

The Concept of “Perfect” in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) Movie

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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THE CONCEPT OF “PERFECT” IN *PITCH PERFECT* (2012) MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

No body is perfect in this world. People create their own perspectives of being perfect. The same way is undergone by the female characters in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie. This research is purposed to know how the concept of “Perfect” is perceived in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie. *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie is a musical comedy movie that tells a story about male and female competition in a cappella contests. Performances of male and female characters in group and personal category are the way to get the concept of “Perfect”. This research uses qualitative method with documentation and audiovisual as the method of collecting the data. This research uses binary opposition theory as the approach. Then the cinematography and Derrida’s deconstruction theory is applied to convey the concept of “Perfect” that is perceived in the movie. It is found that the female and male’s performances are interdependent in being “Perfect”. In conclusion, though the female becomes better than male, female is still the part of male. There is *female* because there is also *male*.

Key words : *Pitch Perfect*, perfect, *female*, *male*, deconstruction theory, dialogic

THE CONCEPT OF “PERFECT” IN *PITCH PERFECT* (2012) MOVIE


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ABSTRAK


Tak ada manusia yang sempurna di dunia. Orang-orang menciptakan perspektif mereka sendiri untuk menjadi sempurna. Hal yang sama juga dialami oleh karakter-karakter perempuan di film *Pitch Perfect* (2012). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana konsep “Sempurna” dipersepsikan di film *Pitch Perfect* (2012). Film *Pitch Perfect* (2012) adalah film musikal komedi yang menceritakan tentang kompetisi *male* (laki-laki) dan *female* (perempuan) di lomba a cappella. Performa karakter laki-laki dan perempuan di kategori grup dan individu adalah cara untuk mendapatkan konsep “Sempurna”. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan metode dokumentasi dan audiovisual dalam mengoleksi data. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori *binary opposition* sebagai pendekatan. Kemudian cinematografi dan teori dekonstruksinya Derrida diterapkan untuk mengungkapkan konsep “Sempurna” yang ditunjukkan dalam film tersebut. Ditemukan bahwa performa *female* dan *male* adalah dua arah untuk menjadi “sempurna”. Kesimpulannya, meskipun *female* atau perempuan menjadi lebih baik daripada *male* atau lelaki, *female* masih menjadi bagian dari *male*. Ada *female* karena adanya *male*. Itu tak terelakkan.

Kata kunci: *Pitch Perfect*, sempurna, *female*, *male*, teori dekonstruksi, bersifat dua arah

MOTTO

99:7  فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ،

So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.

99:8  وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ،

And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.

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I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My Dearest Mother and Father

Abah Shomad and Abah Rozaq

My Big Family

My Beloved Friends

Moslems all over the World

My self, fighting over laziness is happiness too

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

People often say “Nobody is perfect.” Yet the word “Perfect” itself has many possible meanings, definitions, or characteristics that are different from people’s perspective. It can be from his/her look, body, brain, skills, or personalities. In Oxford dictionary, perfect means having all the required or desirable elements, qualities, or characteristics; as good as it is possible to be (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/perfect). Winston Churchill says, “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often”. It means that to make an improvement, someone has to change to be better than before. This saying is in line with Qur’an Chapter 13 verse 11:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا أَمَانَهُمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءَ فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَالَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ

“For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession before and behind him: they guard him by command of Allah. Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah willeth a people's punishment there can be no

turning it back nor will they find besides Him any to protect
(<http://www.alim.org/library/quran/surah/english/13/YAT#11>).

Good changing needs good effort, relations, and faith. Humans are considered as social beings. They must communicate, have relationship, and trust among others to make a change in their life. There are many media that can help people to ease their communication. One of those media is literary work which can connect many ideas from many people and communicate their thoughts or ideas.

As one of many kinds of literary work, movie recently has been growing to be a media of communication. Movie always embodies ideological perspective that privileges certain characters, institutions, or cultures (Saktia, Ria. 2007. *Ideological Construction in Spiderman 3 Film: A Semiotic Analysis*. Surabaya: Airlangga University). Movie presents actions, images, and words which replicates life. There are number of features of a movie that the literary version cannot compete with. One of these is background music which is used to complement the scenes and emphasize the tension or the plot's development.

Related to movie, this paper attempts to find the concepts of *perfect* in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie. The writer chooses this movie because it shows the contrasting performance of male and female and how "perfect" is perceived in the movie. Because this movie is kind of musical comedy, the song choices are also considered to support the theme and analysis of the movie.

The music supervisors of *Pitch Perfect* movie, Julianne Jordan and Julia Michels, say to *Entertainment Weekly* that the requirements for each song, "It had to work right in the scene and tell the story, it had to translate to the actors'

on-camera, and it had to sound good a cappella.” The director, Jason Moore, says, “The songs were delivery systems for character and comedy” (Emily Rome. Dec 14, 2012. *Best of 2012 (Behind the Scenes): How the music in 'Pitch Perfect' became aca-awesome.* accessed 16 Jan. 2015. <http://insidemovies.ew.com/2012/12/14/pitch-perfect-a-cappella-music/>).

Pitch Perfect (2012) movie highlights the competition of all-male and all-female a-cappella group that have different style of performances. The all-male group is called as the Treblemaker, while the all-female group is called as the Barden Bella. The Treblemaker are depicted as the center of a-cappella group, the “everyone’s favorite” group. On the other hand, the Barden Bella is the margin of a-cappella group, the “refreshing yet displeasing to the eyes” group. The group and personal’s performances and the cinematic features in this movie convey several significant things which assert the concept of “Perfect” that the movie has.

This paper concerns with the analysis of the male and female’s performances and the cinematic features under binary opposition theory by Levi-Strauss. Finding the binary oppositions is the way to get the list of male and female’s performances in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie. Those performances are the concept of being “perfect” in the movie. From the analysis done, it is found that the female is worse than male because the male shows the domination either in preferred group or personal performances.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1.2.1 Why is female depicted worse than male?
- 1.2.2 How the concept of “Perfect” is perceived in the movie?

1.3 Objectives of Study

Based on the formulated research questions, the objectives of this study are to elaborate the reason why female is depicted worse than male and figure out how the concept of “Perfect” in this movie is actually perceived so it can support the theme of the movie.

1.4 Significances of Study

Academically, the writer hopes that this research contributes to knowledge development for English Department students. Hopefully, the students can consider this research as reference when they learn how the binary opposition theory is applied in a movie such as in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie.

Practically, analyzing *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie is similar when thinking of perfection that is crucial to improve human’s thoughts, attitudes and perspectives. Therefore, by this research it is hoped that people can live a good life and try to be a better person every day. On the other hand, for Moslems hopefully this research can make them realize that the real truth is perfection only belongs to Allah. We, as His creatures, can only do what He commands with our best. So in the end we can get Allah’s rewards.

1.5 Literature Review

Describing the concept of “Perfect” in *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie has not been written and analyzed yet by other students in their thesis analysis.

However, in aspect of theoretical approach, some students that use binary opposition theory as their subject are:

1. Dhinar Fitra (Sanata Dharma University: 2010), in her thesis entitled “Moliere’s *Tartuffe*: A Deconstruction Study on the Binary Opposition of the Characteristics of Tartuffe and Orgon Related to Tartuffe’s Deception”. The writer uses binary opposition theory to contrast the characteristics of Orgon and Tartuffe that are connected to the deception event in *Tartuffe* play. The result is that Tartuffe is the cause of the deception and Orgon is only the victim because the characteristics of Tartuffe are harmful while Orgon’s characteristics are harmless.
2. Fariska Pujiyanti (Diponegoro University: 2010) has analyzed the *Da Vinci Code* novel in her thesis entitled “Deconstruction of Male Domination in the *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown”. The research uses binary opposition theory by A.J Greimas. The binary opposition that is resulted in the research is such as Doxa and Orthodoxa.
3. Sri Rahayu (State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah: 2011) in her thesis entitled “A Binary Opposition in the Film *Music Within*”. Besides the binary opposition theory as the main theory, the writer also uses the concept of orientalism by Edward W. Said as the supporting theory. The goal of the research is to find two objects that oppose in the film *Music Within* and analyze the event that shows the opposition.
4. Nofiyanti Fuanda (State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga: 2013) in her thesis entitled “The Symbols of Vampire and Werewolf in Romance

Fantasy Movie: *The Twilight Saga*". To find out the meaning of vampire and werewolf symbols in *Twilight Saga*, the writer uses the binary opposition to get the contrast of Edward as the vampire and Jacob as the werewolf. The binary opposition that appears is Edward as a well-dressed gentleman, whereas Jacob as the half-naked guy. The result of the research is that vampire is the symbol of an ideal spouse in Java and Islamic perspective. Edward as the vampire is a handsome, rich, and honorable guy.

5. Putri Kurniasari (State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga: 2014) in her thesis entitled "The Differences between Anna's and Elsa's Characters based on Their Speech Act in *Frozen* Movie". The research analyzes the differences between two main characters of *Frozen* movie (Anna and Elsa) that are related to how they use speech acts in their utterances.
6. Crisnanto Tri Wibowo (State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga: 2015) with his thesis entitled "Deconstructive Reading in Lang Leav's Poem *All or Nothing*". As seen in the title, Crisnanto uses poem as his object of study. The research result shows that meaning in the poem tends to shift and be fluid because there is no absolute structure or discourse that can govern a text when it is separated from its author or origin. In the first analysis with binary oppositions, it is acquired that the poem conveys about how man should love their woman wholly where the deconstructive reading shows that female should love their female partially.

Unlike those reviews and analysis, this research attempts to find out why the female is depicted worse than male and how the movie creates the concept of “perfect” based on binary opposition theory and cinematic features. Yet the writer will also consider the characters, events, images, conversations, and songs of *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie in order to support the analysis.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

1.6.1 Binary Opposition

Binary opposition is a key concept in structuralism, a theory of sociology, anthropology, and linguistics that states that all elements of human culture can only be understood in relation to one another and how they function within a larger system or the overall environment. On the surface, these seem merely like identifying labels, but what makes them binary opposites is the notion that they cannot coexist. The problem with a system of binary opposites is that it creates boundaries between groups of people and leads to prejudice and discrimination. One group may fear or consider a threat the 'opposite' group, referred to as the other. The use of binary opposition in literature is a system that authors use to explore differences between groups of individuals, such as cultural, class, or gender differences. Authors may explore the gray area between the two groups and what can result from those perceived differences (Deconstructing Binaries. accessed in Nov 28th, 2015 at <https://www.education.psu.edu/geog128/node/608>).

The binary opposition is two terms which are in opposite to each other. Units of systems have meanings in the relation of its opposites; for example, a thing can be named as good because another thing is bad. Anything in the world has contradictions and has a positive value to things and a negative value to things, for instance, up/down, good/bad, light/darkness, right/left, presence/absence, and so on. In the binary opposition theory there are privileged and marginalized. The positive value is the privileged one, and the negative value is the marginalized one. The privileged one is also called center, and the marginalized one is called marginal. The privileged are good, truth, masculinity, rationality, nature, and so forth whereas the marginalized are the opposites of them. They are categorized by culture bound (Bartens, 2001: 128).

1.6.2 Cinematography

The third theory is cinematography. This theory is also important in this research because it helps the writer to analyze the pictures that are taken for contrasting the male and female's performances. This theory emphasizes framing in taking pictures. As cited in *Movie Studies: The Basics*, framing is divided into seven types:

- a. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which one can barely distinguish the human figure;
- b. The long shot (LS), in which humans are distinguishable but remain dwarfed by the background;
- c. The medium long shot (MLS), in which the human is framed from the knees up;
- d. The medium shot (MS), in which we move in slightly to frame the human from waist up;

- e. The medium close-up (MCU), in which we are slightly closer and see the human from the chest up;
- f. The close up (CU), which isolates a portion of a human (the face, most prominently);
- g. And the extreme close up (ECU), in which we see a mere portion of the face (an eye, the lips) (Villarejo, 2007: 38).

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative method. The qualitative research attempts to arrive at a description of the people, objects, events, place, conversations, and so on. In this method, the researcher does not need to make observation, interview, or questioner in any place. It only needs to collect data from books, newspapers, movies, websites and other sources which relate to the object that will be analyzed.

1.7.2 Data Sources

There are two types of data that are used in this research, main data and supporting data. The main data of this research is *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie. The data are taken in the form of pictures, dialogues, and characterizations that relate for contrasting the male and female performances in the movie. The supporting data are books, essays, or articles which will help the analysis of the main data.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

In this research, the writer uses documentation and audiovisual as the technique in collecting data. Furthermore, there are several ways that are used by

the writer to collect the data. First, the writer watches *Pitch Perfect* (2012) movie closely to be able to determine the intrinsic aspects of the movie. Second, the writer determines the aspects to classify the data based on the contrast of male and female performances. The aspect can be seen through the performances of male and female characters that will be explained in detail. Third, the writer collects the data which relate to the contrast of male and female performances so it can be classified into two parts; based on group and based on person/individual. The data that have been found will help the writer to not only find the binary opposition of male and female performances but also the concept of “Perfect” that the movie perceives.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

This research uses an objective approach as the technique to analyze the data. First, the writer watches the movie to identify the plot and other intrinsic elements of the movie. Second, before contrasting, the writer analyzes the similarity between male and female characters in the movie. Third, the writer analyzes then contrasts the performances of male and female characters based on group and person by using binary opposition theory. It will be used to get the concept of “Perfect” that the movie has. Moreover, the writer uses cinematography theory for explaining pictures that are taken from the movie. It consists either of lighting, framing technique, or camera angles. From the analysis the writer will draw the conclusion.

1.8 Thesis Organization

This paper is presented in four chapters. The first chapter elaborates the background of study, research questions, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, and method of research. The second chapter is the intrinsic elements. The third chapter elaborates the analysis of the research. Then the fourth chapter is conclusion of this research.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, this research can be concluded that the concept of “Perfect” in this movie is classified into two categories; based on group and personal’s performances. The male’s performances are privileged than the female’s performances. Male, in group, is modern, sporty, various, and energetic. It indicates that male is “Progressive” while female is “Conservative” in the field of improving his/her skills and qualities in performing. Male, in person, is planned, progressive, friendly and calm. It indicates that male is “Intellectual” while female is “Emotional” in the field of increasing his/her individual skills in communicating and having relationship with others. Progressive and intellectual, as portrayed in male’s performances and characterizations, are the characteristics of “Culture” as it always moves away from “Nature”. Nature’s characteristics are conservative and emotional as portrayed in female’s performances and characterizations. In this analysis, male, as the culture, is depicted as the center because male shows the required qualities to be “Perfect” than female who is the margin.

From the discussion, it can be seen that although the movie has the tendency to be deconstructed but it is not changing. In the analysis using binary opposition theory, female is depicted worse than male. Male has the required or desirable qualities to be “Perfect” either in group or person. Nevertheless, in

deconstruction tendencies, female changes to be “Perfect” but it still follows the male’s way.

The changing of performances and characterizations of female is still in the masculine ideology. Male is depicted as modern, sporty, various, and energetic in group. Then in deconstruction tendencies, female improves her performances as male does. By following male’s way, female becomes modern, sporty, various, and energetic in group. Male, in person, is planned, progressive, friendly and calm. Then, female improves her characterizations as male has. By following male’s characterizations, female becomes planned, progressive, friendly and calm in personality.

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