

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Sexual objectification, one of the central problems from the feminist perspective, has been a prevalent issue that people face, especially women. In general, objectification occurs when one is treated as an object that is not an object but is, in fact, a human being (Nussbaum, 1995:257). Women are regarded as bodies when it comes to sexual objectification, specifically as bodies that exist for the benefit and satisfaction of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997: 175). Although sexual objectification is a single form of gender oppression, it contributes to and may even facilitate a variety of other forms of oppression that women experience, from sexual assault and employment discrimination to the discrediting of women's achievements. The experience of receiving treatment as a body or collection of body parts valued primarily for use or consumption by others is the commonality connecting every type of sexual objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997: 174).

Wesleyan University found that 51.8 percent of advertisements featuring women depicted them as sexual objects on average across 58 magazines (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008: 584). Conversely, women were objectified 76 percent when they appeared in advertisements in men's magazines (Stankiewicz

& Rosselli, 2008: 585). Furthermore, a study surveying 283 undergraduate men found that watching TV, sports programming, and using pornography were all linked to higher acceptance of women's objectification, which contributed to attitudes and actions that supported violence against women (Seabrook et al., 2019: 536).

In addition, feminist thought has typically portrayed men's sexual objectification of women as not just a minor issue but a major one in women's lives, and the fight against it is the core of feminist politics. MacKinnon stated that women's intimate experience of sexual objectification is definitive of and synonymous with women's lives as the female gender (Nussbaum, 1995:250). To establish, uphold, and express hierarchy is where the cultural practice of objectifying female bodies began (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997: 175).

Directed by Benjamin Nolot, *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* documentary explores growing up in the “hook-up culture” of today’s young adults. The documentary, which follows the journey of college students on spring break, offers shocking perspectives on attitudes and behaviors concerning sex, the normalization of sexual violation, and the struggle towards media-driven conceptions of gender and sexuality (Loesch & Loesch, 2018). Nolot stated that the curiosity of what kind of society encourages many men to buy a woman or child for sex led him and his production team to produce a film about sexual culture in America, which provides a more comprehensive look at the landscape of sexual culture. Unexpectedly, Spring break, which he thought to be a smaller

segment of a more significant film, became a place where sexual violation was prevalent (Loesch & Loesch, 2018).

Amidst many forms of sexual violation depicted in the documentary, the writer will analyze the sexual objectification of women and the male sexual dominance portrayed in the documentary to raise insights and awareness about sexual objectification faced by women.

1.2 Research Problem

To analyze the sexual objectification depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* Documentary, the writer formulated two questions, which can be written as follows:

1. What are the forms of sexual objectification of women depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* Documentary?
2. What are the forms of male sexual dominance depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* Documentary?

1.3 Scopes of the Study

The writer will limit this study only by focusing on the 2017 American documentary *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution*, directed by Benjamin Nolot, to analyze the forms of sexual objectification and the male sexual dominance portrayed in the documentary. In her book *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction*, Aufderheide states that documentary makers use similar methods as fiction filmmakers, employing cinematographers, sound engineers, digital experts, musicians, and editors (Aufderheide, 2007: 12). Hence, the writer will analyze the

aspects of cinematographic elements in the documentary. Furthermore, to analyze the forms of sexual objectification of women and the male sexual dominance in the documentary, the writer will utilize Martha Nussbaum's objectification theory and Catharine MacKinnon's theory of gender.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are:

1. To analyze the forms of sexual objectification of women depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* documentary.
2. To analyze the male sexual dominance depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* Documentary.

1.5 Previous Studies

Despite the lack of research on the *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* documentary, the writer has analyzed similar studies. The first study is a thesis by Laras Adistya Putri (2020) entitled *Objectification Suffered by Black Woman in Suzan-Lori Parks' Venus*. This study identifies six types of objectification experienced by a black woman on Venus and explores their driving forces. Sexuality, class, and ethnicity cause objectification in Suzan-Lon Parks' Venus.

The second study is a thesis entitled *Objectification of Women as Seen through Anastasia Steele in Fifty Shades of Gray* by F.X. Natanael Nonon Erta Putri Intan Permatasari (2015). The study aims to describe the female characters in the book and identify objectification in Anastasia Steele's relationship. As a result of this thesis, Steele and Grey's heterosexual relationship in Fifty Shades of

Grey displays objectification. Anastasia Steele is described as seductive and submissive, highlighting the objectification of women. The description fits the criteria of denial of autonomy, denial of subjectivity and autonomy, inertness, fungibility, and ownership.

Furthermore, a study entitled *Man's Body on the Line: Male Objectification in Magic Mike (2012)* by Agnes Leona and Diah Ariani Arimbi (2016) aims to examine how men and their bodies are portrayed in the Hollywood film *Magic Mike* (2012). The study finds that male actors in *Magic Mike* have a muscular body type and are sexualized on the screen to promote masculinity. The results suggest that men's bodies are objectified and commodified for visual pleasure.

The fourth study is a journal article by Maud Blose (2012) entitled *Pornographic Objectification of Women through Kwaito Lyrics*. The article examines how women are objectified in Kwaito music and how the genre has deviated from its roots as an expression of democratic, indigenous, and controversial township voices. The author analyzes fans' views on female representation in music and whether musicians have diverged from the path to success. Examining lyrics, the article questions whether popular music can move away from gender inequality and exploitation of women.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Data and The Source of Data

The writer uses the *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* documentary by Benjamin Nolot from the online streaming platform (Netflix) as the primary data, with secondary data to support the primary data acquired from books, journals, and websites to provide a strong foundation for the research.

1.6.2 Data Collection

In his book *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*, George defines library research as finding sources that offer factual data or opinions on a research question (George, 2008:6). It involves reading information from books, theories, and documents to gather data about issues. Hence, the writer does library research using necessary books, journals, and data.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

The writer applies the radical feminist approach. According to radical feminism, the majority of interactions between men and women serve to uphold male sexual dominance. Women are socialized to follow societal expectations of femininity and sexual objectification and satisfy men's sexual desires (Jaggar, 1983:50). Thus, this approach helps to analyze the portrayal of sexual objectification of women and male sexual dominance based on the scenes in the documentary through the radical feminism framework. Hence, the writer will analyze the study using a radical feminist approach.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter comprises the background of the study, research problem, the scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research method, and organization of the writing.

Chapter II: Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter contains an explanation of a documentary film. The second aspect is the cinematography, which consists of the shots, lens height, and sound. The third aspect is extrinsic aspects, which explain the theories needed in the next chapter.

Chapter III: Discussion

The central chapter of the thesis comprises the analysis to answer the study's research questions. The writer will analyze the forms of sexual objectification of women and male sexual dominance depicted in *Liberated: The New Sexual Revolution* Documentary.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

This chapter is the summary and analysis of the previous chapters.