



## Artigos/Articles

### The representation of femininity in Lana Del Rey's songs

*A representação da feminilidade nas músicas de Lana Del Rey*

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#### ABSTRACT

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This article aims to analyze the feminine representation in Lana Del Rey's songs. In order to achieve that objective, discourse analysis will be used as a useful tool in our studies, since we are going to deal with lyrics in, thus, discourse. Our corpora are her famous songs: *Ultraviolence*, *Ride*, *This is what makes us girls*, *Cola* and *Off to the races*. Since Lana Del Rey is a well-known personality in pop music and the majority of her fans are women, we consider that the discourse she conveys in her songs provides feelings of representation and identity, which will be analyzed in our paper. We also expect to find ambiguous discourse, which seems to empower women and their identity in a chauvinist society and, at the same time, seems to portray them as fragile and passive. The results show that Lana draws contradictory accounts on the feminine image, but in a way that makes us aware of women representation face to society. Lana Del Rey's lyrics reflects a disappointing reality in which it is not that hard to understand why women (and men) try to escape into alcohol, self-injury and other forms of self-destruction.

**Keywords:** pop culture, pop music, discourse analysis, gender.

#### RESUMO

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*Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a representação feminina nas composições de Lana Del Rey. Para atingir esse objetivo, a análise do discurso será utilizada como uma ferramenta útil nos nossos estudos, uma vez que vamos lidar com letras de música em, portanto, discurso. Os nossos corpora são as suas canções famosas: Ultraviolence, Ride, This is what makes us girls, Cola e Off to the races. Uma vez que Lana Del Rey é uma personalidade bem conhecida*

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*da música pop e que a maioria dos seus fãs são mulheres, consideramos que o discurso que transmite nas suas canções proporciona sentimentos de representação e identidade, que serão analisados no nosso trabalho. Esperamos também encontrar um discurso ambíguo, que parece dar poder às mulheres e à sua identidade numa sociedade machista e, ao mesmo tempo, parece retratá-las como frágeis e passivas. Os resultados mostram que Lana traça relatos contraditórios sobre a imagem feminina, mas de uma forma que nos sensibiliza para a representação da mulher perante a sociedade. As letras de Lana Del Rey refletem uma realidade decepcionante, na qual não é assim tão difícil compreender por que razão as mulheres (e os homens) tentam fugir para o álcool, para a auto-agressão e para outras formas de auto-destruição.*

**Palavras-chave:** cultura pop, *música pop*, *análise do discurso*, *gênero*.

## 1. Introdução

This paper aims to analyze the representation of femininity in Lana Del Rey's discourse. Nevertheless, beyond studying only gender representation in a specific discourse, this article also intends to analyze the representation of femininity in pop music and its relation with the image of this category in popular culture.

A range of problems with different characteristics derives from this general topic and we hope to accomplish all of them. The first item which it is going to be analyzed is how Lana portrays women in her lyrics and which linguistic strategies she uses to safeguard her point. However, the second problem seems to be slightly more complicated, since it refers to the strategies she uses to justify her points and the intertextuality that can be seen in her discourse together with its relation with popular culture. Finally, the third problem that derives from our general objective is the analysis of different women behaviors in her lyrics and, thus, different feminine discourses.

This article also intends to provide further discussions regarding gender representation through different means of communication, especially those that can be perceived in popular culture. It is important to expand that analysis because pop music discourses dialogue immensely with popular culture. It can be said as a primer consequence that these discourses take an important role in the process of socialization, from which derives certain understandings of gender and sexuality.

It is important to acknowledge how the feminine has been performed through the years, for gender has been seen as a significant issue which raised plenty of movements to discuss this topic, and considering, as well, that society is built in the light of chauvinist standards. Thus, Lana Del Rey's songs are amusing in resources that provide a profound analysis regarding femininity and its roles within society.

When it concerns Lana Del Rey's songs, it is important to notice that there are myriads of songs that discuss how women are represented through time and if this representation has changed according to her previous and current generation, and also how this representation is being understood at the moment by society. As a matter of fact, she does not consider herself a feminist. Therefore, this evidence assist our analysis not with the image community has of Lana, but with that of a woman who portrays herself, her experiences and understandings, as cisgender, white, and heterosexual.

In order to support the analysis regarding discourses, some reading support will guide this research until the conclusion. As far as it is concerned, several songs will be analyzed with different perspectives, and it is essential to have some expertise to assist this investigation. The initial reading support, *The egg and the sperm*(1991), was written by Emily Martin, who is an anthropologist and feminist and who also wrote an article about male and female organs regarding scientific knowledge. Moreover, the article of Ana Cristina Ostermann and Deborah Keller-Cohen '*Good girls go to heaven; bad girls...'* learn to be good: quizzes in American and Brazilian teenage girls' magazines (1998) will provide information about how to analyze the discourse itself. Furthermore, the article *Gender and sexual scripts in popular US teen series: a study on the gendered discourses in One Tree Hill and Gossip Girl*(2010) and *Constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing gender*, written by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (2003) respectively, will give support to understand how gender roles are performed according to society. Last but not least, Catherine Vigier's *The meaning of Lana Del Rey*(2012) will help us with a broader critical view on Lana's positionings face to a feminist movement rise.

We use in this paper the concept that language constructs reality. The use of the language is central in our everyday lives, it is, therefore, directly connected

to our capacity of constructing and maintaining the gender categorization, which is a worldwide discussed topic currently. Gender is, thus, embedded and built in/by language and it is evidenced by the acts of speaking based on the stereotyped categorizations, that aim to conform a body to the coherence norms between sex, gender and desire. Considering media's power of influence nowadays and the lack of focus on language when it comes to identity performances, we want to develop a study in which the feminine representativeness is not only present in pop songs, here Lana Del Rey's songs, but it is divided in a dichotomy that may seem, at first, ironic: on the one hand, it empowers women in order to fight against a chauvinist society; on the other hand, it portrays them as fragile and passive, based on a common sense of gender construction. We want to discuss these behavior constructions so we can have a better understanding of how its repetition through Lana's songs reinforces distinct point of views. The regulatory practice of identity presented in some of the songs we are going to analyze here can, as well, in a specific context, function as a way of questioning the normative contexts of identity production.

Finally, with the analysis of Lana Del Rey's songs, we expect to give a broad view of how the gender discourses in some lyrics take an important role in the process of socialization, and consequently help to reinforce certain representations which are based on conventions that produce gendered bodies. As we are products of discourse, we attempt to show the readers how we can trace an alternative imagine of the feminine through Lana's songs, questioning her positions face to normative and non-normative contexts of identity production.

## **2. Popular culture and discourse**

Regarding popular culture and its expressions, it can be said that the means through which this culture is spread, media, regulates society. Nevertheless, this process is not as simple as it seems. Actually, the process of controlling society values is mainly caused by a regulatory framework, which portrays some social assumptions as natural and unmarked. Therefore, social facts are affirmed by Essentialist discourses rather than a Constructivist view.

In order to commence our analysis, it is important to highlight the concepts of "social facts" and "discourse", which dialogue with the notions of popular

culture, power and, in a least instance, gender. Thus, Durkheim (2010, p. 13) defines “social facts” in his book *The rules of sociological method* as:

every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.

Therefore, social facts externally constraint one’s actions. According to this idea, our beliefs regarding social values are produced by these social facts. Nevertheless, in order to expand this assumption, it can be said that this concept is shaped and spread by discourse. In accordance to this conception, Foucault (1981) considers that “discourses are practices that systematically produce the objects of which they speak”. For that reason, discourse and social facts are vectors of standard beliefs regarding maleness, femininity and, in a broad sense, gender.

Based on that, we argue that pop music carries standard discourses that refer to social facts and values. Since music is a cultural expression spread rapidly through society, it influences popular culture and, therefore, constructs a regulatory framework. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the discourse’s importance in society since the old ages, due to the attempt of controlling people’s thoughts and considerations. About that regard, Foucault (1981, p. 52) affirms that every discourse in society has a role.

In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain numbers of procedures whose role is to ward off its power and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.

This consideration seems to reinforce the idea promoted by Max Horkheimer (1944 *apud* Vigier, 2012) that culture had assumed the purpose of providing social cohesion in Modernity. Extending the concept of culture, we consider that, since pop music has been spread rapidly in the world, this genre now assumes the cited purpose. By providing social cohesion, pop music influences popular culture and constructs a one-dimensional society. Still analyzing the scholars of Frankfurt School, we observe that Theodor Adorno



(1994) had affirmed that corporate interests were controlling and defining the production of music and other popular arts. Nowadays, this procedure derives a process of standardization of popular music, spreading hegemonic discourses. Vigier (2012, p. 3) points out this fact in the following passage.

Adorno and Horkheimer's insistence on the homogeneity of many cultural products, on the fact that we can scarcely distinguish advertising from editorial text, seems particularly true today. Yet there is a difficulty with this emphasis on the overwhelming power of the culture industries. Popular culture, in order to be successful and win audiences, must express in some way people's lived experiences. Even religion, if it is to channel people's aspirations toward the hereafter, must give expression to feelings of injustice, anguish and desire for a better world.

Since Lana Del Rey is a well-known personality in pop music and the majority of her fans are women, we consider that the discourse she conveys in her songs provides feelings of representation and identity, which will be analyzed in our paper. This feeling of identity proves the tight relation among pop music, popular culture and discourses. In that sense, the cited feeling refers to dilemmas that women face nowadays and problems that are in hegemonic discourses of gender and in popular culture. Vigier (2012, p. 1-2) considers what follows.

Through an analysis of Del Rey's songs and videos, it will also be argued that she is representing and speaking to a contradiction facing thousands of young women today, women who have followed mainstream society's prescriptions for success in what has been called a post feminist world, but who find that real liberation and genuine satisfaction elude them. Working for long hours and for relatively low pay and still having responsibility for household management, many women have little free time or money. Images that suggest romance or escape are thus extremely attractive.

Therefore, it can be affirmed that popular culture and discourse have a strong relation and an important role in society. During and after the process of socialization, people are constraint by social facts, which are considered natural and unmarked by them. Since people live in society, culture interchanges work as an important phenomenon, promoting social cohesion. For that reason, popular culture is mostly shaped by pop music and takes part in the cited

phenomenon. Discourses which are conveyed in these cultural expressions reinforce hegemonic beliefs and social facts, constraining society as a whole.

### 3. The meaning of Lana Del Rey

Lana Del Rey's discourse represents the problems and contradictions that women face in the Post-Feminist World. These problems and dilemmas are mostly based on the attempt to follow social prescriptions of gender and behavior. For that reason, Vigier analyzes that Del Rey's lyrics also represent a romantic conception of freedom and society, which explains why so many women like this singer. For that reason, Vigier (2012, p. 3) considers:

the stars that are coopted by the music industry are also particularly adept at expressing the sentiments of listeners – and usually at channeling these sentiments into harmless outlets such as the search for Romantic Love.

Proceeding in this analysis, we argue that Del Rey's songs express some of the profound dissatisfactions women still feel. It refers to the fact that freedom has not been completely achieved by them. It also portrays how women react when they face certain emotional, economic and social problems caused by the asymmetry of genders. Beyond that, Lana Del Rey's songs refer to a pungent nostalgia for the old times, as Vigier (2012, p. 4) affirms:

one of the problems is that, after a decade in which women were told that they had everything it took to get ahead, and that the playing-field was somehow level in our new, post-feminist world, it was disturbing to many to see a woman recast herself as an old-fashioned male fantasy and to seemingly embrace submissiveness, and to dress as if she were nostalgic for the days before women's liberation.

Based on that, we can affirm that, despite the sexual freedom expressed in Del Rey's videos and songs, a strong feeling of frustration can be perceived. This feeling is constructed when Lana affirms the subservience of the woman, as we can notice in the monologue of her song, *Ride*: "It was the winter of my life and the men I met along the way were my only summer". We intend to analyze this song in the discourse analysis' section, but it is important to highlight that this subservience is constant in her songs, although it has many forms of expression.

It is also very frequent in her songs the allusions of morbidly dependent relationships, addiction, self-destruction and mental illness, which refers to the common sense that women cannot control themselves alone. It also supports the historical categorization of women as crazy, hysteric and less intelligent than men. In a premier instance, these ideas influence a whole generation of young women who emerge in a paradox, based on the nostalgia of a strong patriarchal regulation and the expectations of a true emancipation and equality.

Nevertheless, at the same time that these assumptions are conveyed in her discourse, Del Rey also empowers women's sexuality and autonomy. This tendency in her songs point to an oxymoron, a labyrinth, in which women gain sexual freedom and autonomy but remain stuck in old beliefs. We are going to analyze some lyrics that concern to this paradox, but here we can briefly observe this discourse in her song, *Cola*: "My pussy tastes like Pepsi cola". We can also observe it in *Burning Desire* in: "Gotta touch myself to pretend you're there".

It is also perceived that Lana Del Rey represents a dichotomy in pop music which was constructed by corporate interests and hegemonic discourses. This dichotomy was build at the early days of the pop music industry and regards to the assumption that male singers must represent an active and strong figure and female singers a passive and fragile one.

In an ultimate instance, it is important to understand that all the items appointed here fit the Foucauldian definition of discourse and represent hegemonic beliefs concerning gender and others topics. Therefore, we can observe how pop music and its discourses influence pop culture and safeguard certain understandings of social facts.

#### **4. Femininity in Del Rey's lyrics**

In order to analyze Lana Del Rey's discourse, we decided to take some of her famous songs, which portray many women kinds. At the same time that Del Rey strives to construct a notion of general identity, the singer presents various characteristics of divergent types of female profiles. Based on that, at this fist part, we are going to analyze the songs: *This is what makes us girls*, *Ride, Off to the races* and *Ultraviolence*.



When it concerns to the song *This is what makes us girls*, it can be said that the songwriter tried to talk about the relationship among young girls. As we analyze the song, we notice that Lana pictures a specific female profile, which is characterized by the tendency of putting love first and suffering accordingly. This suffering makes the girls “hate those guys”. At this part, we understand that this phrase is a metonymic form of reference of men. Based on that, Del Rey describes girls that suffer due to abusive relationships, whilst they hate men because of their absence of feelings and their “natural” insensibility. We can see these references clearly on the verses that follow:

There she was my new best friend  
High heels in her hands, swaying' in the wind  
While she starts to cry, mascara runnin' down on her little  
bambi eyes:  
"Lana, how I hate those guys."  
This is what makes us girls  
We all look for heaven and we put our love first  
Somethin' that we'd die for it? it's a curse  
Don't cry about it, don't cry about it  
This is what makes us girls  
We don't stick together 'cause we put our love first  
Don't cry about him, don't cry about him  
It's all gonna happen.

According to this discourse, we can infer that the friendship among women is something fragile because girls tend to “put their love first”, i.e. to give priority to men. It means that, even though a woman is suffering, she will give priority to men’s feelings and needs, rather than her own necessities. Lana also portrays an extremely girlish persona who cannot see any happiness in life without the presence of men. We also observe that, when the songwriter alters the usage of object pronouns, such as “it” and “him”, she seems to affirm that women just cry for unnecessary reasons and for men. This grammatical usage demonstrates how fragile women are described. However, analyzing the lexical choices, we can infer that Del Rey produces a frame full of a feminine reference, such as “high heels”, “cry”, “mascara” and “bambi eyes”. It is also important to highlight that the use of “this” in “This is what makes us girls” is quite meaningful in this context, since this clitic seems to encompass and summarize the “femine experience” in a collection of similar experiences faced by girls

It can also be affirmed that in this song Lana highlights the importance of age and beauty for a woman, safeguarding a hegemonic discourse regarding femininity. Nevertheless, at the same time, she describes women that consume alcohol and party without a masculinity company. At this part, Del Rey describes a femininity based on parties and sexual games. Still, she refers to objectification of women, affirming intrinsically that women only worth “while they’re hot”. We can see that in these verses:

Sweet sixteen and we had arrived  
Baby's table dancin' at the local dive  
Cheerin our names in the pink spotlight  
Drinkin' cherry schnapps in the velvet night

Yo we used to go break in  
To the hotel pool, glittering we'd swim  
Runnin' from the cops in our black bikini tops  
Screaming, "get us while we're hot"  
"get us while we're hot"  
(come on and take a shoot)

Regarding the song *Ultraviolence*, it can be said that the songwriter describes a typical *femme fragile*, making reference to a romantic view of Love. In the other hand, Lana pictures a woman that does not consider herself good enough for marrying your man and points out her bad qualities. However, this masculine persona is described as a man that cannot control his feelings and demonstrates his love by spanking his girlfriend. This abusive relationship is described in a very romantic form, as we can see below:

He used to call me Dn  
That stood for deadly nightshade  
'Cause I was filled with poison  
But blessed with beauty and rage  
Jim told me that he hit me and it felt like a kiss  
Jim brought me back  
Reminded me of when we were kids

With his ultraviolence  
Ultraviolence  
I can hear sirens, sirens  
He hit me and it felt like a kiss  
I can hear violins, violins

## Give me all of that ultraviolence

It can also be said that, according to this discourse, women tend to suffer any kind of violence and stay quiet, because, as Lana has already affirmed, women “put their love first”. Some critiques had considered this song a biography of Jim Morrison’s girlfriend, Pamela Courson. Pamela was completely in love with Jim, but he used to spank and humiliate her every night. Del Rey reconstructs this episode and reinforces a regulatory framework of subservience and fragileness. However, another interpretation can be conveyed in these verses. The one that the songwriter recreates the story in order to show how terrible an abusive relationship can be for women and how heartless men can be. This least interpretation seems to fit better in the context, because, in the light of a linguistic analysis, the phrase “I can hear sirens, sirens” refers to the police. This semantic artifice can be understood as a metaphor of social rules that affirm that men cannot spank women. A little further, we notice that the phrase “I can hear violins, violins” refers to a contradictory sensation, since the term “violins” can be understood as a metaphor of the act of dancing with a partner and, therefore, love. This last phrase can also represent an irony scene, comparing the “sirens” with the “violins”.

The second part of the song starts when Jim affirms that his girlfriend is poison. This act makes reference to female subservience and humiliation by men. Straight after it, she agrees that she is poison and seems hypnotized by Jim. It also refers to the fragileness of female self-esteem and the authoritarian male discourse towards women. When she agrees that she is poison, Jim hearts her and she considers it an act of true love. She finishes saying that loving Jim is never enough. At this part, it can be said that the discourse conveyed by Lana reinforces the idea of masculine hegemony, power and authority. Again, Lana describes this woman as a *femme fragile* that cannot even stand up and protect herself. These characteristics can be seen in these verses:

He used to call me poison  
Like I was Poison Ivy  
I could have died right there  
'Cause Jim 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

In the last part of this song, the feminine persona affirms that love Jim was pretty difficult and, even though he still spans her, she offers him her companion. After that, she says she would do anything for him and she evokes the memory of Marilyn Monroe. Analyzing this part, we can perceive that the lexical choices and the grammar used by the songwriter convey various meanings. In order to start, we present these verses:

We can go back to New York  
Loving him was really hard  
We can go back to Woodstock  
Where don't know who we are  
Heaven is on earth  
I will do anything for you, babe  
Blessed is this union  
Crying tears of gold, like Marylin  
I love you the first time  
I love you the last time  
Yo soy la princesa, comprende mis white lines  
Cause I'm your jazz singer  
And you're my cult leader  
I love you forever  
I love you forever

These verses show that women only are certain about one thing: help men. We can notice it by analyzing the verbal phrase “I will do anything for you, babe”. According to many English Grammars, the auxiliary verb “will” denotes a high degree of certainty. Beyond that, the songwriter uses copular verbs, which denote an idea of permanent state. This permanent state also refers to their union and, therefore, to her suffering. Finally, Lana uses the present participle in order to evoke the memory of Marilyn Monroe, a symbol of women’s objectification and exploration. This use conveys a meaning of progressivity in a broad sense, but can also conveys a meaning that the feminine persona tends to stand “crying tears of gold” at the frequency that Jim wants.

Straight after, Del Rey uses syntactic parallelism, but not a semantic parallelism. She alters the love that the feminine persona had felt in the “first

time”, with the love that she had felt in the “last time”. Albeit this alteration, the syntactic parallelism conveys a meaning of equality and refers to the sense that she shall love Jim eternally. Then, this feminine figure is compared to a jazz singer, which represents someone that entertains other people. This is not a random lexical choice, it represents women as entertainers, as sexual objects, whilst men (cult leader) are portrayed as the one who is entertained and can appreciate all of it. At the end, Lana Del Rey uses the simple present to represent something eternal, unchangeable, referring not only to the future, but to a timeless reality.

Concerning the song *Off to the races*, we can observe that the whole song compares the relationship with an old man with the novel *Lolita*, by Vladimir Nabokov. In this songs, Del Rey compares femininity to childness, since the lyrics refer to how dependent is the feminine figure of a masculine figure. It is also present here an authoritarian discourse towards women, as we can see above.

Light of my life, fire of my loins  
Be a good baby, do what I want  
Light of my life, fire of my loins  
Give me them gold coins  
Gimme them coins

The three initial verses highlight a process of intertextuality with the book *Lolita*. It conveys a meaning that women must do what men want and not question their actions. This authoritarian discourse can be clearly seen in the use of imperative forms, such as “be” and “do”. Straight after this part, Del Rey describes the feminine persona as crazy and incapable to defend herself, as we see in the verses:

Because I'm crazy, baby  
I need you to come here and save me  
I'm your little scarlett, starlet  
Singing in the garden  
Kiss me on my open mouth  
Ready for you

The process of depreciation occurs with lexical and syntactical choices. The entire frame of this passage refers to incapability and mental illness, whilst

the use of the present form of the verb “to be” denotes a permanent state. It is also very important to highlight that the scenario of a garden is a possible reference to fecundity and, therefore, to a so-called female characteristic.

When it concerns the song *Cola*, it can be affirmed that the singer portrays herself as an independent woman who has complete control of her body, and not as a fragile and submissive female. Based on her discourse, it is possible to infer that she is proud of being a woman and also not ashamed to praise her genitals. In addition, it is implied that she has an active sexual life, and talking about it is not seen as problematic to her.

In order to support these concepts, *Cola* exposes a different perspective of women’s genitals, in which she states that her “pussy tastes like Pepsi cola”, considering that products made of cola can be addicting, it implies that her female organ is the same. Furthermore, once proved her ‘essence’, the taster will become dependent on it. This categorization of female organs is not common when it concerns to some scientific approaches, which state that women organs are not as worthy as male organs. According to Ruth Herschberger (1948 *apud* Martin, 1991, p. 490) “female reproductive organs are seen as biologically interdependent, while male organs are viewed as autonomous, operating independently and in isolation”.

Furthermore, she mentions that she “got sweet taste for men who’re older” and “it’s always been so, it’s no surprise”, which breaks some social stereotypes. The first rupture she applies in her discourse is the lexical choice “men” in the plural form, instead of using it in its singular form. This reference indicates that the singer is not concerned about the standards imposed by society, in which women should be reserved and having several partners is not “acceptable”. Moreover, according to this behavior, she would be classified as a bad girl:

(...) the ‘good’ girl is described as loving ‘feeling protected’ by her boyfriend. The ideal type, therefore, is the one who occupies the space between the strong and the weak. The preferred girl is the one who reveals some sort of weakness, supporting the patriarchal system of unquestioned male superiority (Ostermann and Cohen, 1998, p. 551).



Finally, Lana Del Rey proves once again that she is an empowered woman who demands her partner to treat her the way she deserves to be treated:

Drug, suck it up, like Vanilla Ice is  
Don't treat me rough, treat me  
Really nice-is

In other words, she wanted to be treated with respect and does not allowed her partner to be aggressive, regarding that men are biologically rougher than women:

Members of any western industrial society are likely to be able to produce the following set of oppositions: men are strong, women are weak; men are brave, women are timid; men are aggressive; women are passive; men are sex-driven, women are relationship-driven; men are impassive, women are emotional; men are rational, women are irrational; men are direct, women are indirect; men are competitive; women are cooperative; men are practical, women are nurturing; men are rough, women are gentle. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p.49).

## 5. Final remarks

Gendered performances are being constructed everywhere around us, through the way people speak, to the way they move or sit and the way they dress – the way they behave, in general –, in outdoors, in television shows and commercials, in magazines, in music, etc. If people performance gender according to socially advocated scripts, then it's appropriate to assume that these specific gender roles are directly connected and constructed by cultural traditions, moral codes, economy and politics, factors which determine what is “appropriate” when it comes to gender identity (Van Dame, 2010; Jacobson, 2005). Media reflect reality and contribute to the construction of hegemonic gender, therefore they have a central role in portraying woman as submissive and weak, as well as in making the search for Romantic Love not only valuable but necessary. Likewise, popular culture, as media content, reflects people's experiences in order to be successful and win audiences. From this perspective, we wanted to call our reader's attention to the feminine representation on Lana Del Rey's songs.

After the feminist movements of women empowerment and, consequently, after women started gaining more social recognition, a cruel, heteronormative and chauvinist economic structure arouse a necessity of escaping reality. Our purpose was to demonstrate how Del Rey's music truly reflects the extremely attractive idea of escaping this reality. She surely draws contradictory parallels of the feminine image. Lana seems to describe, on one hand, the stereotyped submissive woman who is closely attached to the feeling that she deserves such treatment from her partner. On the other hand, she also seems to encourage her listeners to act and think independently, or even to pay attention to what may or may not be acceptable in a relationship. In a way, it is possible to argue that Lana Del Rey's lyrics reflects a disappointing reality in which it is not that hard to understand why women (and men) try to escape into alcohol, self-injury and other forms of self-destruction, as Vigier (2012, p. 11) arguments.

What we have here is an opportunity of tracing alternatives to a reality which is barely discussed, that one drowned in an oppressive capitalist society and in its destructive mechanisms of discouragement. Future research may be developed if we want to give more visibility to how women are still being exploited at most contexts of their lives. 'Girl power' itself would not change society in a blink of an eye face to the prevalent pressure of a patriarchal society. This border crossings between girlishness and female empowerment are product of a media culture which is constantly encouraging young women to identify both as traditionally feminine objects and as powerful feminist agents (Zaslow, 2009 *apud* Simon, 2012). Some people are skeptical about the images Lana Del Rey performs in her music because what she does is precisely to show us the worst aspects of being a girl. Indeed, and we want to confirm that, it is shocking because it is real.

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