

**DESIRING DOMINATION:  
A POSTFEMINIST STUDY ON THE LYRICS OF  
LANA DEL REY'S *ULTRAVIOLENCE* ALBUM**

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**ABSTRACT**

Feminist movements are said to have served their purposes and achieved equality, empowerment, and emancipation for women. America thus enters the era of postfeminism. A redefined image of independent and free-spirited yet feminine women is brought through popular cultural products, creating a shift in the view of 21<sup>st</sup> century American women, one of which can be seen from their response toward male domination. It is expressed in the lyrics of songs compiled in Lana Del Rey's *Ultraviolence* album. This study employs descriptive qualitative method by treating the lyrics with the same approach as poetry. The data are in the form of language features, such as words, phrases, clauses, lines, and verses related to women's response to male domination. McRobbie's notion of double entanglement allows this study to borrow the feminist concept of male domination. There are five male dominating conducts found in the lyrics: 1) marginalization in "Sad Girl"; 2) subordination in "Shades of Cool", 3) stereotype in "The Other Woman"; 4) physical and psychological violence in "Ultraviolence", sexual violence in "Fucked My Way Up to the Top"; 5) domestic workload in "Old Money". Meanwhile, the women's response toward male domination is expressed in "Brooklyn Baby". The progressive postfeminists approach male domination differently from the conservative feminists. The female speaker of the lyrics comprehend that her men's conducts are dominating her, yet she receives them with a manner full of desire. For her, every relationship has the luxury to define their own rules as long as there is a consensual agreement from both parties involved.

**Keywords:** *domination; lyrics; postfeminism; postnational; women*

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout his entire campaigns as the United States presidential candidate, Donald Trump often made insults to his opponent, Hillary Clinton, and to women in general. During the election, a video leaked showing him and TV host Billy Bush talking vulgarly about how Trump treat women and their bodies upon possessing power as a wealthy celebrity (Drum, 2016, par. 1). The video caused fury from public, and critics deemed such action as sexual assault. Surprisingly, Trump won, which meant that a substantial number of women voted for him, since female voters made up more than 50 percent of the electorates (Golshan, 2017, par. 3-7). Petersen (2016, par. 8) interviewed Trump’s female supporters and discovered that they did not take all of his insults or allegations into consideration. One of them even said she would be worried if her husband did not talk or behave in a manner similar to Trump’s.

The above evidence illustrates that there is a shifting view on the 21<sup>st</sup> century American women. Women prior to this generation would have raged over any sexist comments. Yet, young women seem to consider sexism as just the way men are, if not as a thing of the past (Pomerantz, Raby & Stefanik, 2013, pp. 185-7). A question then arises. Is it a backlash toward feminism? Feminist movements fought gender inequality, and it is safe to say that the battle has been won. Now that women have access to education and occupation, they do not care anymore about degrading remarks. Women thus enjoy their individuality that they no longer feel the need to unite. This condition bears to mind the term ‘postfeminism’.

According to Genz&Brabon (p. 3), postfeminism is a contemporary movement that

works both as the death and the reincarnation of feminism. It exposes young women to an image of women with an extensive sense of independence and an elevated freedom and/of choice, while still upholding feminine qualities, such as fashion, makeup, physical fitness and beauty pampering. Women thus continue to be under the male gaze. Yet, instead of being a victim, they get pleasure and take advantage from it. This lately found comprehension of women is brought out through popular culture.

Unlike its former petitioner that used institutionalized activism as platforms to spread its message and serve its purpose, postfeminism has utilized popular culture. Popular cultural products have been an effective means to promote the image of emancipated postfeminist women, while at the same time destructing the conservative tenets of feminism. Such products depict women’s emancipation in individual capacity, such as personal independence and sexual liberation. Postfeminist popular culture, from fashion, film, fiction, magazine, music to TV show, become the ruling influence on women’s development.

American popular music passes postfeminist values targeted at the scene of young women. Popular music reflects the shifting characteristics of a particular generation. Popular songs, the musical and lyrical elements, are a medium of expression of the youth experience (Plasketes, 2002, pp. 613-8). Musicians then pay more attention to lyrics, writing them to have more meanings and messages. From emotional ballads as personal outlets to counterculture anthems as complaints, song-lyrics can spin any political and social discourses. Traditionally, love lyrics sell. A female songstress singing softly love lyrics is more appealing to mass audience,

including men, than those of 'Girl Power' anthems. A fitting example of such songstress is Lana Del Rey.

Lana Del Rey is an American singer, songwriter and recording artist, who was getting exposure in 2011 for her sensational "Video Games" music video. Her rising fame was continued by her debut *Born to Die* (2011), peaking at #2 on the US *Billboard 200*. The album birthed hits like "Born to Die", "Blue Jeans", "Dark Paradise" and "Summertime Sadness." In 2012, she released a mini album *Paradise*, with singles like "Ride", "Blue Velvet" and "Burning Desire." Based on these albums, Del Rey has been criticized for being an anti-feminist. She remains unaffected by the criticism and continues recording her upcoming album (Savage, 2012, par. 40-50).

The release of her third studio album, *Ultraviolence* (2014), invigorates the image of tragic glamour and melancholia in Del Rey's lyrics and becomes her first album to reach #1 in the US (Caulfield, 2014, par. 1). The album is composed of eleven bleakly nuanced ballads, namely "Cruel World", "Ultraviolence", "Shades of Cool", "Brooklyn Baby", "West Coast", "Sad Girl", "Pretty When You Cry", "Money Power Glory", "Fucked My Way Up", "Old Money" and "The Other Woman." Del Rey divulges about a woman who is highly obsessed by her love for a man that she becomes dominated. Other people might think the relationship is unhealthy, while conservative critics would have considered it as an anti-feminist expression because woman should not love their men more than they love themselves.

*Ultraviolence*, with its provocative song titles and lyrics, has been ascribed as a

postfeminist text. Prior pursuing a musical career, Del Rey wanted to be a poet; she studied philosophy at Fordham University. Only after her uncle taught her six guitar chords, she turned her poem into song-lyrics. According to Sadie (p. 85), lyrics are a form of literary text that bears resemblances to poetry. Similar to poems, lyrics contain sound pattern as well as expressive and subjective thoughts and feelings uttered in first person point-of-view. From this understanding, the lyrics of the songs compiled as an album can be studied using the same approach as poetry (Holman & Harmon, 1992, p. 422). While Del Rey both as the singer and songwriter can be placed as the poet, the woman singing in the songs can be treated as the female speaker of the poems. Therefore, this study aims to answer: How does the female speaker desire male domination expressed in the lyrics of Lana Del Rey's *Ultraviolence* album?

This study is conducted under the discipline of American Studies, with the viewpoint of Post-nationalism. Rowe in *Post-national American Studies* (pp. 11-3), states that the study of Post-national study criticizes the previous American Study concepts that emphasize only on "American Exceptionalism" as distinguishable national identity and its role in spreading American cultural imperialism. The study of Post-national thus insists to include the different voices that have been previously excluded despite the fact that they are historically vital to the social, political and economic development of American culture. Women are one of the many excluded communities in the American society, and Women Studies is acknowledged by post-nationalist American Studies. The progressing ideas regarding to women concerns have affected the American culture and society. The agitation of women, known as feminist

movements, can be tracked back historically to time when they fight for gender equality, followed by several feminist movements, expanding the demands of rights to vote, higher education, professional works and domestic affairs.

Since these movements now have served their purposes, America is said to enter the era of postfeminism. The image of postfeminist American women is largely represented in popular cultural products, such as in the lyrics of Lana Del Rey’s *Ultraviolence* album. Explained by Angela McRobbie (2009), postfeminism is a theory that surfaces as:

a new kind of anti-feminist sentiment. Elements of feminism have been taken into account, ... these elements are then converted into a much more individualistic discourse, and they are deployed in this’ new guise, particularly in media and popular culture, but also by agencies of the state, as a kind of substitute for feminism. These new and seemingly ‘modern’ ideas about women and especially young women are then disseminated more aggressively, so as to ensure that a new women’s movement will not re-emerge (p. 1).

On one hand, postfeminism attempts to restore the spirit of pre-feminist time, as young women distinguish themselves from the extreme, man-hating feminism, which is correlated with out-of-date and unglamorous women. On the other hand, postfeminism draws on the feminist ground and its achievements for giving women equality, empowerment and emancipation. This ‘double entanglement’ crystallizes into an anti-feminist endorsement of female individualization (McRobbie, p. 2; Harris, p. 13; Tasker & Negra, p. 8). Are defined interpretation of freedom and independence, such as individual choice, physical liberation and sexual pleasure, is embodied.

Young women are constructed with a mindset of having unlimited choice and ultimate right in making decisions about their body and other personal matter and in any way they see fit, as long as they understand the consequences and there is no outside pressure. It results in ‘a new form of sexual contract’ between men and women (McRobbie, p. 12). If a woman enjoys the bondage, domination, sadism and masochism (BDSM) like Anastasia Steel in E. L. James’ *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2011), then she is allowed to have it. In their subordinate or dependent position, women have long been deemed particularly malleable or even ‘docile subjects’. Rather than the sexualized women portrayed as a victim, postfeminism argues that being dominated is a form of sexual liberation (Gill, pp. 8-10; Bellafante, p. 58). This standpoint contradicts the feminist opinion of such enjoyment as male domination. According to Fakhri (pp. 12-3), male domination exists in most parts of the world in many different happenings, but mostly characterized as these five conducts:

- Marginalization, or alienation, is one face of domination that banishes women to join the public realm that can take place in relationship, marriage, society or culture (Fakhri, p. 15). Women must stay at home, thus cannot participate in social life and have access to public facilities. Marginalization can cause economy extinction.
- Subordination is the superior position of men over women. Men are considered physically, mentally and intellectually more capable than women (Fakhri, p. 16). Therefore, women become the second-class group in society, and then are objectified. Subordination toward women

can result in self-esteem and self-confidence deprivation as well as the powerless feeling.

- Stereotype is a set of characteristics with negative tendency to govern what women can and cannot do or be (Fakih, pp. 16-7). This domination is fostered to justify gender expectations, forcing women to behave in a normative way by following the stereotypes ascribed for them. A negative effect of stereotype is shown when a woman faces sexual abuse, she tends to get blamed because stereotypically the intent of a woman who dresses up and puts makeup on is to attract men.
- Violence is the most apparent kind of domination. It is done by attacking or invading physical, mental and sexual integrity (Fakih, p. 17). There three kinds of violence: physical violence is absolutely visible violence through many attacks that may cause bodily harms, such as slapping, choking, biting, hitting, and kicking; psychological violence, or emotional abuse, is any nonphysical behavior or attitude designed to control, punish, or isolate another person through the use of humiliation or fear, resulting in psychological distress, such as verbal assault, isolation from certain group, ridicule, or the use of intimate knowledge for degradation (Fakih, pp. 17-8), and sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act, comment or attempt to obtain sexual act, directed against a woman's desire using coercion by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, which can destroy women's dignity, including rape, marital rape, sexual harassment and incest.

- Workload for men and women are differentiated with the man work outside of home, while the woman take care of the house, children, chores and men's need all by herself. This way, women are tied from social and intellectual occupation (Fakih, pp. 75-6). Relationship and marriage as a gender relation disguise this domination for men's benefit, while women suffer from accumulation of emotional labor.

Furthermore, McRobbie's double entanglement, allows a postfeminist analysis to borrow the earlier feminist concept, stating that postfeminism believes in the "co-existence of neo-conservative values in relation to gender, sexuality and family life, with processes of liberalization in regard to choice and diversity in domestic, sexual and kinship relations" (p. 256). McRobbie herself has done it in "Post Feminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime." She finds that besides the sexual freedom, city parties, rights to drink, and smoke and economically independence, Bridget still wants to pursue dreams of romance, find a suitable husband, get married and have children (p. 12).

From this understanding, this study treats lyrics of songs compiled in Del Rey's *Ultraviolence* as poems by employing Fakih's concept of male domination but analyzing it through postfeminist perspective. In doing so, the personal choice is given to women as to how they response to male domination. Additionally, the precise album from which the lyrics are taken is the CD released by UMG Recordings in 2014 for North American market. This study then uses descriptive qualitative method. The data are in form of language features, such as words, phrases, clauses, lines and verses related to women's response on male domination.

## DISCUSSION

The shifting view of the 21<sup>st</sup> century American women toward male domination is expressed on the lyrics of songs compiled in Del Rey’s *Ultraviolence* album. A postfeminist reading on the lyrics treated as poems connotes to the condition of a female speaker who is in a relationship with an alpha male figure. The female speaker’s story is about the happenings on her relationship told throughout the entirety of the album. According to a music critic Richardson (par. 4-5), *Ultraviolence* is a cohesive concept album, which tells a comprehensive and flowing story from the beginning of the album to the end.

Upon either listening to the songs or reading the lyrics, one conveyed feeling is a scrofulous and despairing overromanticisation of desire and domination. In no particular order, each song and its lyrics in the album reflect the man’s dominating conducts to the female speaker and how the she responds to them. The female speaker is consumed by her love for the man that she becomes inferior in the face of her man’s superiority. She is under the male domination in a voluntary and passionate manner. It can even be said that the woman is desiring the domination from her man. Deriving from the double entanglement of postfeminism, man’s dominating conducts in the lyrics are analyzed by borrowing the feminist definition on male domination. Fakih’s notion on five forms of male domination can be found in *Ultraviolence* album.

**Marginalization** of women can be grasped in the song “Sad Girl”. The female speaker’s life is limited by her man because she is not allowed to participate in the public

sphere. Her social mobility is handicapped; thus, she cannot leave home and go to any place she wants. However, she does not seem to mind. She even attempts to justify her choice to other women. Verses such as “Being a mistress on the side / It might not appeal to fools like you / Creepin’ around on the side / Might not be something you would do” and “Being a bad bitch on the side / Might not appeal to fools like you / Creepin’ around while he gets high / It might not be something you would do” clearly show that she does not mind at all being a ‘mistress’ and a ‘bitch’. The former means the caretaker of a house, while the latter refers to a woman who is worthless besides for sexual pleasure (Hornby, 1995, pp. 214-504). The female speaker must stay at home waiting for her husband, and be by his side when he does. Feminists would argue that mistress is the female equivalent of ‘mister’, while ‘bitch’ is often addressed unjustly to strong-willed, assertive women.

As the result of marginalization, the female speaker is blinded about what is happening outside of her cloistered world. She thinks that the way her man treats her is something worth jealous at. She calls other women fools and warns those who are trying to knock some senses into her. She defends her choice of being in a relationship with a man who is putting her aside. Lines “Watch what you say to me / Careful who you’re talking to / I’m on fire, baby” demonstrate how deeply in love she is. She conveys gossipers to mind their own business and forbids them from telling she is thinking and behaving foolishly because she will be offended. Postfeminism believes such action to be an invasion of individual freedom (Jolles, 2012, p. 44). As a consent adult, she is allowed to have personal preferences.

The female speaker continues claiming that she is a lucky woman because her man is strikingly good-looking and masculine. Lines “But you haven’t seen my man / You haven’t seen my man / You haven’t seen my man / You haven’t seen my him” and “He’s got the fire and he walks with it / He’s got the fire and he talks with it” can be indicated as an attempt of justification. She supposes other women will understand her choice when they lay eyes on her man and realize they are not as lucky as her. The repetition means that she wants to intensify that her man is a man of quality and virility. She even feels proud for her ability to seduce such man because it is an honor to be in a relationship with him, despite the fact that her man might feel differently. However, as the song title suggests, the female speaker is feeling sad. As much as she tries to cover up her true feeling by proclaim her proudness to other women, she cannot escape the sadness because all she does is lounging at home, marginalized from the public realm. Nevertheless, she realizes that it is the consequence of falling in love with a man like him.

Another consequence is **subordination**, which is strongly felt in “Shades Of Cool”. The female speaker is subordinated by her man, in term of being objectified. As an object, her feeling and opinion are disregarded for the sake of his ego. More background about her good-looking man is revealed in the following verses. “My baby lives in shades of blue / Blue eyes and jazz and attitude / He lives in California too / He drives a Chevy Malibu” and “My baby lives in shades of cool / Cool heart and hands and aptitude / He lives for love, for women, too / I’m one of many, one is blue” bear an ample understanding of the man. He is a Caucasian man who lives California with a rather laid-

back and carefree lifestyle. He is not interested to be attached to anyone or anything, besides drugs, cars and women. This secular worldview holds him back from having a committed relationship or a long-term employment. Meanwhile, the reference to color blue connotes that he has cold-hearted attitudes.

Contrary wise, all of these above characteristics are what appeal and attract the female speaker to the man. She fully realizes that she is merely one of his many possessions, thus she does not demand to be his priority. She still loves him and cherishes any moment she spends with him. Verse “And when he calls / He calls for me and not for you / He lives for love, he loves his drugs / He loves his baby too” obviously signifies that she is not the only woman in his life. She is aware that she is one of many women he is seeing, and that he will never love her as much as she loves him. Nevertheless, she always feels grateful every time he sees her, because it means that she is preferable than his other women, and she is proud of it. In this case, a competition among women to win the man’s love can be sensed.

Furthermore, the female speaker is conscious that she will not be able to break down her man’s emotional barrier. She cannot change him and make him settle in a committed relationship with her. Lines “But I can’t fix him, can’t make him better / And I can’t do nothing about his strange weather” and “But you are, are unfixable / I can’t break through your world / ’Cause you live in shades of cool / Your heart is unbreakable” display the female speaker’s sensibility in not trying to change her man and his carefree life. Feminism is set on determination of fixing men, such as to make them treat women more

equally, respectfully and faithfully. Moreover, such effort is done in motherly manner and adult men are known to resist being mothered again (Pickhardt, par. 6-7). As a postfeminist woman, the female speaker knows better than to do try fixing her man. Instead, she lets him and his ‘strange weather’ be. The phrase refers to his moodiness of how cold he can be to her, even in the warm Californian sunshine.

Stemming from marginalization and subordination of women, women have limited, if none at all, life outside of home. While men become the breadwinner, women must take care of the family needs, child rearing and house chores. The female speaker’s **domestic workload** is exemplified in “Old Money.” The title implies that she comes from an established family, which does not require her to work. She then stays at home like a housewife. Verses “The kids were young and pretty / Where have you been? Where did you go? / Those summer nights seem long ago / And so is the girl you used to call / The queen of New York City” and “The power of youth is on my mind / Sunsets, small town, I’m out of time / Will you still love me when I shine / From words but not from beauty / For reasons unknown to me” describe her boredom for waiting at home handling domestic affairs, as well as worry about losing affection from her man. She is afraid that her man is not interested in her, especially as they are growing old. Although she still has the same personality, wit, and humor, she will no longer be young and beautiful, and lose her charm, faded from being the house caretaker.

Her apprehension becomes worse because she feels like her man is leaving home too often and abandoning her. Verse

“But if you send for me, you know I’ll come / And if you call for me, you know I’ll run / I’ll run to you, I’ll run to you / I’ll run, run / I’ll come to you; I’ll come to you / I’ll come, come, come” shows how bad she longs to be with her man. After all of her errands are done, she waits anxiously at home for her man. When he finally comes, she will run to him with open arms. To ease her anxiety, she depicts a nostalgic scene. Verses “Blue hydrangea, cold cash divine / Cashmere, cologne and white sunshine / Red racing cars, sunset and vine” and “My father’s love was always strong / My mother’s glamour lives on and on” are employed as reminiscent of true love she witnesses in the past. She uses imageries to symbolize her parents’ golden era, indulging their happy memories. She hopes that her relationship with her man will be everlasting like theirs. Unlike feminism which is anti-stereotypical housewives, postfeminism gives absolute freedom for women to choose what her roles are in a relationship or marriage, including to be a stay-home, non-working mother because being a mother is already a job (Lagerway, 2016, p. 1).

Additionally, **stereotypes** towards women have a rather negative tendency, since the positive ones have been reserved for men. Stereotype degrades women position and diminishes their opportunity. The example of women’s stereotype can be seen in “The Other Woman”. The female speaker assigns a set of stereotypes regarding her appearance and attitude. Verses “The other woman finds time to manicure her nails / The other woman is perfect where her rival fails / And she’s never seen with pin curls in her hair anywhere” and “The other woman enchants her clothes with French perfume / The other woman keeps fresh cut flowers in each room /



There are never toys that scatter everywhere” completely ascribe characteristics as a standard of how ideal women should be. Women’s stereotype is based on their femininity works as a binary opposition to men’s masculinity. Conservative feminists suppress their femininity by refusing to wear girly clothes and makeup. For them, it is a source of weakness, and men inferiorly stereotype them for it (Kaplan et al., p. 722).

As a postfeminist woman, the female speaker regards femininity as a physical asset and encourages other women to use it at their benefit. Women thus can possess power over men because men’s desire for women’s body make them helplessly inferior (Bellafante, 1998, p. 58). She then says to other women that if you want to keep your men in your arms, you must act like you are the other women or a mistress. You must always take care of your body and keep your house clean and smell nice. This way, men will not get bored of you. Verses “And when her old man comes to call / He finds her waiting like a lonesome queen / Cause to be by her side / It’s such a change from old routine” and “But the other woman will always cry herself to sleep / The other woman will never have his love to keep / And as the years go by the other woman / Will spend her life alone, alone” exhibits stereotypical compulsions towards women. The female speaker sincerely lives up to this stereotypical standard. She suggests other women to patiently wait and passionately attend to their men’s need. According to Prabasmoro (p. 2), women must arouse men by being wild and naughty on bed, like a personal prostitute for her man. That ploy is the only way to keep men satisfied and ensure them stay away from having a mistress. The female speaker probably appears to be in a dominated

position of the relationship, but she actually takes advantage from it.

As the result of male domination, women often face violence. **Physical violence**, which causes the bodily injuries, and **psychological violence**, which emotional harms, are told in “Ultraviolence”. The female speaker’s experience of being in a relationship with a violent man is showed in the verse “This is ultraviolence / ultraviolence / ultraviolence / ultraviolence / I can hear sirens, sirens / He hit me and it felt like a kiss / I can hear violence, violence / Give me all of that ultraviolence.” This title of both the song and album is a combination of two words. The word ‘ultra’ means extreme or extremely, while ‘violence’ means actions intended to hurt people (Landau, 2000, pp. 243-61). The phase ‘ultraviolence’ thus expresses an extreme violence, to the extent that she needs an ambulance to save her life.

In addition, the female speaker tries to draw a fine line between the pains from loving hard and getting beaten. As elaborated in the lines “Heaven is on earth / I will do anything for you, babe / Blessed is this union / Crying tears of gold, like lemonade,” she is abusively and repeatedly beaten by her man, yet she receives that willingly. Although she might seem like a punching bag, both she and the man take the violence as an expression of love, in this case a sour yet sweet kiss. She understands that love never goes effortlessly because there will always be sacrifices and compromises, which can be felt in lines “Cause I’m your jazz singer / And you’re my cult leader / I love you forever/ I love you forever.” She thus strives to enjoy the sadism from her man that she might eventually turn into a masochist as she begs him to give her more violence. This elucidation contradicts

the feminist stance on healthy relationship, which is strongly against domestic violence. Meanwhile, postfeminism promotes an individual right of freedom for woman to do anything she desires to achieve sexual pleasure, without no pressure or force.

Furthermore, the psychological violence is expressed in the verses, such as “He used to call me DN / That stood for deadly nightshade / Cause I was filled with poison / But blessed with beauty and rage” and “He used to call me poison / Like I was Poison Ivy / I could have died right there / Cause he was right beside me / Jim raised me up / He hurt me but it felt like true love / Jim taught me that / Loving him was never enough.” It is apparent that the female speaker suffers psychological violence from her man, in form of verbal abuse. She is blatantly parallelized with deadly nightshade and poison ivy. The former is a highly poisonous plant, while the latter is a plant that causes a rash if it is touched, and they symbolized deception, danger and death (Boddy-Evans, par. 8). The parallelization is clearly a degrading remark attributing her as a dangerous creature whom shall be kept at distant. Her man’s verbal abuse obviously causes her an emotional breakdown, yet she thinks of it as a small price to pay for affection, and she endures. All of physical violence, emotional invalidation and power imbalance, she remains adoring her dominating abuser. The more violent he is, the more love she gains.

Another kind of violence is done sexually. It is when a woman receives an unwanted sexual act or remark from a man. According to the Advocates for Human Rights website, feminist activists explicate that sexual harassment is not a way to express sexual desire, but rather is a means by which

men declare power over women through threat or acts of violence, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and economic control (par. 5). Hence, women often face sexual hostility, in the workplace as a manifestation of power relation. The female speaker’s tale about **sexual violence** described in “Fucked My Way Up to the Top.” The verse “I fucked my way up to the top / This is my show / I fucked my way up to the top / Go, baby, go” apparently illustrates her effort to succeed in music industry. In climbing up the social ladder to get to the position she wants, she has to face the phase of being sexually harassed. When a high-powered studio mogul makes sexual advances, she seizes the moment as a stepping-stone for her musical career.

Different from feminist perspective, postfeminism does not presumptuously victimize women who are involved in a sexual advance and emplace them as sexual objects. They are sexual beings free to use their body in any way they desire, including as an asset to improve their lives. It means that any case of sexual advance is a two-way street, and women should also be considered as the decision maker (Rich, 2015, par. 5). These following lines verify this intent “Life is awesome, I confess/ What I do, I do best/ You got nothing, I got tested/ And I’m best, yes/ Lay me down tonight in my linen and curls / Lay me down tonight, Riviera girls” and “I’m a dragon, you’re a whore / Don’t even know what you’re good for / Mimicking me is a fucking bore to me / But babe / Lay me down tonight in my diamonds and pearls / Tell me songs at night about your favorite girl.” The female speaker is thus able to enjoy the pleasure of life. She proudly proclaims her accomplishment from capitalizing her sexuality, while other girls are stupid by not

doing so. Her liberated attitude is the embodiment of the absolute women's liberation proposed by postfeminism.

Following this new perspective of woman's liberation, disputes from conservative feminists upsurge. Insisting its values on gender equality between women and men, they strongly resist and repudiate male domination over women. However, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century American woman, Del Rey's view on how **women's response** to men's dominating conducts should be has shifted. Her idea of a true feminist is "a woman who feels free enough to do whatever she wants" (Lafarge, 2014, par. 5). She thus rebuttals to conservative feminists whom read her lyrics on *Ultraviolence* as anti-feminist through "Brooklyn Baby." The female speaker's relationship is criticized by feminists for being unhealthy and ill-suited. These following verses express her awareness of postfeminist position in the eye of feminism.

They say I'm too young to love you / I don't know what I need / They think I don't understand / The Freedom land of the seventies / I think I'm too cool to know ya / You say I'm like the ice I freeze / I'm churning out novels like / Beat poetry on Amphetamines  
They say I'm too young to love you / They say I'm too dumb to see / They judge me like a picture book / By the colors like they forgot to read / I think we're like fire and water / I think we're like the wind and sea / You're burning up, I'm cooling down / You're up, I'm down / You're blind, I see

The female speaker is judged by the feminists because she is too innocent and foolish to see how toxic both the man and the relationship are. Failing to see the relevance of feminism, she is said to deviate from its value. In fact, she realizes her man's

dominating conducts as well as his obnoxious emotional state, which enables her to balance him. For her, every relationship has the luxury to define their own rules as long as consensual agreement from both parties involved. Postfeminists then argue that they understand how feminism worked in the early period of its emergence. As the time goes by, the changing condition of woman demands the renewal of woman movement.

Unfortunately, this renewal does not continue the conservative perspective, but rather counterclockwise it. The differences of their stances cause the crash of the two activists. The conservatives tend to be rigid in gaining the goal of gender equality. They become more critical of men's claims to power and domination (Aronson, 2003, p. 904). While the progressives prefer to be more casual in promoting women's freedom and most importantly do not alienate man. Accordingly, the progressive generation bears new movement that appropriate to be applied for their era. Verse "I'm talking about my generation / Talking about that newer nation / And if you don't like it / You can beat it / Beat it, baby / You never liked the way I said it / If you don't get it, then forget it / Cause I don't have to fucking explain it" explicitly demonstrates this generation gap of women. The female speaker assumes that it is fine if the conservatives might not understand how the progressive generation approaches male domination. For them, it is the personal choice of the conservative feminists to make decision upon the issue.

## CONCLUSION

The feminist movements are said to have served their purposes and achieved equality, empowerment and emancipation for women.

America thus enters the era of postfeminism. A redefined image of independent and free-spirited yet feminine women is brought through popular cultural products, creating a shift on the view of 21<sup>st</sup> century American women. The lyrics of songs compiled in Lana Del Rey’s *Ultraviolence* album express women’s response on male domination.

McRobbie’s notion on double entanglement allows this study to borrow the feminist concept of male domination. The female speaker of the lyrics comprehend that her men’s conducts are dominating her, yet she receives them with a manner full of desire. There are five male dominating conducts found in the lyrics: 1) marginalization in “Sad Girl”; 2) subordination in “Shades of Cool”; 3) stereotype in “The Other Woman”; 4) physical and psychological violence in “Ultraviolence”; sexual violence in “Fucked My Way Up to the Top”; 5) domestic workload in “Old Money”. Meanwhile, the women’s response toward male domination is expressed in “Brooklyn Baby”.

The way progressive postfeminists approach male domination is different from the conservative feminists. From the postfeminist perspective, every party in a relationship has the freedom to define their own domestic rules as long as consensual agreement. Women also have the personal right to circumscribe her role and position in any relationship she is in. The shifting response toward men’s dominating conducts embraces the progressive postfeminism values to uphold the individual liberation to be oneself and has the final decision over their own choice.

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