

Androgynous Perspective as Represented on The Offspring's *Why Don't You Get A Job?*

Cahyaningsih Pujimahanani, Salsabila Nova Calista, Laila Nabilahtauzzahro
Ibrahim and Rommel Utungga Pasopati
Universitas Dr. Soetomo Surabaya

Corresponding authors. rommelpasopati@yahoo.com

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Abstract Literatures are meanings of everyday life as on point with Sandra Bem's concept about androgynous sides that focuses on indicating masculinity and femininity of individuals and societies. *Why Don't You Get a Job?* is a song by The Offspring in 1999 that underlines American couples' condition where only one side is working while the other is doing nothing. Interestingly, this band shows how that situation happens to both gender. Then, how is androgynous perspective represented on The Offspring's *Why Don't You Get a Job??* Through qualitative method, this paper exposes that man and woman are proved not to be so independent and dependent, but both should work to complement each other. That song indicates that society is so androgynous that spots roles of man and woman supported by Bem's theory. In conclusion, the song shows society is not totally about man or woman but how each side asks other side for better deed. The Offspring asserts androgynous perspective that requires roles of man and woman, not of being dominant but to be complementary.

Keywords: androgynous; Sandra Bem; The Offspring; Why Don't You Get a Job?

Perspektif Androgini dalam Lagu the Offspring Berjudul *Why Don't You Get A Job?*

Abstrak Sastra adalah perkara pemaknaan kehidupan sehari-hari sesuai dengan konsep Sandra Bem tentang sisi androgini yang berfokus pada indikasi maskulinitas dan feminitas individu dan masyarakat. *Why Don't You Get a Job?* adalah lagu The Offspring pada tahun 1999 yang menggarisbawahi kondisi pasangan Amerika terutama hanya satu pihak yang bekerja sementara yang lain tidak melakukan apapun. Menariknya, grup musik ini menunjukkan bagaimana situasi itu terjadi pada kedua gender. Lalu, bagaimana perspektif androgini direpresentasikan dalam lagu The Offspring berjudul *Why Don't You Get a Job??* Melalui metode kualitatif, tulisan ini memaparkan bahwa laki-laki dan perempuan terbukti tidak selalu sepenuhnya mandiri dan bergantung pada yang lain, tetapi keduanya harus bekerja untuk saling melengkapi. Lagu itu menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat begitu androgini sesuai peran laki-laki dan perempuan dengan didukung oleh teori Bem. Kesimpulannya, lagu tersebut menunjukkan masyarakat tidak sepenuhnya tentang pria atau wanita tetapi bagaimana masing-masing pihak meminta pihak lain untuk melakukan perbuatan yang lebih baik. The Offspring menegaskan perspektif androgini yang membutuhkan peran laki-laki dan perempuan, bukan untuk menjadi dominan tetapi untuk saling melengkapi.

Kata kunci: androgini; Sandra Bem; The Offspring; Why Don't You Get a Job?

INTRODUCTION

Gender is about individual and society matter in which both affect and are affected by each other. Modern idea radically divides sexes into man and woman with its roles in society (Bem, 1981; Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017). Men work outside and women handle domestic jobs. Meanwhile, that idea is never sufficient to draw complex matters in society. Dictating ideas vanish solidarities in societal matters. Gender speaks about roles and how those are well recognized by others (Balzer Carr et al., 2017; Freeman, 2021). That recognition indicates communalities through roles of human beings that are not dependent but complementary to each other.

Why Don't You Get a Job? is a song by The Offspring in 1999. It reveals American culture in which man and woman as couple need support from each other (GeniusMedia, 2020). A side would like another side to understand its position and helps it furthermore. Being a couple is not dependent, but complementary as matter of inter-subjectivity. Harmony should be emphasized by realizing reciprocal interactions. Society is so androgynous that underlines involvement of masculinity and femininity, not as a static and separated parts, but as intertwining aspects that define each other simultaneously (Dean & Tate, 2017; Wiyatmi, 2012). Then, how is androgynous perspective represented on The Offspring's *Why Don't You Get a Job?* This paper exposes how man and woman are proved not to be independent and dependent but each side needs the other's role. Androgynous perspectives highlight society is not totally about man or woman but how each side demands another to do better deed. That song denies matter of being dominant and pointing up correlative roles between man and woman in society.

Understanding androgynous perspective is important today due to

recent increasing dialogue on gender. There are also several previous studies that have been done regarding the androgynous understanding. The first one is a journal written by Wijayakusuma, P. K. F. in 2020 entitled *Less Masculine, More Feminine dan Less Feminine, More Masculine: Laki-laki Mengekspresikan Androgini Melalui Fashion* (Wijayakusuma, 2020). By underlining the idea of fashion in cultural studies, androgynous perspective is attained to express self that is the other from usual understandings. The second one is a paper written by Fhebrianty, N. and Oktavianti, R. in 2019 entitled *Representasi Identitas Androgini di Media Sosial* (Fhebrianty & Oktavianti, 2019). The article emphasizes on identities in social media that make people enable to practice such androgynous perspective. The third study is done by Sitanggang, A. in 2020 entitled *Androgini: Popularitas dan Eksistensi Bagi Remaja di Era Digital* (Sitanggang, 2020). The journal exposes teenagers' existential crisis that may include such androgynous identities as well. The fourth analysis is written by Aningpasca, A. in 2015 entitled *Self Presentation Model Androgini Dalam Lingkungan Pertemanan* (Aningpasca, 2015). By showing the idea in friendship, the article finds how people could be both tolerant and intolerant regarding androgynous identities.

The four previous studies above indicate that androgynous perspective in gender is flourishing today. The lens of gender as supported by Sandra Bem is also crucial to see how identities are not static but flexible in its prolonging process. Androgynous idea include any perspective in society is not unilateral, but it involves matter of both man and woman. The perspective is also shown in matter of literature in which its aspect is about reflection of everyday life. the song of The Offspring also underlines matter of being androgynous in expanding idea of society is about roles of both man and woman. Both of them is not substitutional but

complementary, as both should work together rather than being dependent from one to another. In addition, this matter of social truth and justice could be interpreted further with abundant point of views. The other focal point is that any domination should be eradicated to show the real importance of both aspect between man and woman. The criticism of the breadwinner in the song portrays that anyone could be that role as long as the other party could complement the main one.

METHODS

By using qualitative method, online and offline scripts are used to explain correlations between The Offspring's *Why Don't You Get a Job?* and matter of androgynous perspective by Sandra Bem alongside with literary and gender ideas. The data analysis includes attaining sources, reading sources carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting into paper, and writing down in references lists. The following analyses include how the lyric shows society is androgynous that demands supportive sides from both man and woman.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Condition of American Couple in The Offspring's song

Why Don't You Get a Job? is a song by American rock band The Offspring. The song is the 11th track on The Offspring's fifth studio album, *Americana* in 1998, and was released as its second single on March 15, 1999 (GeniusMedia, 2020). The song also appears as the eighth track on the band's *Greatest Hits* album in 2005. This song has playful and energetic melody. Despite its upbeat Ska sound saluted with punk rock energy, the lyrics are quite dark and angry, implying an underlying sarcasm and resentment. The lyrics tell the story of two people, a guy and a girl, who drives other partner crazy by mooching off and being lazy. Each side

spends each other's money, but refuses to get a job and pays for anything.

The song is divided into two verses, chorus, bridge and outro. The complete lyrics are the following;

Verse One

My friend's got a girlfriend, man,
he hates that bitch

He tells me every day
He says, "Man, I really gotta lose
my chick in the worst kind of
way"

She sits on her ass,
he works his hands to the bone
To give her money every payday
But she wants more dinero just to
stay at home

Well, my friend, you gotta say

Chorus

I won't pay, I won't pay ya, no
way-ay-ay-ay

Na-na, why don't you get a job?

Say no way, say no way-ah, no
way-ay-ay-ay

Na-na, why don't you get a job?

Verse One

I guess all his money, well, it isn't
enough

To keep the bill collectors at bay

I guess all his money, well, it isn't
enough

'Cause that girl's got expensive
taste

Chorus

Bridge

Well, I guess it ain't easy doing
nothing at all, oh yeah
But, hey man, free rides just don't
come along every day
(Let me tell you about my other
friend now)

Verse Two

My friend's got a boyfriend, man,
she hates that dick
She tells me every day

He wants more dinero just to stay
at home
Well, my friend, you gotta say

I won't give you no money, I
always pay

Chorus

Outro

Hey, that's something everyone
can enjoy
(GeniusMedia, 2020)

The first verse tells a man who has a relationship with his loved one but hates his girlfriend so much. He thinks that he will lose his girlfriend in a worst way because of material matters. The reason why he hates his girlfriend is because she does not have a job but she always wants more money (*dinero* in Spanish) from him. She always asks her boyfriend money to support her life but staying lazy at home (GeniusMedia, 2020). Even on his worst days, her girlfriend could live her best life with expensive taste, while he is working hard to get money for the living. The bills keep coming but the man's money is never enough to pay everything. A side is working so hard to the bone, while other side only sits everyday on a comfortable couch at home.

Next, the chorus is asserting unwillingness to pay another side while it does no effort at all. That is the reason to push other side to find a job. The lyrics do not explicitly asks other side to pay, but it contains hope for another side to help by finding a job. The man implicitly would like his couple to work so that both efforts could pay future bills.

The bridge of the song explore condition of being parasite to the other side. Doing nothing is quite easy, but it will bring in further consequence (Wiyatmi, 2012). Other person must work hard to fulfill the needs of the person who does nothing at all. Free rides is good only in some occasions. However, it will be

meaningless if free rides come every day. It will only burden a side to pay for two sides at once.

Interestingly, The Offspring includes the side from a woman in verse two. The lyric starts from the latter point of the bridge; (*Let me tell you about my other friend now*). Those words indicate the opposite gender of the first verse. It is usual that a husband works full-time for his wife (Dean & Tate, 2017). However, there is different situation where wives work so hard while her husband is doing nothing at home. In the second verse, this girl has a boyfriend and he does not have a job (GeniusMedia, 2020). This woman hates him because he is a parasite to her. That is why she asks him to find a job instead of having the girl to pay all of his needs. Moreover, both should complement instead of being lazy and hate each other. A good relationship means complementing than dominating as Relationship is two persons have each other as one.

The point of outro is pleasing as the closing of the song. The words of "*Hey, that's something everyone can enjoy*" means two aspects. The first one is the song that contains punk rock melodies. Indeed, The Offspring is still one of the great bands in the 1990s until now. This song is listed in their Greatest Hits album showing that the song has attracted people to listen and to understand the lyrics (GeniusMedia, 2020). The second aspect is the lyrics that show two faces of American society where man and woman must work alone while his or her couple does nothing. The Offspring explores both sides equally to show that any side should help another. The band would like to underline condition of America where being dependent is common as crucial problem in that country for a long time.

The above explanations of the lyrics of the song exposes that it has nothing to do with gender when it comes to relationship. The song highlights how society contains masculine and feminine

sides. It is stated as being androgynous as explored in this paper. Every human has both masculine and feminine sides, so it is natural to have feminine side in men and masculine side in woman as reflected in society either (Wiyatmi, 2012). This song brings up perspectives of man and woman. People think that man must get an outside job to be a real man and the woman must do the domestic job to be a real woman (Marhenke & Imhoff, 2019). This song opposes all the former statements. Each couple should work for another and it applies to both sides.

Androgynous Perspective as Providence of Masculinity and Femininity

Characteristics of men and women are divided into two positions as its mainstream. They are initiated from biological and social aspects. The biological is meant as sexual roles while the social one is gender roles (Bem, 1981). The differences between those roles shape tensions until today as shown through matter of gender studies. Moreover, feminism plays big roles to shape understandings about having duality of issues regarding individuals and societies either (Sitanggang, 2020; Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017). Following matters on dualism on those aspects are also indicated in how a side could be so hierarchical that could undermine another side.

Those differentiated positions above are involved in a name of androgyny. Literally, androgyny coins Greek terms; *andros* means male and *gynē* states female (Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). Not only that, androgyny is a term in gender identity where a person is not clearly written into masculine and feminine roles as they play a role in society (Fhebrianty & Oktavianti, 2019; Jacqueline, 2019). Every woman and man certainly has biological attitude that is not always straight, where every man is masculine and woman is feminine. With androgyny, they have a different

understanding of sex roles, for example, a man can have a masculine side, and a woman can have a feminine side (Keener et al., 2017; Sitanggang, 2020). The perspective of androgyny respect both sides. The both have each own similarities and differences, but a side could not live without another as that is the nature of society (Bem, 1974; Perkasa et al., 2017).

This article is accentuating gender without undermining sexual issues. By taking points on the most common idea in society, further understandings could be explored through idea of its orientation. According to Bem in her Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), gender role orientation has been calculated into four groups, which occur in each individual. First, if the feminine trait is high and the masculine is high, it is called androgyny. Second, if the masculine trait is high and the feminine is low, it is called masculine. Third, if the feminine trait is high, and the masculine is low, it is called feminine. And forth as the last, if the masculine trait is low, and the feminine is low, it is called undifferentiated (Agustang et al., 2015; Bem, 1974). Those four aspects above assert matters of binary opposition in which every person has inside. Although it still shows dual condition between man and woman, the idea could cope with problems of sexual and gender tensions in society. A man could do woman job and in reverse as well due to matter of those four points above. Someone with an androgyny identity has a more flexible mentality and style compared to someone who only has a masculine and feminine identity (Bem, 1974; Fhebrianty & Oktavianti, 2019). Each individual would only like to become her or himself and wants to be recognized as equal. He is a man and he may have feminine side, and vice versa.

The term androgyny is often used as an assertive term where persons are expressive, confident, independent and have a warm and gentle nature (Aningpasca, 2015; Bem, 1974). It is quite

different from matter of being total masculine and feminine. It is due to clarity that being androgyny covers both kinds of gender alongside with its any attitude. Masculinity is concerned with assertiveness, domination and instrumentality, whereas femininity is concerned with nurturing, appreciation, and expressivity. Matter of androgyny then also defines indications of effort in finding better balance between both of them. If a side becomes too dominant, it should decline its power. In reverse, if any side is too low, it should be supported further. Moreover, no one could decline or support beside another side itself (Aningpasca, 2015; Bem, 1974). So, understanding androgyny is implicitly saying that the dual ideas underline crucial aspects to support each other consequently (Jacqueline, 2019; Perkasa et al., 2017).

In fact, talking about most men and women who have acted and used androgynous itself by looking at the way their nature, activities and roles are exchanged, then this has been the result of community contraction, and is not fate at all (Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). Tending to a side will only result to imbalance of having anxiety. Bem revealed that individuals who only play one type of sex (between masculine and feminine) will limit their behavior when interacting with others (Bem, 1974; Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). Feminine and masculine aspects are complementary, presuppose each other, and do not contradict each other following idea of androgyny (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017).

Androgynous also expresses themselves through their style or appearance. Androgynous fashion was created to be a picture of self-liberation from gender constraints and social construction that tries to maintain natural differences between men and women from psychological and behavioral sides (Perkasa et al., 2017; Wijayakusuma, 2020). This situation has been supported

by androgynous fashion that is used as a medium for communication, where in the part of androgynous fashion that can be seen from hairstyles, clothes to accessories can deliver a message of emotions, feelings, and behavior (Perkasa et al., 2017; Wijayakusuma, 2020). This style is used to be known as unisex as there are various clothing best suited for both man and woman. It is not a woman dress worn by man or in reverse. Yet, it is a fashion that stands in both feet as things that could be worn by both genders.

Matter of androgyny walks together with perception of how gender is fluid. It is quite different from matter of transsexual condition (Perkasa et al., 2017). While transsexuals totally change to another sex and would never go back again, being in androgyny is flexible by covering both sexes. Androgyny condition is not arising a side and condemning another. It works quite elastic to both genders (Bem, 1995; Dean & Tate, 2017). It also shows human beings could bend in gender, from a side to another, as everyone has both aspects of masculine and feminine. Androgyny also works in matter of society. It is simply due to individuals' deeds could never be separated from idea of communalities. There are various standards of gender roles, but from time to time, the borders blur as roles become so plural nowadays (Dean & Tate, 2017; Keener & Mehta, 2017).

Androgyny could be seen as a label for a person, a condition for a society, and a perspective for certain study (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017). As a perspective, this is crucial matter in involving inclusiveness into gender idea. Somehow, gender is quite hindered by idea of total two gender. It is because there is still suspicion of dominance that could come from a powerful side to another (Bem, 1995). Meanwhile, androgyny perspective shows better providence in idea of masculinity and femininity. Both aspects are appreciated as a side could not

live without another (Bem, 1995). As nature of society, this point of view shows how man and woman are not to be so independent and dependent, but each side needs the other's role.

Being Androgynous as Being Complementary in Societal Condition

There are two main perspectives of the lyrics of the song. The first one is this song contains toxic relationship between man and woman. The first verse indicates man who pays for everything and the woman does nothing while the second verse means in reverse. This perspective conserves that a side does not like characteristic of the other. It brings bad impacts to the relationship and to psychological condition of both persons. There is implicit ideal aspect that should be realized in a relationship, which is equality in complementing one to another.

The second perspective is deeper as asserted through matter of androgynous point of view. Facing other's behavior is never easy since there will always be normalization of situation to be realized. It must be normal to define man or woman as strong and independent. However, each side eventually requires active participation from the other either. Verse one and two of the song refuse total condition of being masculine and feminine. Masculinity needs femininity and in reverse as well (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017). The lyric also shows that being dominant is not really beneficial at all. Paying all the bills by his or her own is tiring enough especially while the other does nothing at all. The lyric seems so androgynous that it shows similar condition between man and woman. The condition is not be equal, but effort to realize that situation should be paid attention for better interpersonal relations.

Moreover, the lyrics of the song accentuate matter of interpretation in showing how men and women have mixed masculinity and femininity. A man could be as gentle as woman while a woman

could also be as strong as man. In sexual roles, each sex has opposite attitude from the other. The roles stay the same and will never be the same for other party. Gender roles are totally different since androgynous matters are more liquid but stable in two forms (Anindya, 2016; Keener et al., 2017). A man has feminine side while a woman has masculine side. A man who has quality of being feminine is not like a queer, but he has value like his mother. A woman who has matter of masculinity is not totally a tomboy but full of value from her father. Gender is actually so fluid that reflects a never ending process (Anindya, 2016). It moves together with how individual performs his or her roles every time. This aspect is also gathered in reflection of society. Communalities explore matter of both being feminine and masculine. Society needs both of them, not to substitute but to complement each other (Anindya, 2016). Man could be dominant in some matters, but woman who does domestic jobs is as valuable as doing jobs outside home.

The song also underlines ethical perceptions in society. There is steep discrimination of job in that song in which a side works for the other while other does nothing at home. The song points the needs for the two sides to support each other by understanding the conditions they face together. Further stereotypes are eradicated as well since woman is not always feminine, but she can also become masculine by being independent by working to live her life (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2017). On the other hand, while work is often mentioned as an activity that is mostly done by men, he needs to be recognized and even helped by the woman. Not only woman is treated as nothing compared to man, this song also shows how man is undermined by the woman either. Each side may find difficulties to find benefits with what he or she does (Agustang et al., 2015). By being

complementary, ethical conception is matter of appreciation to the other.

CONCLUSION

The Offspring's *Why Don't Get a Job?* underlines how gender roles do not conform to what they are. In fact, each individual should be able to act and express how they feel based on his or her identity. Androgynous perspective is applied to label of a person, a condition for society, and a perspective for certain studies. This song denies dominance by pointing up correlative roles between men and women in society. Androgyny perspective shows providence of masculinity and femininity as both aspects are appreciated. As the nature of society, this point of view also shows how men and women are proven not to be so independent and dependent, but each side needs the other's role. In this song, man and woman do her or his work and need another to do it as well as both are not dominant but complementary. Androgynous perspective has more flexible mentalities that cover both aspects of masculine and feminine identities.

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