

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Betty Friedan's book, entitled *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, marked the movement of the second wave feminism, which had developed during the 1960s. In her book, Friedan talks about the general condition of women in 1960s when women were only housewives whose main jobs were to take care of their husbands, their house, and their children. Friedan argues that there was something missing in those women's life, but they were not brave enough to articulate what the problem was. Friedan also states that in those years, books, columns, and articles taught women that what really mattered for them was to seek fulfilment in their roles as wives and mothers. In short, in Friedan's opinion, the media at that time required woman to be a good wife, mother, and to cope with problems related to being wives and mothers. Friedan also adds that during that age, truly feminine women were framed in the idea that they did not want careers, higher education, and everything that the old-fashioned feminists had fought for. Therefore, the ideal women's image in that age was supposedly to make their husband happy and to take care of their children.

In her famous feminism book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan mentions the role of advertisements in promoting women's roles in 1960s. For her, advertisements have played a huge role in women's lifestyle since mid twentieth century, "This image - created by women's magazines, by advertisements ...- shapes women's lives today and mirrors their dreams." (Friedan, 1997, p. 34). From her statement, it can be inferred that magazines and advertisements are responsible for creating women's

images in the society. In the magazines, models are the best figure to mirror the ideal portrayal of women's images and expectations. The magazines' portrayal of beautiful women can be seen through the models for advertisements, especially in the advertisements of beauty products. This also creates an unhealthy beauty standard for women. As it is mentioned in a website called *the women and advertising*, the female models that are displayed in the magazines are "beautiful, thin and sexually skilled. ... [and] this creates unrealistic expectations of gender portrayal, such as being thin, beautiful and having designer clothes, make-up and accessories." ("Women as Sexual Objects and Victims", n.d.)

Friedan (1997) claims that even when the articles in the magazine were talking about actresses, they would always write about these celebrities as housewives instead of providing information about their careers and work as actresses (p. 53). In short, magazine articles created general images of women in that era as housewives whose jobs were loving their husbands and taking care of their children. The society in that age also did not consider that career was important for women.

As a beauty product, Lux also promotes women's image as inferior to men. According to *Liquisearch.com* on *Lux Origins and History*, Lux soap is one of the popular beauty products that has existed in the early 1900s until today. Lever Brothers is a company creating the Lux brand in 1899, and it is known as Unilever today. In 1925, the company started to introduce the toilet soap product in the United States, and in 1930s, they started to advertise Lux soap in the magazines, and portraying famous Hollywood celebrities for their advertisement models.

One of the famous Hollywood stars who became the model of Lux in *The New Yorker* magazine 1929, for instance, is Helen Morgan. This advertisement encourages women to make them believe that the most important thing that makes a

good memory of a woman is the beauty of her skin. This advertisement emphasizes that Helen Morgan is remembered because of her beautiful skin. According to *Small Business* website, displaying popular Hollywood stars will make the advertisement an effective influence for those who see it, as people will be influenced to purchase the products. The advertisements which display famous Hollywood celebrities can build awareness in the society, attract new users, and help to create new interest in consumers (Suttle, n.d.).

Betty Friedan's criticism on women's images and women's roles, combined with Lux as one of the popular brands of beauty products advertised all over the world motivate the writer to study further about the images of women in advertisements published in the United States in the 1960s. During that period, Betty Friedan published her book *The Feminine Mystique*, which was in 1963. The writer decided to analyse Lux advertisements before Friedan's book was published in 1963. Friedan's book is a result of her observations on women's life in the United States before 1960s. In her book, Friedan presents the images of women as portrayed by the media in her era. Making use of her finding, this research attempts to show the real examples of women's image in Lux advertisement before 1960s.

Later, the writer found out that the general image of women as housewives as argued by Friedan in her book, *The Feminine Mystique* which was published in 1963, was actually not a new image. Christina Catalano (2002) in the later study about beauty product advertisements says that 1950s was the most important part of gender inequality in which women were explicitly portrayed as being inferior to men. Catalano explains that during that era, the feminists believed that advertisements had created women's images as stupid, submissive, and purely domestic creatures.

Based on the fact above, the writer broadens the scope of the study to include Lux soap advertisements published before 1960s in the United States, in particular Lux soap advertisements since 1930s. The 1930s was when the first Lux advertisement was published. The main emphasis of this study is to reveal whether Lux soap advertisements represent women's images criticized by Betty Friedan.

There are some previous studies that has been done before in gender and advertisements. For example, a book by Erving Goffman (1987) entitled *Gender Advertisements* is about roles of gender (male and female) in the advertisements, and a journal that published in 2003 entitled *Gender Issues in Advertising—An Oversight Synthesis of Research: 1970-2002* is about the effectiveness of the advertisements based on gender differences. The point that makes this study different from the previous studies that have been done before is that there is no other study that uses Betty Friedan's book to analyse women's images in Lux advertisements.

1.2. FIELD OF THE STUDY

The field of this study is Literature, especially Gender Studies.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is on women's images represented in the Lux soap advertisements published in the United States from 1930s until 1960s. This study will use Betty Friedan's criticism, *The Feminine Mystique* to analyse the Lux advertisements.

1.4. PROBLEM FORMULATION

This study aims to address the following question:

What are the women's images shown in the Lux soap advertisements published in the United States from 1930s until 1960s in the light of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan?

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is as follows:

To find out the women's images shown in the Lux soap advertisements published in the United States from 1930s until 1960s in the light of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to offer more knowledge about women's images from 1930s to 1960s, in particular through the Lux soap advertisements using the criticism proposed by Betty Friedan written in her book *The Feminine Mystique*. The writer hopes that the information from this study can be useful for Gender Studies, especially in the study of the second wave feminism in the Faculty of Language and Arts. Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963 and she wrote it according to her examination during the years before that. Therefore the writer analysed the advertisements that is published during years before her book was published. It is expected that this study will give knowledge of women's images in that era that is criticised by Friedan. By using Lux as a popular soap brand that has existed to the present day, the writer expects that the reader will be able to know that the advertisements have an important role in shaping women's images.

1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Feminism**

The basic definition of feminism is “the movement for social, political, and economic equality of men and women.” (Baumgardner & Richards, 2016)

- **Second Wave Feminism**

Based on feminist activism website, Second Wave Feminism “came in the form of legislation designed to give women more equal opportunities on par with men, and gave women (at least on paper) autonomy over their own bodies” (“Day 7- Waves of the Women’s Movement in the US ”, 2011). In conclusion, second wave feminism is the movement where women should be more equal with men, and have right to control their own body.

- **Betty Friedan**

Betty Friedan is the author of *The Feminine Mystique*. “With her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan (1921-2006) broke new ground by exploring the idea of women finding personal fulfilment outside of their traditional roles. She also helped advance the women’s rights movement as one of the founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW). She advocated for an increased role for women in the political process and is remembered as a pioneer of feminism and the women’s rights movements.” (“Betty Friedan”, n.d.)

- **Self-Image**

The definition of self-image is “one's conception of oneself or of one's role” (“Definition of Self-Image”, n.d.)

- **The Feminine Mystique**

The Feminine Mystique is a book “[...] by Betty Friedan, published in 1963, is often seen as the beginning of the Women’s Liberation Movement. [...] Feminists of the 1960s and 1970s would later say *The Feminine Mystique* was the book that “started it all.” (Napikoski, 2016). The term *Mystique* in Friedan’s book has a meaning as “an artificial idea of femininity that says having a career and/or fulfilling one’s individual potential somehow go against women's pre-ordained role.” (Napikoski, 2017)

- **LUX**

LUX is a beauty product brand. “The brand was founded by the Lever Brothers (today known as Unilever) in 1899. The name changed from “Sunlight Flakes” to “Lux” in 1900, a Latin word for “light” and suggestive of “luxury.” Lux toilet soap was launched in the United States in 1925 and in the United Kingdom in 1928. Subsequently, Lux soap has been marketed in several forms, including hand wash, shower gel and cream bath soap. Since the 1930s, more than 400 of the world’s most famous female celebrities have been associated with Lux. Sarah Jessica Parker and Aishwarya Rai are some actresses featured in Lux advertising campaigns.” (“Lux (soap) - History - Origins and History”, n.d.).