

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This research aimed to examine how femininity is negotiated through hyper-feminine aesthetics and satire in Sabrina Carpenter's *Manchild* music video using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. The research finds that the music video does not reject conventional femininity, rather it uses them to reconstruct its meanings by combining hyper-feminine appearance and repeated representations of independence, competence, and criticism towards the patriarchal gender expectations.

In the denotative level and connotative level, the music video presents a combination of glamorous styling and hyper-feminine costumes, with satirical lyrics and some aggressive gesture, with the intention to challenge conventional gender expectations. The music video depicts Sabrina Carpenter with a highly feminine appearance, as an autonomous, aware, and capable of navigating traditionally masculine spaces, rather than portraying her as a passive and in need of male protection. At the same time, the male characters are satirically displayed with an immature, incompetent, and dependent characteristics, creating a reversal in conventional gender expectations.

However, at the myth level, the music video exist in an ambivalent position. As these repetition of portrayals collectively challenge patriarchal myths that associate hyper-femininity with fragility, passivity, and dependence by constructing new myths of female autonomy, authority, and

narrative control. Nevertheless, these messages are continued to be delivered through the logic of conventional popular media, where female portrayals have been highly influenced with dominant beauty standards and expectations of femininity. As a result, the music video illustrates Gill's (2007) postfeminist media culture concept, where female empowerment and commodification coexist rather than oppose one another. Overall, the music video *Manchild* portrays that femininity is continuously negotiated through the interaction of hyper-feminine aesthetics and satire, rather than completely rejected, within the contemporary popular culture.

5.2 Recommendation and Implication

Based on the findings, further research is encouraged to examine the negotiations of femininity across different modern day popular artist, music genres, and cultural contexts to provide a broader comparison of gender representation in contemporary popular culture. Other forms of media text such as lyrics, films, or other digital content are encouraged to be used to understand how femininity is negotiated in popular media. In addition, other theoretical perspective of intersectionality, neoliberal feminism, or audience perspectives are encouraged to provide a more comprehensive understandings of how femininity is produced and interpreted by different audiences.

Media practitioners, artist, and creators are encouraged to explore more diverse way to represent femininity within popular media. While *Manchild* demonstrates that hyper-feminine aesthetics may function as a

site of female agency, future media productions may experiment different visual and narrative strategies to challenge conventional gender stereotypes. Creators are also encouraged to critically reflect how contemporary continuously operate within commercial logics that prioritize certain standards of femininity and beauty. This way, media texts can contribute to more diverse understandings of female identity within popular culture.

Finally, audiences are encouraged to engage with popular media in a more critical lens by looking beyond the surface level visual representations. Instead of focusing only on visual presentations, audience should also consider how visual elements, lyrics, and narratives may construct meanings surrounding gender and femininity. Developing a critical media literacy may help audience in acknowledging that in popular media, female empowerment can coexist with the convention of contemporary popular media logics.

5.3 Limitations

When interpreting its findings, this study has several limitations. First, this research focus solely on one single music video *Manchild* by Sabrina Carpenter. Thus the findings cannot be generalized to represent all music videos and artist, as different media texts may construct and negotiate gender in different ways. Furthermore, the music video is situated within the context of western popular culture, which means that the findings primarily reflect the cultural values and media conventions within that context.

Second, this study employs Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, which focuses on meaning construction within the media text. Which means, the study is limited to textual interpretation and does not examine how audience with different cultural or social backgrounds perceive or negotiate these representations. This means that the findings explains how femininity is constructed within the text rather than how it is interpreted by viewers. Therefore, audience interpretations may differ from the meanings identified in this study.

Lastly, this study primarily adopts Gill's (2007) postfeminist media culture to interpret the negotiation of femininity. Although the framework provides insights into the coexistence of female empowerment and commodification within contemporary popular media, it has also the criticism for predominantly reflecting western, white, and middle-class experiences of femininity. In addition, this study does not explicitly incorporate an intersectional perspective that considers how gender may intersect with other social identities. Consequently, the findings should be understood within the scope of theoretical framework used rather than as a comprehensive representation of woman's experiences across diverse social context.