

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Femme Fatale is the term originated from French, which means as a dangerous woman. The Femme Fatale then described as an attractive female who uses her charms to seduce or destroy a male protagonist. She can be desirable but dangerous and brings the downfall of the male protagonist (Elhallaq 2015). The Femme Fatale also be depicted in other forms, such as a witch, a supernatural woman, and vice versa (Thekkeveetil 1983). The various forms of Femme Fatale figures both in literature and in mythology are somewhat more compound. She may appear as a high society lady, bejeweled and surrounded by wealthy people, as a low-class woman, and many more. Those various forms required to hide their origin personality. These figures related to the traits of Femme Fatale that are stated by Mary Ann Doane in her work entitled *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, that Femme Fatale depicted the image of a dangerous woman (Beckman 2012).

The dangerous nature of Femme Fatale tends to do a hidden purpose (Grossman 2009). To pursuit the hidden purpose, Femme Fatale uses her seductively dangerous charm to overpower men. The idea of how women overpower men becomes the concept of Femme Fatale's attempt to break the patriarchal culture. There is a relation between Femme Fatale and patriarchy. The

patriarchal culture limited women's freedom and led women to tend to seek freedom and become independent. In an attempt to struggle from the oppression of patriarchy, it argued if there is a relation between the presence of *Femme Fatale* and patriarchy. Patriarchy refers to a hierarchical system that values men with power over as many as possible to control the women (Tong 2009).

The patriarchal system constructed gender categories into feminine and masculine as the cultural programming of people and known as traditional gender roles (Tyson 2006). The traditional gender roles depicted male and female into different stereotypes. Traditional gender roles lead women into a subordinate place since it undervalues women as inferior to men. In response to women's subordination within the patriarchal society, women decided the movement against patriarchy. Furthermore, patriarchy is an authority system designed by men that cripple women and their rights in the aspect of the political, economic, and social establishments and conditions (Humm 1992). Patriarchal culture often depicted women as powerless and incapable of making decisions, often engaged in gossips and hearsays, totally incapable, and less intelligent. These values were projected and reinforced over the years through the patriarchal societies which adopted the idea that woman was inferior, caging women into the roles that are limited only to be a man's sidekick, keeping the harmony of a family, being a good mother, or a great wife (Imron 2012). The patriarchal culture also sometimes gives women the harmful impacts, such as making women inferior, making it hard to pursue their rights and opportunities to develop their particular life's aspects

such as job, education, politics, and others. Thus, patriarchal culture becomes one of the biggest obstacles for women to achieve liberty and equality.

The patriarchal culture also leads to women's subordination. The terms 'women subordination' were considered the inferior position of women, their limited access to resources, and their creation of their own decisions (Sultana 2011). Women are subjected and controlled in society within the patriarchal domination. This term means that the inferiority position of women as women's subordination is a condition where a power relationship exists, and men become superior by dominating women. Besides the discriminatory actions toward women in real life, women also face discriminatory actions in media. The portrayal of women is not always right. It can be twisted and manipulated. Media also portray "women's do" and "do not" based on the people's assumption, which later will make the society follow that made up portrayal and look up to it. In order to describe the phenomenon, women must turn down the notion that popular culture for girls and women did not matter or that it only consisted of retroact portrayals (Douglas 1994).

In this era, women struggle to have the same equal right in every sector in society. Women more independent and they can do the same activity and job the same as men. Nowadays, women are not only to stay at home. Women also can do men's jobs. Women as individual workers nowadays experienced both the liberating or the empowering impact of increased their economic lives. But, although more women are working, they are often still get discrimination such as

lower salary than men (Van der Gaag 2014). This case linked to the presence of patriarchal culture and traditional gender roles.

Relates to the study; traditional gender roles make men always take control of women. Men also direct women into what men want and shape in society. For example, there are several men as a husband that restricted their wife to work. Based on gender roles, women must stay at home, doing household work, and take care of children. Women should obey men's rules. In the feminist view in the modern era, women should have against the limitation of their freedom and equal as men. The women's subordination cannot separate the struggle to get the empowerment in a patriarchal culture. The patriarchal culture also leads women to get equality in many ways. The way to fight equality sometimes is not only in the right way.

The issue of woman subordination and some patriarchal culture is related to the Indonesian culture. If we take a look at the past, women are restricted from going out from home and cannot get an education in school. However, there is a movement well-known as emancipation when Kartini as a woman spearheaded the struggle of gender equality between women and men in the sphere of education through her intellectual thought of women awakening which creates the independent and capable women nowadays (Swasono 2016).

The existence of women in the sphere of many job aspects is the evidences that women are able to compete with men and break the patriarchal values in which women are considered as subordinate beings. In Indonesia, people

sometimes still follow traditional gender roles. Women should have the right to express their freedom to become whatever they want because they have the same right. On the other hand, although they have the rights to express themselves, the woman is still a woman that always seen inferior (Van der Gaag 2014).

Media, as a form to spread the ideas, give the portrayal of woman, and also give impacts to the society. The portrayal of women in media can sometimes be twisted and far from what they want to be delivered. Related to those issues about women struggle to get equality, it raised the term of *Femme Fatale*. *Femme Fatale* is the woman illustrated as a dangerous woman harming the good man (Doane 1991). Therefore, *Femme Fatale* is the category of negative women as a patriarchal concept; good women are those who accept and obey traditional gender roles, in contrast, bad women reject and disrupt the role (Tyson 2006). *Femme Fatale* is one of the issues in a patriarchal system that usually appeared in media such as film, tv series, and also a music video. Thus, besides the most negative stereotypes of women in the portrayal of *Femme Fatale*, this study provides another perception of *Femme Fatale* construction. In this study of the music video, try to reveal how women try to show their power against the limitation of men. However, the media also has the power to twist the resistance of women.

This study focused on the representation of *Femme Fatale* as the resistance towards women's subordination that portrayed in the music video. "Sit Still, Look Pretty" is a song by American singer Daya. It released on March 29, 2016. The

song was written by Gino Barletta, Mike Campbell, and Britten Newbill. The song includes themes of female empowerment in its lyric. Billboard ranked "Sit Still, Look Pretty" at number 28 on their "100 Best Pop Songs of 2016" list (Billboard 2016). This music video can be accessed on the Official Youtube Channel of Daya. This song urges girls to follow and fight for their dreams by themselves and does not depend on them to grant happiness (Getz 2016). To conclude, this song aims to encourage all women to take full authority toward their own lives.

In 2017, Daya broke down her perspectives toward the lyrics of this song, providing a vivid interpretation for the listener. She confirmed that this song includes women's stereotype issues, which inspired by her own experiences when people told her to be a dress-up and make-up in a particular way (Scott 2016). This music video is exciting to be observed because this music video tries to empower women to do whatever they want; however, the writer discovers some violent actions done by women to achieve her freedom that indicates the notions of *Femme Fatale*. This music video concerns the plot of a woman struggle who takes revenge on men around her. This song tells about how women should have power for themselves to prove that they are strong and not always inferior. The scenes depicted the woman sitting in the centre of the room and surrounded by men that try to program that woman. In the beginning, the woman depicted as the weak one who always in control of men. It related to the patriarchal culture that man always superior, and woman is inferior. At the end of the video, the woman is standing and attacks every man, and she wants to escape from the trap and rules

men by rude action. The woman in the music video does not want to judge as weak; she wants to be strong and wants to get freedom. These several inappropriate actions lead to *Femme Fatale*. The *Femme Fatale* figure usually described as a figure who always wrong and resists men. The existence of patriarchy shown through the imbalance of power relations between man and woman (Walters 2005).

The music video somehow contains an exciting plot to be analyzed as the woman character in the music video gradually transforms from a weak woman into a rebel one. It also has a contrast ending compared to the *Femme Fatale* in the old era. Based on the fact that the *Femme Fatale* figure in the music video different from the depiction of the common *Femme Fatale* in the old era. The writer tries to unveil how the music video portrays the *Femme Fatale* figure based on the attitudes and characteristics shown by the figure being investigated and explaining the ideology behind the presence of *Femme Fatale* in the music video.

This object is similar to "Pretty Girl" Maggie Lindemann (2016) and "Sweet but Psycho" Ava Max (2018) has a similar issue about *Femme Fatale*. In Maggie Lindeman – Pretty Girl, the song focus on how a girl wants to do everything that they want. They just want to be free and ignore the stereotypes about a girl because they are equal to men. The music video is not displayed the *Femme Fatale* figure profoundly; it only shows the act of women to attack men by rude action. The other similar issue is provided in a song by Ava Max entitled Sweet but Psycho. This song explicitly tells about a woman who can be

dangerous. The music video captured a woman figure who poisons and tortures a man into death as the revenge of her jealousy. This music video has not provided the plot and the patriarchy concept as the basic notions of the Femme Fatale presence.

Compared to the previous objects, The music video "Sit Still, Look Pretty" is chosen because it seems to be a more suitable object to be analyzed for some reason. This song has a clear plot compared to the previous others. The plot that indicates the figure of Femme Fatale depicted clearly from the beginning to the end. The neatly plot required to this study since it attempts to examine the representation of the Femme Fatale through the appearance and characteristics, a clear story would be helpful for the study. Diverse to the object that chosen, the other music video does not provided the clear plot and has a mainstream story. For the "*Sweet but Psycho*" by Ava Max, the character about Femme Fatale displayed as common Femme Fatale figure and does not attempts the special things.

The previous study that related to this study is a thesis from Lailatul Mazidatur Rohmah's study on Sherlock Holmes: "The Abominable Bride" TV Movie (Rohmah 2017). The study resulted that as considered as Femme Fatale, a woman should be able to use the powerful weapon. The director shows the powerful weapon by changing the woman into a ghost to become dominant. The second is Yudha Adji Pangestu's study on Revisiting Femme Fatale in Music Video Clean Bandit – Solo Feat Demi Lovato (Pangestu 2019). This study reveals

that there is shifting in the portrayal of Femme Fatale caused by the influence of the producer's experience as the victim of patriarchy. The third study is a Representation of Women as Femme Fatales: History, Development, and Analysis by Ayman Hassan Elhallaq (Elhallaq 2015). This study reveals that Femme Fatale characters are not ends in themselves but may attribute to some factors such as economic, psychological, and also the environment. The fourth study is Deconstructing the Male: Masochism, Female Spectatorship, and the Femme Fatale in Fatal Attraction, Body of Evidence, and Basic Instinct by Miranda Sherwin (Sherwin 2014). The study reveals that the protagonist men sexually desirable to the deadly women as considered as Femme Fatale as they proved that women could be manipulating. This study examines that women can be affected by men. The last study is La Femme Fatale: The Female Psychopath in Fiction and Clinical Practice by Caroline Logan (Logan 2011). The study concern the representation of psychopathic women in fiction that categorized as Femme Fatale. The study discovered that the acts of women as the Femme Fatale usually manipulated and dominated the others.

All of the related studies above are on a similar topic about Femme Fatale with a different focus specifically. The first mentioned study focuses on revealing the way of Femme Fatale to gains her power. The second study focuses on examining the shifting of the Femme Fatale that leads to the changing image of women no longer seen negatively and always be punishes. The third study focuses on Femme Fatale characters that used their beauty and sexuality to gain equality in all of their life's aspects. The fourth study focuses on the spectatorship and male

gaze towards view the *Femme Fatale* action. Lastly, the fifth study focuses on the psychopathic traits that lead to *Femme Fatale*.

The writer expects that all the previous studies mentioned above can support the writer's arguments about the vital concept and characteristics of the figure of *Femme Fatale*. The difference between this study and the previous studies is based on the object because *Femme Fatale* usually applied in literary work. However, in this study, *Femme Fatale* can be applied in popular culture such as music videos that can be more related in the modern-day. Thus, the author proposes to conduct this study. The writer also found that in Universitas Airlangga, there has not much discussion about *Femme Fatale* in a music video. Moreover, the representation of *Femme Fatale* might have changed by the time, and it might be there are different shapes about *Femme Fatale* adjusted to women's life nowadays. In this case, the writer considers that issue essential to be examined can complete the previous research which had already done before.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background that explained before, the author examined the statement of the problem:

- How is *Femme Fatale* represented in *Sit Still Look Pretty* music video?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study tries to seek to answer the question related to the statement of the problem. In order to answer the questions above, this study focuses on describing and interpreting:

- The portrayal of a Femme Fatale in "Sit Still, Look Pretty" Daya music video is portrayed according to her traits.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be various. It can depend on how people interpret about Femme Fatale and the music video itself. There are several significant points of this study. First of all, for the researcher, it will give insight into the study of Femme Fatale figure and how women portrayed in media. This study is also expected to give knowledge about the ideology of Femme Fatale figure and how this issue rise in nowadays. This research is also expected to give understanding to people to become more critical in interpreting women's depiction within the popular culture through the illustration of Femme Fatale.

The last one, the writer of this study, wants to give a contribution for English Department students of Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Airlangga to become a reference for the next research and hopefully, it can be a reference and enrich the study about Femme Fatale in the music video for cultural studies field.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

Feminism: belief of social, political, and economic equality of both sexes (Weik 2015)

Femme Fatale: the women illustrate as the dangerous women that can cause harm to men (Doane 1991)

Gender roles: the stereotype that tells men and women what is typical for their sex in a particular context and situation (Eisenchlas 2013)

Patriarchy: a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions (Asiyanbola 2005)

Women's subordination: The inferior position of women, their limited access to resources and creating their own decisions (Sultana 2011)