

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the introduction of the study including the background of the study, research question, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

In 2008, there were two of the biggest hits albums released in Hollywood. Those were The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination* and P!nk's *Funhouse*. *Doll Domination* debuted at number four on the *Billboard 200* chart, selling 80,000 copies in its first week (Yahoo! Music, 2012). While according to Canadian Recording Industry Association (2013), this second album from The Pussycat Dolls also acquired some platinum in Australia, Canada, Ireland, and Russia. The platinum was also obtained by P!nk's *Funhouse* in several countries such as UK, US, Australia, Austria, Canada, German, Ireland, and Russia. *Funhouse* debuted at number two on the United States *Billboard 200 Chart* issued on November 18, 2008, with sales of 180,000 and as of June 2012, the album has sold 1,960,000 copies.

According to AceShowbiz (2012), The Pussycat Dolls are

[...] an American pop girl group and dance ensemble, founded in Los Angeles by choreographer Robin Antin in 1995 as a burlesque troupe. After attracting national attention, Antin negotiated a record deal with Interscope Records in 2003 turning the group into a music franchise, which developed a global image and commercial brand overseen by Antin, Interscope and various partners. The first recording group (Nicole Scherzinger, Melody Thornton, Ashley Roberts, Jessica Sutta, Kimberly Wyatt and Carmit Bachar) produced two albums and numerous singles between 2004 and 2009. In 2009, *Billboard* ranked the The Pussycat Dolls as the 80th most successful musical act of the 2000s.

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By singing pop songs, The Pussycat Dolls are easily recognised since their first debut in music industry in 2004. Because it is considered to be a music franchise, The Pussycat Dolls are formed as 'pop' as it cannot only from their genre of music, but also their appearance, video clips, song lyrics, fashion, and attitude. They usually appear in highly sexualized costumes and behaviours, especially in their music videos.

Different from The Pussycat Dolls, P!nk is a *single fighter* or a soloist in a music industry. Born as Alecia Moore 33 years ago, P!nk recorded her solo debut, *Can't Take Me Home* in 2000, with a variety of song writing partners and dance-pop and R&B producers. Later, in October 2001, P!nk released her second album named *M!ssundaztood* with her first single *Get the Party Started* and it became her biggest hits in her career.

Both The Pussycat Dolls and P!nk have several similarities; one of them is their song lyrics that mostly tell about how the woman in each of their songs survives and solves some conflicts related to their gender. To reveal the way their actions towards them, this study chose song lyrics of The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination* and P!nk's *Funhouse*.

Song lyric is interesting to be discussed because it has broad themes depending on the genre of the music. One of the most fascinating music genres is pop music that still develops from time to time. In spite of it, according to Parker-Pope (2008), a new report in The Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine said that one in three popular songs contains explicit references to drug or alcohol use. However, this fact seems not affecting pop songs to be less popular. Nevertheless, there are also a lot of popular songs that expresses about life, especially female's life in 2000s.

Ramachandran (1999, as cited in Hyman, 2010, p.245) said that the purpose of literature (including song lyric) is not only represents reality but also enhances or amplifies it. Then, the content of song lyrics is usually attached to

circumstances and conditions in a real life. It is believed that song lyric represents the real world, including the portrayal of women appeared there which are constructed by language.

Therefore, in relation of the idea above, this study investigated the portrayal of women in every song lyric and found the patterns which constructed them. The study includes all of the songs both P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination*.

To elaborate the issue, Feminist Literary Criticism is believed as the most appropriate theory to depict such portrayal of females. Since all of the song lyrics are written in the early 2000s, Feminist Literary Criticism that will be used to analyse the subject of the research is Postfeminism. Tasker and Negra (2007, as cited in Lazar, 2009, p.372) explain that even though characteristics of postfeminism had derived in the popular media in the UK and USA in the early 1980s, it was during the 1990s that the term became concretized as a discursive phenomenon. Postfeminism is also suitable to be employed because the subject in this research is female and postfeminism "can be an extremely valuable descriptor for recognizing and analyzing recent shifts in female representations and ideas about feminism" (Lotz, 2001, as cited in Isbister, 2008, p.1).

1.2. Reason for Choosing The Topic

This study analysed the portrayal of women in every single song of P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination*. The albums were chosen because most of the songs present female personas. However, the song writers of each album might be different in representing and constructing the portrayal of women.

Furthermore, the study also aims to compare the patterns of how the portrayal of women is constructed both in *Funhouse* and *Doll Domination*. By

comparing the patterns, it is acquired which pattern that is better in portraying women in the view of postfeminism based on Faludi's *Backlash* (1991).

In other words, this study does not thoroughly show that P!nk and The Pussycat Dolls are perfect examples of postfeminist products, but also as two of many expressions of postfeminism that will help the readers to understand how postfeminism can be manifested in song lyrics—whether it is purposely or not.

1.3. Research Question

In conducting the study, the writer tries to seek the answer of these following questions:

1. From the point of view of postfeminism proposed by Faludi (1991), how are the female personas in P!nk's and The Pussycat Dolls' albums portrayed?
2. What patterns emerged from the portrayals of female personas in P!nk's and The Pussycat Dolls' albums?

1.4. Aims of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To reveal the portrayals of women in P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination* and to discover which song lyric that has a characteristic of postfeminism proposed by Faludi (1991).
2. To find out the patterns based on the female portrayals that emerged in P!nk's and The Pussycat Dolls' albums.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The study investigates how women in P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination* are described and presented. The postfeminism framework theory proposed by Faludi (1991) is also used to examine whether the portrayals of women are manifested by postfeminism notion or not.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study focuses on the portrayal of women in P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination* which construct the patterns. It is expected that the study provides a different view of understanding the portrayals and the patterns by comparing and analysing them. Moreover, this study is hoped to give a fruitful and positive impact both on English Department's students and the larger society.

1.7. Research Method

This study uses qualitative method because the role of literature will be background knowledge in answering the research problem (Cresswell, 2007, p.53). In addition, it is because the collected data for this study were in the form of words or text.

The collection of the data were taken from the twelve songs of P!nk's *Funhouse* and the sixteen songs of The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination*. The data were analysed to reveal the women's portrayal in both albums and to compare the patterns that construct the depiction of women in the view of postfeminism.

1.8. Research Procedures

In conducting the study, the following steps were taken as follows:

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1. reading and close-reading all of the song lyrics in P!nk's *Funhouse* and The Pussycat Dolls' *Doll Domination*,
2. highlighting the female personas' acts, thoughts, and speeches as the textual evidence,
3. filtering the female personas in both albums by using Faludi's postfeminism (1991),
4. analysing and comparing the data results,
5. presenting the data results framed by the related theories to answer the research question,
6. discussing and interpreting the analysed data,
7. drawing the conclusions of the analysed and interpreted data, and
8. making the suggestion for further research.

1.9. Clarification of Terms

- Portrayal : a depiction of someone or something in a work of art or literature; a picture (Online Oxford Dictionaries, 2012).
- Postfeminism: is a highly contested term, used to refer to: (1) those contemporaries of Third Wave feminists who disavow feminism, finding it divisive or to have outgrown its relevance and appeal, and focus instead on the social liberties women have already won and also (2) those Third Wave feminists who actively claim feminism but who are also working to transform it into what they hope will be an "updated" and more dynamic movement (Mukherjea, 2011, p.2).
- Pop Culture : modern popular culture transmitted via the mass media and aimed particularly at younger people. (Online Oxford Dictionaries, 2014).

1.10. Organisation of Paper

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The paper is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the terms, and organisation of the paper.

CHAPTER II

It contains theoretical review that provides a basis for conducting the statement of problems.

CHAPTER III

This section consists of the research methodology, discussion of the steps and procedures of the study, and the data resources in conducting the study.

CHAPTER IV

This chapter contains the research findings and discussion. In this part, the result of the research will be presented.

CHAPTER V

This last chapter contains the interpretation towards the result of the research in a form of conclusion and suggestion related to the research.

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