semiotic theory. This research will look at how the character of Black Widow in this film represents the idea of feminism through symbols and signs that exist in the narrative, visuals, and dialogue. This study also aims to understand how the representation of feminism in this film can influence perceptions of the role and power of women in the world of superheroes *Black Widow (2021)* has a major conflict that represents one of the existing feminist ideas. This film is composed of signs that form a system to be able to examine a film using semiotic analysis. According to Fiske (2012) Semiotics has three fields of study, namely (1) The level of Reality, (2) The Level of REpresentation, and (3) The Level of Ideology.

## 2. METHOD

The research method chosen in this study is qualitative with semiotic analysis approach from John Fiske. Semiotic analysis basically discusses and explains the meaning or meaning of the code. Codes and meanings that are sought and displayed in films are social realities that exist in society. The selection of John Fiske's semiotic analysis is due to its suitability with the research being analyzed, namely to find the codes of feminism in Natasha Romanoff's character in the movie of *Black Widow (2021)*.

## 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How is the representation of feminism in the reality level of the film *Black Widow (2021)*; (2) How is feminism represented at the representational level in the film *Black Widow (2021)*l; (3) How is feminism represented at the ideological level in the film *Black Widow (2021)*. Based on this, the objectives of this study are as follows: (1) To analyze the codes of representation of feminism at the reality level in *Black Widow (2021)*; (2) Analyzing representational codes at the level of representation in Black Widow; (3) Analyze the codes of representation at the ideological level in Black Widow.
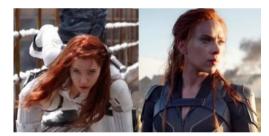
### 3.1. Reality level in *Black Widow (2021)*

Events that are encoded as reality. The social code which includes appearance, dress, makeup, environment, behavior, dialogue, gesture, expression. In written language, for example, documents, transcripts, interviews, and so on.

### 3.1.1. Appearance

In this film, the appearance code was depicted with Natasha Romanoff's simple costume and natural makeup. Natasha personal style was mostly wearing jeans and t-shirt with jacket in daily. For the costume was more like a sport outfit. Her appearance was balance with long hair makes her appearance shows gender equality. Her hair is longer than usual in this film, indicating some time has passed since Captain America: Civil War. She even tied it back for battle at times and she is shown at the end of the film turning into the blonde hair seen in Infinity War. Because on the escape from the government, Natasha borrows Melina's Black Widow costume, which is black with protective padding. She also wears a nice white costume for her snowy missions in battle. Her belt further features the Black Widow symbol with a silver center. Besides Natasha's masculine appearance, mostly, Natasha still uses a long hairstyle that still shows her feminine side

### 3.1.2. Dress



Picture 1. The costume of Natasha

In this movie, the costume was divided into two colors which is black and white. The first color, black, encode Natasha before quit as a widow or Dreykov's slave. The others color, white, encode Natasha will to fight for her rights as a human. Furthermore, the black color gives a hint when she was apart with her family and white color when she is with her family. The costume design also showed the masculine side of Black Widow character. This masculine costume gave the impression of a smart, skilled, and capable person as depicted in the character of the widows. Therefore, Natasha's costume able show feminism representation on the role of women role to gender equality.

### 3.1.3. Make up

Picture 2. The makeup of Natasha

Makeup was used to change someone appearance using cosmetics or tools and made them different from their original look. In the Black Widow movie, Natasha's makeup mostly shown with natural makeup look or almost bareface. It indicates that Natasha's character was projected as an honest person and had a pure intention. In compared, Dreykov's widow at the Red Room wore dark eyeshadow to show an intimidation and mysterious look. Moreover in this movie, Dreykov's widow didn't have a real consciousness to make decision and only follow his command until they died. Therefore, Natasha's light make up able to present her as an independent person which have the power to make her own choices in compared to the dark makeup from the Dreykov's Widow.

### 3.1.4. Environment

The environment took a big part for Natasha's character development especially her family at Ohio. In the first scene of the movie Natasha shown as a daughter from a prefect family even though later, it revealed as a fake family but her feelings with them were genuine. The environment also can show that she was care for her little sister, Yelena, by an action of protecting Yelena from Dreykov's soldier. Also, her family meeting after 20s years became a turning point for her when she struggled with dealing her problems alone without the Avengers. Her family also became a big support for her mission to defeat Dreykov and destroy the Red Room which took the widow rights and slave them as assassins.

### 3.1.5. Behavior

The highlight of Natasha behavior was after meeting her sister, Yelena, and family. At first, Natasha wants to live as quite as possible in a small van at Norway but due to the connection with Red Room, she must team up with her family to find and eliminate Dreykov. Her behavior also show feminism in the effort to destroy Dreykov and Red Room especially in this movie only women being slaved and controlled. In contrast, those women are talented and skillful assassin but they do not have a power to reject his command at all. This also

indicate that even a strong woman could be still treated as pushover and tools by a man. Therefore, Natasha Romanoff's behavior was able to show how she break the boundary between man and women to get a gender equality.

### 3.1.6. Speech

In dialog, Natasha has several other talents that make her one of the best spies and assassins in the world. Based on Marvel Comic, the character of Natasha is multilingual; apart from speaking Russian and English, she is also fluent in French, German, Chinese, and more. An excellent marksman and expert in weaponry, she uses automatic weapons and knives necessary to fulfill her mission. Natasha is intelligent, brave and one of the most capable Avengers despite not having super powers. She is cool under pressure and doesn't let her ego get the better of him, unlike most of her heroic counterparts. Natasha shows the brave girl from the beginning of the movie until the end. Since childhood, Natasha has been very attached to the nature of being brave. Her skills in infiltration and stealth, coupled with a strong will, make Black Widow a force to be reckoned with. Natasha's language is brave. At the beginning of film shows when her mother, Melina, shoots by a government soldier. She can help her for riding the plane even though she was just a kid. After that accident she still protected Yelena from the Dreykov soldiers even though she failed and ended up parting ways with her sister. Natasha was persistent by trying to fight the Task Master who suddenly attacked her. She speaks with bravely, decisively and straight to the point. She also speaks with love when she with her family. It is represented on how does she love them.

### 3.1.7. Gesture

Gesture can be meant as movements taken by the characters to achieve the goal. Here, the action Natasha took was by helping her sister, Yelena, to find Red Room and kill Dreykov. More importantly, she also wanted to help others widow which trapped under Dreykov's control. To help them, Natasha tried to find her family and face her past. More importantly, Natasha believed Dreykov had died for years due to the bomb plot she laid but he still managed to survive. Her anger and frustrate gesture were later shown when she knew that Dreykov still used women as a assassination tools to achieve his goals. Therefore, the movement she took by helping the other women also a representation of feminism to oppose forces that are greater than one

gender, especially the widows are fully controlled by Dreykov.

### 3.1.8. Expression

In the movie, Natasha and her family was required to collaborate so they could destroy the Red Room. They also devise a plan to destroy and stop Dreykov's crimes. This action is not only for a revenge because he had enslaved them but also to help other women or the widow out there so they would not be the next victim of Dreykov cruelty. Natasha's expression showed a bravery and optimistic in every plan. Her expression was a resemble of feminism to fight injustice or inequality done by a man who got bigger power and use it only for slaving woman. At the end, Natasha was successful to face the challenge with her family and she was claimed her win to defeat Dreykov.

## 3.2. Representation level in Black Widow

Reality encoded in electronically encoded must be displayed in technical code. In written language, the technical code includes words, sentences, propositions, photos, graphics, and so on. While in image language, the technical code consists of camera, lighting, editing, music, sound. These elements are then transmitted into a representational that can be actualized, including narrative, conflict, character, action, conversation, screen, and player selection.

### 3.2.1. Camera Act & Editing

In the Black Widow movie, the camera act and editing were showing high angle shot, aerial shot, and eye-level shot. A high angle shot is a camera acts which represent the narrative information and able to create the character visual or emotional from a perspective that makes them looks vulnerable or diminished. The scene using high angle shot was the fighting scene between Natasha and Yelena. The scene can show the tension between the two of them and the frustration they had. Another example can be seen when Natasha's car was blown by a bomb (00:26:03). The high angle shot was able to make the audience know that the scene was narrate a beginning of Natasha's battle with Red Room. Meanwhile, aerial shot is a camera acts which show the viewers with deeper perspective on what is happening on the present scene. In the black widow movie, they use an aerial shot as a sign of location changing by showing the area around the main character. The last camera acts is eye- level shot. An eye-level shot is a standard composition in

film making yet it can evoke a sense of empathy from the audience on what is happening to the characters. The scene with an eye-angle shot was used when Natasha meets Dreyknov at the Red Room (01:37:20) From this scene, the audience able to feel Natasha's resentment, frustration, and helplessness for not having the power to attack Dreykov. Moreover, this kind of shot was suitable for showing the character's facial expression.

### 3.2.2. Lighting & Setting

(Scene sunset: 00:02:27 and 02:03:44)

The lighting and setting of the movie are highlighted at the beginning and the last movie's scenes. The scenes shown sunset and fireflies in the forest as a Metaphor. The sunset was a metaphor for ending or completion. Moreover, the sunset scene at the beginning of the movie was depicted to be not as bright as the last scene. At the beginning, the sunset is covered by forest trees which after this scene Natasha's losing her fake family. Meanwhile, at the last scene the sunset was shining brightly at the sky after Natasha succeed killing Dreykov and save others widow. Thus, the different lighting compositions was also indicating a metaphor for Natasha's feelings of sadness and sorrow at the beginning and gratefulness at the end of the movie. Despite both lighting composition was different, but it always shown fireflies in the forest which indicate a hope between darkness and refer to Natasha's fake family in Ohio also the Avengers as her second family. Therefore, the lighting and setting able to project a deeper meaning to Natasha character and help the audience to feel the compassion.

**(Scene fireflies= 02:01:01 and 02:03:05)**

### 3.2.3. Music & Narrative



Picture 3. The Opening Songs: "American Pie"
(00.06.03-00.06.42)

The Opening Songs: "American Pie" and "Smells Like Teen Spirit The use of either song in the prolog is not a coincidence. After JFK's assassination, the song "American Pie," which is Yelena's favorite, was penned as a death knell for the

American Dream. It's a song of lamentation, and it's appropriate that it plays over pictures of Natasha seeing the end of her own American dream. Also, the song "This'll be the day that I die" from American Pie became the voiceover explaining Natasha's family's demise. As a twisted twist on the song "Smells Like Teen Spirit's" adoption as a youth anthem of defiance and self- expression—the very traits being conditioned out of the Red Room victims—the opening credits music is used.

### 3.2.4. Conversation

(Scene:00:12:25)

Feminism of gender equality can be seen in the dialogue between Natasha and her fake father, Alexie. At the beginning of the movie, he said to Natasha that "my girls are the toughest girls in the world" which later described the characters, Natasha and Yelena, when they had grown up. Even though, the context is leading to conflicts with Red Room and Dreykov but Natasha able to prove her bravery by protecting her sister ,Yelena, from Dreykov's soldier who had a larger body than her and carry guns.

### 3.2.5. Character & Action

(Scene 00:38:21)

In the Black Widow film, the character of Natasha is a perfect representation of feminism because she was concerned for the widow who are entangled in Dreyknov's slavery. This film also presents how female characters require bigger effort to get equal status and make decisions for their own lives in compared to man. The example can be seen on one of the scenes when Natasha tried to help one of Dreykov's widow. The widow said, "I have to do this" "He is making me" as a form of obedience to the Dreykov's command which made the widow commit a suicide. Therefore, the action taken by the main character, Natasha, was a form of feminism which showing an attempt get a equality especially for women.

### 3.2.6. Conflict

The Black Widow's conflict was highlighted to the relation between the Widow and Dreykov. The conflict able to prove how gender equality was a big matter for woman because they were used as a tool who did not deserve to make decisions and have freedom in their lives especially when the widow, woman assassins, was slaved only for Dreykov's ideology and goals. The feminism in the conflict also supported by Natasha character who played a big role in destroying Dreykov and Red

Room's power. The movie shown Natasha's struggle in attacking Dreykov even though she had high intentions and reasons to kill him. (Scene 01:37:13) Yet, Natasha able to prove that she was able to break that limitation with her bravery and ingenuity. Therefore, Natasha's freed all the widow and kill Dreykov as an act to fight for liberation and gender equality.

### 3.3. Ideology level in Black Widow

All components are arranged and classified according to ideological categories such as individualism, patriarchy, racism, class, materialism, capitalism, liberalism, socialism, and others. Through the analyzing of the codes at these three levels, a correlation was discovered that provided insight into how the *Black Widow (2021)* represented feminism. The relationships between each sequence produce messages and meanings that represent the feminism contained in them. A number of codes, such as codes at the level of reality and representations that produce codes for a specific ideology, such as feminism and existentialism. It can be seen from the background, gesture, way of speaking, narration, appearance, make-up, as well as the way of taking pictures, audio, and lighting, all of which relate to the ideological codes that exist in the main character in the *Black Widow (2021)*. The codes that appear, such as the code of appearance, expression, gestures, way of speaking, and dialogue have an important meaning in this film and strengthen the representation of feminism contained in it. However, there are also several codes that function as supporting other codes, such as environmental codes, costumes, music, sound, make-up, cameras, lighting, and so on. Although these codes are supporting, the existence of these codes cannot be ignored.

The social code that represents feminism at the beginning of the story starts from how the main character conveys the social code in the form of how to talk, how to dress, and behave properly so that the audience can conclude for themselves that the main protagonist, Natasha Romanoff and her sister, Yelena Belova, are identical with the form of feminism. Which fights for equality for women in the public, private, and cultural domains. The gesture shown by Natasha Romanoff shows her past as a child that she was always a brave girl when she tried to protect Yelena from the Dreykov soldiers. She always used this courageous nature into adulthood until she could enter as one of the core

members of the Avengers. In addition, Natasha Romanoff shows the attitude of how she really wants to help other women out there who have become "widows" by destroying the Red Room's main headquarters which has trained her to be a professional assassin but also at the same time takes away her rights including self-control. The Red Room itself is a professional assassin training center built by a man named Dreykov.

## CLOSING

### Conclusion

Based on the data analysis conducted and the findings of the research data, it can be concluded that the characters in Black Widow 2021, which was directed by a talented female director, Cate Shortland, generally represent feminism by combining three levels of theoretical semiotics by John Fiske. The three levels of John Fiske's semiotic theory are the level of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology. The film work Black Widow 2021 represents feminism, specifically discussing how women are often seen as objects and do not have freedom over themselves because the patriarchal system is still strong. So that there are several rules that are formed such as women must always obey men. This is a debate, especially in terms of freedom to determine one's identity. The limitation to become a subject certainly has strong problems from a women's perspective. In *Black Widow (2021)* The level of reality is encoded in the appearance of the characters, the widows, with natural make-up and dress with boyish styles but they still show long hair or still seem feminine which represents gender equality. At the level of representation in this film, it is described that the situation, plot, story setting, and conflict show the struggle of women to get their right to live freely without being controlled by anyone. The ideological level in this work clearly shows the struggle of Natasha and her family and the widows to achieve their goal so that women are no longer objects and women can freely choose their identities without having to be controlled by anything. The level of ideology represent the existentialism feminism that emphasize freedom of life choice.

### Suggestion

1. This research can be used as reading material in understanding the code and its meaning for the representation of feminism in a literary work, especially film.

2. Readers are expected to be able to enrich their knowledge and study the codes and their meanings which show the message of feminism so that they can be used in understanding the contents of this literary work.

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