

**FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION AND RESISTANCE
IN *THE VALLEY OF AMAZEMENT AND BEAUTY IS A WOUND***

A Thesis Presented to
The Graduate Program in English Language Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Magister Humaniora (M.Hum)
in
English Language Studies



Esther Deborah Kaluserang

(216332009)

Sanata Dharma University

Yogyakarta

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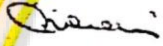
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Esther Deborah Kalauserang

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Was defended in front of the Thesis Committee
and Declared **Acceptable**

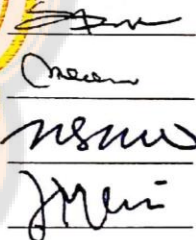
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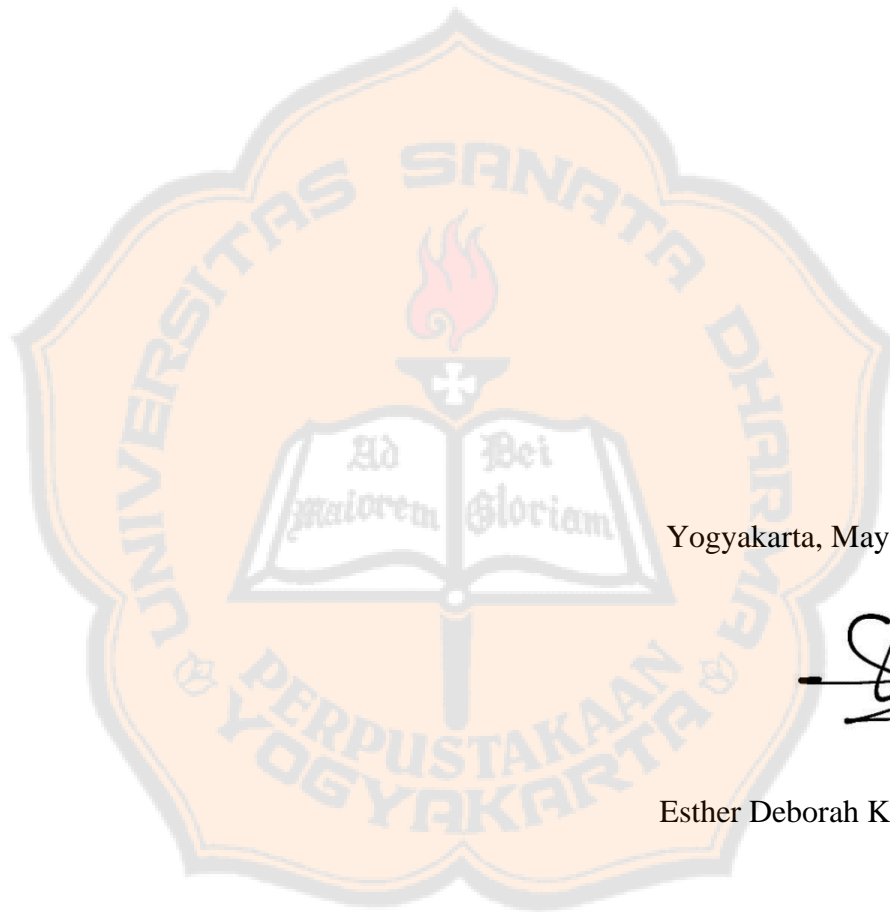
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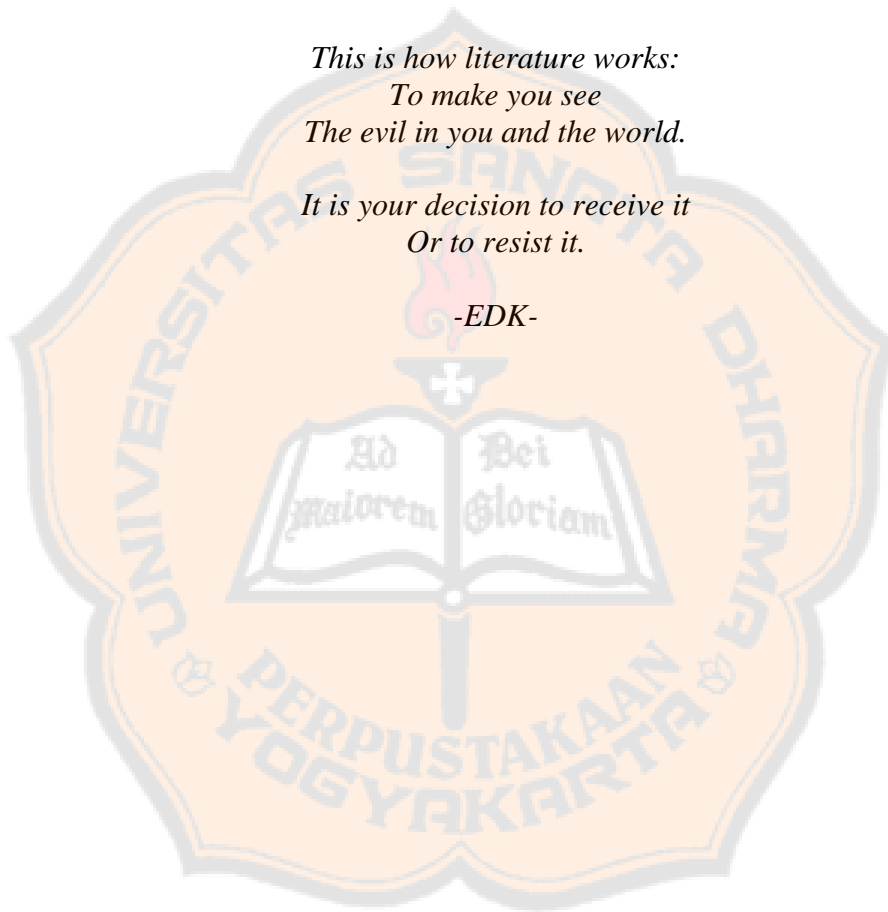
MOTTO

*When you look into the mirror,
You see the devil.
When you look into The Book,
You see the devil's world.*

*This is how literature works:
To make you see
The evil in you and the world.*

*It is your decision to receive it
Or to resist it.*

-EDK-



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I would like to express my gratitude for those who have supported me to complete this thesis in obtaining my master degree. I am forever grateful to God for giving me grace and strength to walk this journey of faith. In 2020, when Covid-19 broke out, my initial plan to study abroad was cancelled. Yet God turns bad things for good, allowing me to enrol at the Graduate Program of English Language Studies at Sanata Dharma. I meet so many amazing people who help me grow intellectually and mentally as well. Prof. Novita Dewi, Ph.D., thank you for helping me shape my resilience in doing research and mentoring me to write my thesis. For Pak Paulus Sarwoto, Ph.D., I am very grateful to learn from you, especially in using various literary critical approaches to see the world.

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ABSTRACT

Esther Deborah Kalauserang. 2023. *Female Objectification and Resistance in The Valley of Amazement and Beauty Is a Wound*. Yogyakarta: English Language Studies. Graduate Program. Sanata Dharma University.

Objectification of women is an issue which have occurred for a long time. This study examines the issue of sexual objectification found in *The Valley of Amazement* by Amy Tan (2013) and *Beauty Is A Wound* (2015) by Eka Kurniawan. Living closely to the prostitution world, the female characters from both of the novels experienced sexual objectification differently yet managed to show resistance in various ways. Hence, this thesis needs to examine the portrayal of female objectification and investigate how the female characters resist female objectification in the light of socialist feminism

Ten categories of sexual objectification is applied to examine the portrayal of female objectification. Foucault's thought on power and resistance is utilized to investigate how the selected female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty* resist female objectification. Socialist feminism is utilized as an umbrella approach to unravel the struggle of the female characters within the intertwining domination of capitalism and patriarchy.

Firstly, the finding shows that female objectification is portrayed through human trafficking and intimate partner violence (IPV) in both of the novels. They have been made as instruments; their autonomy and subjectivity are denied; their personhood is reduced to their body, appearance and sexual functions; they are treated as if they possess zero agency and as if they are things to be owned; they are violated emotionally and physically; their voice is silenced. Second, the female characters resist female objectification through resilience, sisterhood and motherhood. Their resilience enables them to cope with difficult situations, to adapt and come up with tactics. Sisterhood is evident when the female characters work together to resist IPV and its consequences. Motherhood becomes the reason for all to survive. Their resistance against female objectification which is driven by capitalism and patriarchy is still a choice although it comes with a cost.

Socialist feminism has shown that the results are centrally caused by forms of sexual objectification underlined by systemic oppression of capitalism and patriarchy. Thus, this thesis illustrates the mechanisms of the oppressive institutions of female objectification and its individual resistance, yet also puts forward the question of other impacts which gender-based and economic-based objectification cause in other types of human exploitation. The female characters' resistance conveys a message: humanity is deserved by everyone, regardless of their gender, race and class. Future studies can address cases of male objectification, child objectification, or even young adult objectification occurring in different parts of the world and aspects of life.

Keywords: Female objectification, Human trafficking, Intimate partner violence, Resistance, Socialist feminism

ABSTRAK

Esther Deborah Kalauserang. 2023. *Objektifikasi Perempuan dan Resistensi dalam The Valley of Amazement dan Beauty Is a Wound*. Yogyakarta: Magister Kajian Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Objektifikasi perempuan merupakan persoalan yang sudah lama terjadi. Penelitian ini mengkaji isu objektifikasi seksual dalam *The Valley of Amazement* karya Amy Tan (2013) dan *Beauty Is A Wound* (2002) karya Eka Kurniawan. Hidup berdekatan dengan dunia prostitusi, tokoh perempuan dari kedua novel tersebut mengalami objektifikasi seksual secara berbeda namun berhasil menunjukkan resistensi dengan berbagai cara. Dengan demikian, tesis ini menelaah penggambaran objektifikasi perempuan dan menyelidiki bagaimana para tokoh menolak objektifikasi perempuan melalui perspektif feminisme sosialis.

Sepuluh kategori objektifikasi seksual diterapkan untuk mengkaji penggambaran objektifikasi perempuan. Pemikiran kekuasaan dan resistensi Foucault digunakan untuk menyelidiki cara para tokoh perempuan menolak objektifikasi perempuan. Feminisme sosialis digunakan sebagai payung pendekatan dalam mengungkapkan perjuangan mereka di dunia kapitalis dan patriarkis.

Pertama, ditemukan bahwa objektifikasi perempuan digambarkan melalui perdagangan manusia dan kekerasan pasangan intim (KPI) di kedua novel tersebut. Tokoh-tokoh perempuan dijadikan sebagai alat; otonomi dan subjektivitas mereka disangkal; kemanusiaan mereka diukur berdasarkan tubuh, penampilan, dan fungsi seksual; mereka diperlakukan seperti orang yang tak punya pilihan dan seperti barang yang dimiliki; kemanusiaan mereka dilanggar secara emosional dan fisik; suara mereka dibungkam. Kedua, mereka melawan objektifikasi perempuan melalui ketangguhan, persaudaraan dan peran ibu. Ketangguhan membantu mereka mengatasi situasi sulit, beradaptasi dan berstrategi. Persaudaraan antar perempuan terjalin saat mereka bekerja sama melawan KPI dan konsekuensinya. Peran menjadi ibu adalah alasan bertahan hidup. Perlawanan terhadap objektifikasi perempuan yang dilatarbelakangi kapitalisme dan patriarki masih menjadi pilihan walau harga perlawanan mereka mahal.

Feminisme sosialis telah menunjukkan bahwa segala bentuk objektifikasi seksual digaribawahi penindasan sistemik kapitalisme dan patriarki. Dengan demikian, tesis ini telah menggambarkan mekanisme institusi opresif objektifikasi perempuan dan perlawanan individualnya, namun juga mengajukan pertanyaan tentang dampak lain yang ditimbulkan oleh objektifikasi berbasis gender dan ekonomi dalam jenis eksploitasi manusia lainnya. Akhirnya, tindakan perlawanan para tokoh perempuan menyatakan bahwa kemanusiaan layak dimiliki oleh semua orang. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat membahas kasus objektifikasi laki-laki, objektifikasi anak, atau bahkan objektifikasi anak muda yang terjadi di berbagai aspek kehidupan.

Kata kunci: Feminisme sosialis, Kekerasan pasangan intim, Objektifikasi perempuan, Perdagangan manusia, Resistensi

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IPV: Intimate partner violence



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the background of the study, problem formulation, and chapter outline.

A. Background of Study

Objectification of women is an issue which women have faced for a long time. When women are objectified, their bodies are seen as objects and things in a sexual way. Their body are no longer seen as something to differentiate themselves from their opposite sex, but rather defines their place within the society; in other words, their bodies are not only seen in the biological context but also objectified sexually due to one's social construction in viewing the woman's body. Rather than viewing women as a whole human being, women are treated as an instrument, 'a body' or "a collection of body parts valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption) by others" through visual inspection of the body commonly done through the male gaze for pleasure or appetite of other people (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.174).

Although the issue of sexual objectification has happened for a long time since the ancient civilizations, this issue still continue. How is it so? A simple explanation might say that the process of sexual objectification may happen so subtly in a mild way, yet it opens the channel for moderate and extreme forms of sexual objectification. When one's mind is deeply ingrained by the patriarchal values existing in a certain society, one would think lightly of this issue since sexualizing women is considered to be something 'normal' in his/her everyday life; thus, other forms of sexual crimes done towards women succeeds because of this

mindset. Sexual objectification done towards women (or female objectification) is not a trivial issue at all – in fact, sexual objectification of women, or female objectification, in sexual exploitation it is one of the forms of dehumanization when it occurs within the sphere of sexual exploitation, aside from racial discrimination and genocide (Haslam, 2006, pp.252-2536). For example in the pornography industry, women are commonly victims of sex trafficking, the female objectification or dehumanization of women implies “removing women from full moral consideration and legitimating rape and victimization” (Haslam, 2006, p.253). Here, women experience sexual objectification and dehumanization as their body parts and sexual functions seem to be able to fully represent the person they are (Haslam, 2006, p. 252). Haslam, citing Nussbaum, states that this kind of objectification leads to the perception that women are instruments and ‘owned’ commodities who lack agency, self-determination, boundary integrity and are denied or neglected of their feelings and experiences as a person (Haslam, 2006, p. 257). In other words, sexually objectified women were also perceived as lesser beings than men, and that their femaleness is seen as the equal to animality, nature and childlikeness (Haslam, 2006, p. 253).

In order to encourage awareness of this urgent issue in the society, the academic realm has offered a platform to highlight the urgency of this issue. Although messages of ending sexual objectification is not always explicitly conveyed in every academic publication, careful analysis and in-depth research proving the seriousness of this matter is facilitated by various discussion mediums such as literary novels or other cultural phenomena. Here are several studies of female objectification which discuss different forms of sexual objectification has

also been done by academic literary scholars from time to time as shown by several following examples. Guerrero (1990) explains how ‘the look’ or objectification of female characters are tracked down and encompassed in 5 novels of Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981) and *Beloved* (1987). Guerrero argues how the figure of women are sexualized, eroticized, fetishized, commodified and displayed for enjoyment under the male gaze and a patriarchal, consumer-oriented cultural production in society; he also points out how Morrison’s novels are in line with the idea of Stephen Neale (1980) that eroticizing women as sexual objects are accepted ideologically and unproblematic in our society, as shown by Hollywood production (Neale as cited in Guerrero, 1990, p. 761). Although Guerrero’s study dates back to 1990, it shows how the issue of female objectification is still relevant until today as shown in a research conducted by Crawshaw (2015), which analyzes the commodification and selling of female bodies in the graphic novel genre. In Crawshaw’s research titled “Truth, Justice, Boobs? Analyzing Female Empowerment and Objectification in the Graphic Novel Genre”, it is argued that the issue of misrepresentation and sexualization causes an impact of alienation and objectification towards the female fanbase as comic books are perceived as cultural landscapes while the comic book woman’s roles are seen as “the love interest, the nag and the slut” as perceived by the male respondents (Crawshaw, 2015, p.43). As an attempt to defy sexual objectification placed upon women, Kolmes & Hoffman (2021) argues in their research that harlequin romance novels do not provide fantasy to objectify sex, but rather containing sex free of objectification, after challenging the critique coming from A.W. Eaton’s theory that art can objectify its subjects (Kolmes & Hoffman,

2021, p.30) and taking into consideration the accusations claiming sexual contents in romance novels objectifies its heroines as passive receivers of overwhelming sexual energies. Kolmes and Hoffman concludes that “satisfying sex in a romance novel does not appear until it is impossible for the romantic heroine to be objectified” (Kolmes & Hoffman, 2021, p.30).

It can be said that the study of sexual objectification is nothing new as previously mentioned by Guerrero (1990), Crawshaw (2015), and Kolmes & Hoffman (2021). Furthermore, there are previous studies related to the novels under discussion as well. On *The Valley Amazement* by Amy Tan (2013), there are the following studies. Abdillah (2020) looks into the identity politics and gender oppression in *The Valley of Amazement* by Amy Tan and *The Saga of Siti Mariah*. Sun (2021) highlights Violet’s growth and process of initiation to adulthood. Divyasree and Rajarajan (2021) discusses how love, alienation and race are central themes of the book. Chintescu (2021) examines the connection of sub-themes such as otherness, ethnicity, family and prostitution. Vechorynska et al. (2020) highlights Violet’s identity resistance to transgression. Meanwhile, on *Beauty Is a Wound* by Eka Kurniawan (2002), there are several existing studies as follows. Putri (Putri, 2020) explains the abuse of power, symbolic violence and resistance in Kurniawan’s works. Nurrahman & Rosyidi (2020) examines the usage of magical realism with its relation to historical discourse. Pardi (2020) depicts qualities of women’s strength. Asnani (2020) discusses application of radical feminism in the book. It is on these related studies that the foundation of this thesis’ argument is built. Therefore, to differentiate this thesis from the previous studies, this thesis discusses the issue of sexual objectification found in two Asian historical fiction

novels: *The Valley of Amazement* (2013) written by Amy Tan and *Cantik Itu Luka* or *Beauty Is A Wound* or (2015) written by Eka Kurniawan in 2002 and translated from Bahasa Indonesia into English by Annie Tucker in 2015 (for practical purposes, I shorten the title of novels into *The Valley* and *Beauty*). This thesis does not only discuss about the sexual objectification experienced by the female characters in both novels but also their various ways of resisting sexual objectification.

Both novels present a notable similarity. The theme of *The Valley* revolves around the world of courtesans living in 1920s onward in Shanghai who struggles to break free from their personal intrigues as those associated closely to the Chinese world of flowers – this journey is most obvious in the life of the main character, Violet Minturn. Written by the celebrated author of the film-adapted *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) – Amy Tan is the National Book Fiction Finalist of 1989 awards (National Book Critics Circle, 2019) and awardee of National Humanities Medal by National Endowment by the Humanities for “expanding the American literary canon by bravely exploring experiences of immigrant families, heritage, memories, and poignant struggles” (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2021). *The Valley of Amazement* retells the life journey of a young Chinese-American courtesan named Violet, whose story lasts for 40 years starting from the last of Chinese imperial dynasties until the economic growth of the Shanghai international settlement before World War II.

Meanwhile, *Beauty* also offers a similar theme like *The Valley*, where Dewi Ayu, a renowned prostitute of fictional Halimunda city, with other characters closely related to the prostitution world struggled struggles to break free from their

various oppressions as women from the beginning of Japanese invasion upon Indonesia until the killing of *preman* by Soeharto's regime. In addition, *Beauty* has gained international acclaims. Rudolf Mrázek (2016), in the book review published under Cornell University Press, praised and complimented Kurniawan for writing *Beauty* in such creativity, to present a political hope through the book's language, vividly representing the complete history of Indonesia by leaping from 1938, 1942, 1945, 1965 and 1976 (Mrázek, 2016, p. 147). Mrázek commented that Dewi Ayu's three daughters is an allusion of Indonesia's three historical saga-like phases consisting of Japan's colonization of Indonesia, the National Revolution and finally succeeded by Indonesia's independence (pp.146-147). Furthermore, *Cantik Itu Luka* or *Beauty Is a Wound* has been translated into over 30 languages (with Bahasa Indonesia as the original language) as the book is enjoyed by worldwide audience, receiving international awards such as FT Oppenheimer Emerging Voices Prize Winner 2016, Man Booker International Finalist 2016, Winner of the World Readers Awards, and Longlisted for the Best Translated Book Awards (BTBA) 2016 (Pontas, 2022).

The red thread connecting the two novels under discussion is the fact that the selected female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty* experience female objectification. Several female characters whose experience of sexual objectification stands out from both of the novels are selected for analysis. In *The Valley*, the female characters are: Violet Minturn, Magic Gourd and Pomelo. From *Beauty*, I select the following female characters are: Dewi Ayu, Alamanda and Rengganis.

To summarize, these female characters from both of the novels experience sexual objectification differently yet they manage to show resistance in different ways as well. As women living closely to the courtesan and prostitution world, the sexual objectification they receive is not only influenced and rooted in capitalism which commodifies and/or exploits their body, but also in patriarchy which takes advantage of their sexuality. In other words, it can be said that in this context sexual objectification is derived from ‘capitalist patriarchy’, as termed by the socialist feminist Zillah R. Eisenstein (Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009). Hence, this issue taking place in *The Valley* and *Beauty* is examined in the light of socialist feminist approach which argues that capitalism and male domination are interrelated. In the following paragraphs, I explain the brief overview of socialist feminism concepts and its selected theorists to give a brief insight how this critical framework is applicable to analyze the case of sexual objectification (or female objectification, to be specific) experienced by the female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty*.

Socialist feminism is a suitable approach to analyze the case of female objectification experienced by the female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty*. To give a brief overview of this approach, Tong (2009) states that socialist feminism in general stems from Marxist feminism yet differs from the classic understanding of its classical origin. Unlike Marxist feminism, which sees capitalism as the source of women’s oppression, socialist feminism draws and focuses on the connection between patriarchy and capitalism which oppress women. Therefore, as mentioned before, the socialist feminist Zillah Eisenstein combines the two words (‘capitalism’ and ‘patriarchy’) into one phrase, which is the term ‘capitalist patriarchy’ to describe the main source of women’s oppression seen in the light of socialist

feminism. Thus, there are selected theories in relevance with the topic of this thesis and the approach used, with socialist feminism functioning as the main umbrella approach of this thesis (Gordon, 2013; Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009) along with the theory of objectification (Langton, 2009; Nussbaum, 1995; Rector, 2014) and with the concept of power and resistance (Foucault, 1978, 1980; Kebung, 2017; Lynch, 2011; Mills, 2003; Pickett, 1996a).

By keeping the research territory in mind, I proceed to list several publications related to the selected novels are listed to draw implications for the newness of this thesis. There are several related publications that had been examined. In “Abuse Of Power And Symbolic Violence In Eka Kurniawan’s *Beauty Is A Wound, Man Tiger, and Vengeance Is Mine, All Others Pay Cash*” , Putri (2020) studies the resistance in Kurniawan’s works to oppose power abuse between men-women relationship and symbolic violence in patriarchal society. Next, Abdillah (2020) examines how Violet Minturn and Siti Mariah utilize racial fluidity and hybridity as tools of empowerment through postcolonial approach. Meanwhile, Vechorynska et al. (2020) discuss the evolvement of identity resistance to transgression identity of Violet Minturn in *The Valley*. Then, Nurrahman and Rosyidi (2020) investigates how magical realism in *Beauty* challenges the history of Indonesia. Divyasree & Rajarajan (2021) points out how gender, love and alienation are significant overtones in Amy Tan’s novels; and, Sun (2021) highlights how *The Valley* takes the theme of initiation through Violet’s two phases of growth.

All of the aforementioned studies above present the literary representations of women’s oppression similar to the struggle portrayed by the female characters

in *The Valley* and *Beauty*. They do not only offer various perceptions of how the female characters experience conflict, but also affirm that indeed there are various the forms of resistance. Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the issue of sexual objectification and the various ways of resistance done by the female characters in *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound* through the following problem formulations of this thesis.

B. Problem Formulation

There are two questions that lead the discussion of this thesis which are examined in the light of socialist feminism:

1. How do *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound* portray female objectification?
2. How do the selected female characters in *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound* resist female objectification?

C. Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. In chapter two, theoretical and literary review is provided. The literary review shows the location of this thesis among other relevant studies, while the theoretical review explains the concept of socialist feminism and how its framework is applied for the analysis. chapter three and four answer the problem formulations. Chapter three analyzes how the female characters in Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement* and Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty Is a Wound* experience female objectification. Then, chapter four discusses how the selected female characters resist female objectification. Finally, chapter five concludes this thesis and provides information on how this thesis can be developed more for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As presented previously in chapter one, sexual objectification is one of the forms of dehumanization which eventually also leads to commodification, sexual exploitation, and physical abuse. This issue resonates with the stories in the female characters' lives in the two novels under discussion. Socialist feminism perceives their struggle of sexual objectification as oppression not only caused by the unjust capitalist system, but also its relation with male dominance embedded in patriarchy. Through various ways of resistance, they were able to face sexual objectification.

This chapter consists of two parts. First, the related studies of the selected novels are presented. Second, the theories utilized in the analysis are presented. The theories are: socialist feminism as the umbrella approach, the theory of sexual objectification, and the theory of resistance.

A. Literary Representations of *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound*

This part discusses several studies relevant to this thesis and how the following studies assist me to the building of this thesis' argument. There are two types of related studies reviewed in this part. The first discusses literary discoveries revolving around *The Valley of Amazement*. The second shares about several studies on *Beauty Is a Wound*. In the end, the connections between the related studies and the location of this thesis among the reviewed studies are explained.

Here are several related studies reviewed in this section. Through reading and observation, it can be implied that the wealth of related studies on *The Valley* and *Beauty* generally focuses on two points. These two points revolve around the theme of identity and resistance.

1. Identity

The first related study is written by Julia Noor Abdillah (2020) which focuses on the identity politics of two Eurasian female characters from Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement* and *The Saga of Siti Mariah*, and one of the characters is Violet, who is also discussed by the researcher. Through the approach of postcolonial feminism, Abdillah discovers how the characters utilize their racial fluidity to subtly resist subjugation (Abdillah, 2020, p.xii). The female characters analyzed by Abdillah (2020) also utilize their hybrid European-indigenous education and upbringing, along with their sexuality and identity to survive as Eurasians in both the world of colonizer and colonized as courtesan and concubine. Violet's complex identity as Chinese Eurasian through unexpected miscegenation is frowned upon by the society since many girls like Violet has to conceal their biracial identity (Abdillah, 2020, p.22). She is forced into the brothel; her identity is changed from an American girl, free to express herself, into a "voiceless commodity" (p.46). Abdillah's discovery is linked to this thesis because Abdillah's study and this thesis discuss the received oppression of Violet Minturn, the main character of *The Valley* in terms of gender. Furthermore, Abdillah also emphasizes how Violet is treated like an object throughout her journey in the story (Abdillah, 2020). However, Abdillah does not explicitly elaborate in detail that Violet is actually experiencing sexual objectification caused by the factor of capitalism and

the masculine conquest of the female body, a product of a patriarchal and consumerist society. Hence, this thesis presents a different point of view to perceive Violet's struggle. Recalling this thesis' focus on the topic of female objectification through socialist feminism lens, this thesis highlights that Violet's experience is not only caused by her racial identity, but also mainly caused by the economic-based and gender-based oppression in her society which impacts vast areas of her life as a human being – and this is also experienced by her surrounding female characters (Abdillah, 2020).

Next, still discussing around the theme of identity in Violet Minturn from *The Valley*, Caihong Sun (2021) points out how Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement* takes the theme of initiation. Sun contends how Violet goes through two phases of growth. First, Violet refuses to acknowledge her Chinese identity which goes along with her American one. Second, Violet finally realizes that she can attain respect and equality from men only when she is economically and mentally independent. Sun highlights how Violet's process of growth is also heavily influenced by the use of geographic space and first-person narrative. However, Sun does not explain in depth yet on how Violet's formation of identity is also influenced by the hardships she has to endure, and how these hardships shape her as a more resilient individual in the end of the story as she resists oppression caused by the capitalistic and patriarchal system in the courtesan world. This is the point which is explored further in this thesis, that Violet's identity is shaped by her resistance through resilience, sisterhood and motherhood.

C. Divyasree & Dr. S. Rajarajan (2021) points out how gender, love and alienation are significant overtones in Amy Tan's novels. Description of Amy Tan's

profile is prominent in this article, which elaborates Tan's background as a famous author known for her work *Joy Luck Club* (1989) which expresses her Chinese-American identity (Divyasree, C. & Rajarajan, 2021, p. 130). They pointed out how Tan's works, including *The Valley*, are deeply connected with the Chinese history, culture, intergenerational conflict, biculturalism, identity crisis, ethnicity, family relationships and language barriers (p.130). However, in this article, the writers do not provide concise explanation regarding how the themes of gender, love and alienation are shown in Tan's work, especially in *The Valley*. Instead, Divyasree & Rajarajan (2021) implicitly argues how Tan's works are intertwined with the Chinese identity. In this thesis, a different aspect related to gender would be explored more (Divyasree & Rajarajan, 2021, p. 130). This thesis does not focus on multiple works of Amy Tan, but focuses on *The Valley* analyzed under a single theme on female objectification and its resistance through channels of resilience, sisterhood, and motherhood.

All of the three studies above are linked to this thesis because they underscore the various causes of the formation of Violet Minturn's identity. They have been presented from the postcolonial point of view, from the perspective on the theme of adolescence, or from the influence of the author's background. These related studies have given this thesis a starting point to examine the character of Violet Minturn. Yet, this thesis unravels more how Violet's identity is also formed by her resistance towards female objectification, and how her perception towards herself and power-relation in her world implicitly influence her relationship with other characters in the book in the light of socialist feminism.

2. Resistance

Resistance is the key word in this thesis, because it shows the female characters' response towards the case of sexual objectification. Hence, there are several related studies below which revolves around the theme of resistance, be it a direct analysis on the characters' resistance or other forms of it. These related studies are crucial to shape and reshape the argument of this thesis.

First, Putri (2020) looks into the abuse of power, symbolic violence and resistance in three selected works of Eka Kurniawan: *Beauty Is a Wound* (2015), *Man Tiger* (2004) and *Vengeance Is Mine, All Others Pay Cash* (2014). By utilizing Foucault's understanding of power relations along with Bourdieu's thought on symbolic violence, Putri discovers that the dominant class are the abusers. In addition, she also discovers that symbolic violence is a product of the system of patriarchy which appears in the form of culture and tradition. Furthermore, women are not the only ones who suffer from this symbolic violence, but men as well.

Putri's study investigates more about the figure of Dewi Ayu, a Dutch-Indonesian prostitute in the city of Halimunda and her daughter Alamanda, who experience marital rape in *Beauty Is a Wound*. In the analysis of this study, Putri (2020) explains the abuse of power experienced by the characters in the selected novels in terms of their social status and class and also in terms of the relation between men and women through the Foucauldian concept of power (Putri, 2020, pp.36-62). Here, Dewi Ayu as the main character in *Beauty* experience sexual violence not only due to her lower status as a prisoner of war, a free sexual 'commodity' for the Japanese soldier's satisfaction and a prostitute at Mama Kalong's, but also because she is a woman. For instance, she is wildly raped by

Shodancho because she does not give a ‘yes’ for his proposal. Meanwhile, her daughter Alamanda is also raped by her own husband when she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him. Then, she is tied to the bed post and raped over and over again when her husband’s conquest over her body succeeds. Thus, the writer emphasizes that women are commodified and treated as things which one can buy or sell for something else (Putri, 2020, pp. 58–59).

Thus, the oppression experienced by Dewi Ayu and Alamanda is caused by sexual objectification. In the other two third of the chapter’s analysis, Putri presents the symbolic violence experienced by the characters through Bourdieu’s theory (Putri, 2020, p.62-99). Dewi Ayu marries her daughter Maya Dewi to Maman Gendeng, previously Dewi Ayu’s client, to protect her daughter’s virginity and refrain her from unwanted sexual behavior – the understanding that early marriage is valid for her daughter can protect Maya Dewi’s virginity is actually a form of symbolic violence internalized in Dewi Ayu as a mother. Finally, the writer ended the analysis by explaining how the characters display resistance towards abuse of power and symbolic violence. One of the instances presented by the writer is Dewi Ayu’s decision to become “autonomous subject who has power to make her decisions over her body” (p.121) by giving away her virginity to the Japanese soldier to help her friend in the prison camp and also to remain very still and unresponsive on the bed when a soldier forced her them to sleep together. Meanwhile, Alamanda displays her resistance through her refusal to have sexual intercourse with her husband, by creating a metal underwear with a special mantra to unlock it. To summarize, Putri’s study has shown how Dewi Ayu and Alamanda suffer under the abuse of power and symbolic violence imposed them, with Dewi

Ayu inside the sphere of prostitution and Alamanda within the sphere of marriage. However, Putri's study does not discuss in detail how objectification is one of the factors which perpetuates the symbolic violence and power abuse experienced by the female characters. Moreover, it also does not point out how objectification is not only done by men alone, but it can be done by women towards other women or that a woman can self-objectify herself, thus influencing their experience of being sexually exploited, commodified or abused physically. Thus, this is where this thesis differs from this second study because it aims to dig deeper about the aforementioned aspects while showing how the female characters resist sexual objectification.

The theme of resistance is also shown in Violet Minturn's story in *The Valley*, where she resists her Chinese ancestry but eventually comes to terms with her ethnic background by embracing it, as a strategic form of resistance. Vechorynska et al. (2020) contends that *The Valley of Amazement* is a postmodern saga where it displays elements of transgressive American Chineseness. Here, Vechorynska et al. investigates how Violet Minturn's image of herself progresses from identity resistance to identity transgression starting from highlighting the mechanism of literary representation and shifting identities of 'the Self' and 'the Other' through imagological approach (Vechorynska, 2020, p.653, pp.569-560). Moreover, Vechorynska et al. highlights how Violet's nature of American Chineseness can shift in accordance to her creation as a fictional character influenced by the cultural globalization today (p.653). As Vechorynska et al. suggest, Violet's self-encounters a journey from resistance of identity and transgression of identity (p.653). Yet, my thesis would differ in terms of how Violet,

along with other female characters, define their self through resisting sexual objectification, not in terms of inner-conflict resulting from one's view of their ethnicity.

Resistance also takes in another form, disguised in the skin of magical realism. Nurrahman & Rosyidi (2020) uncovers how elements of magical realism (irreducible elements, phenomenal world, the unsettling doubt, merging realms & disruption of time-space-identity) in *Beauty Is a Wound* functions as a historical discourse. Resistance towards reality is seen when Nurrahman & Rosyidi points out how “magical realism enables a writer to challenge the authenticity of the so-called objective reality and at the same time attempts to “write back to the Centre”” as said by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (Nurrahman & Rosyidi, 2020, p. 89). In addition, both of the authors also describe slightly how the female characters' body are colonized by men (pp.96-97). Hence, this point facilitates the continuity of this discussion yet seen through the aspect of resistance as well.

Based on the related studies above, it can be said that identity and resistance are closely associated. It can be inferred as well that resistance is present when power is present, and that resistance comes in different forms. Yet, in this thesis, I propose another kind of resistance where the female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty* come face to face with sexual objectification, where this issue is also implicitly related to the female characters' identity.

B. Socialist Feminism, Sexual Objectification and Resistance

After examining the related studies, this section explores theories related to this thesis' topic. There are several relevant theories which utilized in the analysis.

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They are: socialist feminism (which functions as the umbrella approach of this thesis), theory of sexual objectification, and theory of resistance.

1. Socialist Feminism

According to Rosemary Tong (Tong, 2009), socialist feminism in general stems from Marxist feminism yet differs from the classic understanding of its origin. Socialist feminism draws the connection between patriarchy and capitalism which oppress women. Thus, socialist feminism attempts to uncover how women are treated as subordinates through gender-based and economic-based oppression (as the main focus) along with ethnicity-based and sexual-orientation-based oppression (Tong, 2009, p. 93). To connect this brief overview of socialist feminism's theoretical framework with the political and literary context of trafficking experienced by the female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty*, economic class is not the only source of women's oppression but also the female sex, 'second class' after the male in patriarchal gaze, is a serious root of their suffering as victims of sexual objectification.

Alison Jaggar (1983), a theorist of socialist feminism, in her book *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* describes that socialist feminism is the sister of radical feminism, daughters of the contemporary women's liberation movement in the 1970s; it aims to develop a political theory and practice that synthesizes concepts from radical feminism and traditional Marxism (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 123-125). Yet, to define socialist feminism, one needs to define its difference from radical feminism and traditional Marxism, in order to distinguish its 'middle ground' between both. Marxist feminism perceives that women's subordination belongs is caused by the class division struggle, while radical feminism perceives that

women's struggle belongs to is caused by the struggle against patriarchy – that women's liberation should be prioritized over other struggles for liberation (Jaggar, 1983, pp.123-125; pp.137-139). Socialist feminism believes that the interrelated dominating system of capitalism, male dominance, racism and imperialism should be entirely destroyed (p.124). Socialist feminism claims that the capitalist system is structured by male dominance and the contemporary male dominance is organized by how capitalist division of labor operates (Jaggar, 1983, pp.137-139). In other words, socialist feminism perceives that women are oppressed by “capitalist patriarchy” as termed by Zillah R. Eisenstein (p.124), a form of oppression based on gender and economy – yet, this statement does not diminish the fact that socialist feminism also struggles for the liberation of women who are experiencing oppression based on race and sexual orientation (Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009). This means that socialist feminism has a wide trajectory in perceiving various kinds of oppression experienced by women coming from a wide spectrum of background, yet focuses mainly on the intertwining women's oppression based on patriarchy and capitalism.

Linda Gordon (2013) also explains the basic understanding of socialist feminism. Socialist feminism belongs to the second wave which also focuses on feminism's struggle of women's objectification portrayed in mass culture (Gordon, 2013, p.21). Socialist feminists distinguish themselves by saying that they are different from Marxist feminists and they are not loyal to any socialist regime nor to Leninism or Maoism (p.22), and claims that capitalism as tool of oppression, inequality and exploitation is rooted in the domination of the male sex, and one should understand its structural and reproductive system (p.24); other factors such

as race, class and gender also perpetrated this domination (p. 22). Thus, socialist feminism expands the definition of exploitation not only limited to capitalist labors but also household and child-rearing labor as a form of labor taken advantage by other parties (p.22). Moreover, they also believe that militarism, conquest and environmental destruction are also caused by the masculinist drive to gain profit (p.22).

Through the lens of socialist feminism, the inequalities experienced by the female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty* are observed. It should be taken into account that their struggle of sexual objectification is not only rooted in capitalism which objectifies their body as commodities but also rooted in male dominance in accordance with the notion of masculine conquest (Gordon, 2013, pp.21-22). Recalling Jaggar's words, that generally socialist feminism also aims to examine the components of women's oppression and how it can be ended (Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009, p.4), this thesis shows what constitutes the female characters' oppression in both of the novels; although the oppression of capitalist patriarchy is not eliminated altogether in *The Valley* or *Beauty*, the female characters heads towards that ideal direction by facing sexual objectification with resistance. Hence, to rise against the oppression of the female characters in both novels through various channels of resistance, the cause of problem should be identified clearly through the facilitation offered by the theory of sexual objectification.

3. Theory of Sexual Objectification

Objectification occurs when human beings are viewed sexually and perceived as objects as their humanity is lowered or degraded by the objectifier (Rector, 2014, p.15). Humanity, inseparable with dignity, is what distinguishes

humans uniquely from animals or objects and according to Kant (as cited in Rector, 2014, p.15), the essence of one's morality lies in their acknowledgement of others' humanity; thus, feminists in this contemporary age states that the way objectification works is when one does not acknowledge another person's dignity as a human – in other words, they are reduced to an object (Rector, 2014, p.15). When objectification is done, when human beings are *merely* treated as tools to achieve one's goal, a problem will arise:

... human beings cannot help but treat one another as means towards desired ends on a routine basis, but this need not be necessarily problematic; it's when others are treated merely as means toward a desired end at their own expense or against their will that possible ethical problems arise (Rector, 2014, p. 15).

Martha Nussbaum (1995) explicates the idea of objectification and 14 years later Rae Langton (2009) added more categories of objectification. To summarize her idea, Nussbaum (1995) offers the seven dimensions of objectification: instrumentality is seeing or making other person as a tool to achieve one's goals by neglecting their needs or wants (1); denial of autonomy is when one does not respect other person's independent autonomy to make decisions (2); inertness is to treat others as if they do not have the agency or ability to act (3); fungibility is to view others as interchangeable and replaceable by not taking into account of their uniqueness as an individual (4); violability is not respecting someone's boundaries and treating them as someone who can be harmed, smashed or penetrated (5); ownership is treating other person as something owned or something that can be bought and sold (6); denial of subjectivity is neglecting other person's feelings or experiences, and not considering it as something valid or important (7) (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 257; Rector, 2014, p. 19). Langton (2009) added Nussbaum's

classifications of objectification with the following points: reduction to the body is degrading someone by partially viewing them to their body or body parts (8); reduction to the appearance is viewing other person only based on their looks or how they are appealing to the viewer's senses (9); silencing is to treat others as if they do not have the ability to speak or as if they cannot speak (10) (Langton, 2009, p.228-229; Rector, 2014, p.19). However, Nussbaum said, not all objectifications are negative. For example, treating an object as a thing without any life in it is okay. The same applies to a healthy parent-child relationship where the parent seems to deny the child's autonomy and displays an aspect of ownership; yet the line needs to be drawn when the child's body integrity are ignored, when they are treated as tools to achieve a goal, when their feelings are dismissed and when they are deemed as replaceable (fungible) (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 262). Objectification is also embedded in an everyday romantic relationship and sometimes desirable, for example when the partner treats the lover's stomach as a pillow; yet the line is drawn again when there is no display of equality (or symmetrical power relation), mutual respect and consent between both parties (p.263).

Now that the basic understanding of objectification is covered, the meaning of sexual objectification will be explained. In the classic example, sexual objectification can happen to women when they are raped, physically abused, their bodies exploited to gain profit, and did not receive equal pay because they are seen as more inferior than men (Rector, 2014, p.14). In everyday life, unconsciously, women living in patriarchal societies can also internalize this objectification within themselves to view other women and themselves through the male gaze. Self-objectification, as explained by feminist Sandra Bartky (1990) cited by Rector

(2014), happens when a woman views herself through the patriarchal gaze as a decorative object to please others while neglecting her mind as her source of identity, yet complying to 'the tyranny of slenderness' (Bartky as cited by Rector, p.17) and the succeeding kinds of beauty tyranny and beauty standards. In other words, objectification can be done by both of the male and female sex:

peers, romantic partners, parents of both genders, teachers, and the media all collude to encourage the perception that women's constant preoccupation with appearance is something natural and voluntary. Thus, according to Bartky, it is very difficult for women to free themselves from their self-objectification (Rector, 2014, p.17).

It should be taken into account that there is a significant relationship between Bartky's statement with socialist feminism's belief (in general) that to end all kinds of domination means to end capitalism, male dominance, racism and imperialism (Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009, p.4). The evidence of the victims of sexual objectification from *The Valley* and *Beauty* can give an insightful reflection to show how this terrain can be navigated through resistance shown by the female characters. This, of course, would not be the ultimate solution for all cases of female objectification in real life, but would function as a reflection to perceive the possibilities of how female objectification takes place and how women can respond to it. According to the context of both novels under discussion, the female characters respond the case of female objectification through various channels of resistance; thus, the understanding of resistance is elaborated in the next point.

4. Theory of Resistance

As it has been discussed before, the female characters in the selected novels experience sexual objectification as they live in the environment where power and domination coming from a capitalist and patriarchal society is exercised over them.

However, the female characters show resistance; as Foucault wrote that where power is present, resistance is also present “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Therefore, the concept of resistance according to Foucault is explained.

Power comes hand in hand with resistance, and a crucial understanding of power leads one to understand resistance concisely. There is no exact definition of power provided by Foucault; to him, the way power operates in everyday life and conversations is a greater focus compared to the definition of what exactly power is (Kebung, 2017, p. 24). In accordance with Foucault's perspective, power possesses distinct characteristics, including its nature as a relational system within society, rather than a means of subjugation (1). It also flows throughout society, rather than being wielded by a particular group, in order to ensure citizens' subservience (2). Power is omnipresent, as it arises from everyone, and not a form of domination in which one group exerts control over another (3). Intentionality is inherent to power, which aims to achieve specific objectives (4). Power has the potential to be productive, empowering, and transformative (5), and it coexists with resistance, as points of resistance exist in all power relations (6) (Foucault, 1978, 1980, p. 98; Lynch, 2011, p. 15).

Hence, moving towards the understanding of resistance, Foucault states that no one can escape power because one is always contained within it, thus resistance is not something outside of power (and power is not commodity). Foucault wrote, resistance is never outside the scope of power, because when power is present resistance will always be present too (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). In other words, power and resistance impacts one another since the existence of power also depends on

the multiplicity of points of resistance (p.95); departing from Foucault's explanation, Lynch states that resistance is inevitable within power-relations, because power-relations can exist when there is resistance (Lynch, 2011, p.24)(Foucault, 1994 as cited in Lynch, 2011, p. 24). Therefore, when people resist power, they are not passive or helpless, but instead they are active individuals who have the ability to bring about change and develop new ways of acting (they are also known as active subjects); resistance is actually a component of power.

Foucault presents the types of resistance and how it operates within the dimensions of power-relations. Some resistances are possible, necessary, and not likely to happen; some are spontaneous, savage, done alone, coordinated, uncontrolled or violent; some too are quick to compromise, done on the basis of interest, and sacrificial (Foucault, 1978, p. 96).

Foucault's types of resistance happens in stories and also in everyday life. Moreover, he also informs that many individuals encounter temporary points of resistance, therefore it form individuals into ever-shifting groups depending on the ongoing resistances which marks an impactful memory in the individuals' bodies and minds (Foucault, 1978, p. 96) (p.96). Resistance also has an effect where it can divide the dynamic society, and separate united individuals and also reshape groups (Foucault, 1978, p. 96) (p.96). Resistance too, like the vein-like network of power, surpasses apparatuses, social stratifications and individual unities and varies in density, has a definitive way of mobilizing individuals, inflaming certain parts of the body, moments in life and certain types of behavior (Foucault, 1978, p. 96)(p.96). Many scholars also criticized Foucault for the way he depicts power as omnipresent and insidious at the same time, as if resistance was futile; however,

what Foucault tried to convey was that resistance too has no limits (Pickett, 1996a, p. 445). Thus, forms and consequences of resistance are unpredictable; one also still need to examine closely the concept of resistance by Foucault because it is an intricate thought which is developed in three stages, where resistance first highlights difference, then revolutionary agitation, and later diffuse, localized resistance to power (Pickett, 1996, p.445). To infer, one may suggest that resistance to power is possible but it surely comes with a price to pay. Furthermore, when it comes to power dynamics, individuals shouldn't just be seen as the ones who either receive or are targeted by power; instead, they play a crucial role in either carrying out or resisting the exercise of power – they can act as the vehicle for power to be wielded or challenged (Foucault, 1980).

Now, after the important points of Foucault's concept of resistance if covered, I explain the connection of resistance with socialist feminism and sexual objectification is explained to argue the gist of this thesis in the following sentence. As Foucault stated before, where there is power, there is resistance. It can be implied the power which is resisted by the socialist feminist movement is domination rooted in capitalism and patriarchy, or "capitalist patriarchy" as termed by Zillah R. Eisenstein (Jaggar, 1983; Tong, 2009). Power rests in everyday communication and does not have an exact form since it is vein-like, and everyone is under the influence of power – no one can escape power (Foucault, 1978). Therefore, it is possible to imply that resistance is also present in everyday communication and can take many forms, and everyone has the ability to resist any powerful forms of domination (Foucault, 1978). To synthesize the previous point with the struggle of socialist feminism, one may wildly propose that the powerful

influence of capitalist patriarchy is spread everywhere and embedded deeply in certain individuals' lives, whether they are the sites of power execution or recipient of this power as later would be investigated by the analysis of *The Valley* and *Beauty*; thus, resistance in any forms everywhere is truly possible. With the case of sexual objectification experienced by the female characters in the selected two novels, sexual objectification is an example of the power being executed and resisted, with capitalism and patriarchy as crucial driving forces behind it as shown the world of courtesans and prostitutes in *The Valley* and *Beauty*. This is where socialist feminism fits in, to look into the force behind female objectification, to systematically understand women's subordination in spheres of class and sex and hopes to end all systems of domination (Tong, 2009, p.4) as proposed by Jaggard (Jaggard, 1983) through resistance.

To begin investigating the issue of sexual objectification and resistance found in the novels under discussion in the light of socialist feminism, the journey of a thousand miles should begin with a single step, as Lao Tzu says. The novels utilized in this thesis are: *The Valley of Amazement* written by Amy Tan (2013) written in English, and *Cantik Itu Luka* written by Eka Kurniawan (2002) – later translated into English by Annie Tucker published in (2015). To start with, socialist feminism is utilized to unravel the struggle of the female characters in the world of courtesans and prostitutes within the intertwining domination of capitalism and patriarchy – this approach would become a basis for answering the first and second problem formulations. Thus, the answer for the first problem formulation functions as a stepping stone towards the second one. Next, the theory of sexual objectification by Rector is applied to answer the first problem formulation, which

is to find out how do *The Valley* and *Beauty* portray female objectification. Finally, Foucault's concept of resistance answers the second problem formulation, which is to analyze how do the selected female characters in *The Valley* and *Beauty* resist female objectification.



CHAPTER III

FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION

IN THE VALLEY OF AMAZEMENT AND BEAUTY IS A WOUND

This chapter discusses the first problem formulation on how *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound* portray female objectification. First, evidences of female objectification found in the two texts are presented, examined within the theory of objectification through Rector's book (Rector, 2014) where Rector has compiled various thoughts such as from Martha Nussbaum and Rae Langton to further expand the understanding regarding the scale of objectification through real-life examples. Second, this thesis draws connections between the illustrated instances of female objectification inflicted upon the female characters with relevant issues of sexual exploitation and objectification present in the real world, to show that the two novels under discussion functions as a gateway to perceive these cases through critical approach. Therefore, the results of chapter three are further explained through the lens of socialist feminism and thought of power and resistance in future sections, as a response towards the portrayal of female objectification.

Before diving into the examination of the sexual objectification experienced by the female characters, the general contexts of the two novels are provided to enrich the analysis. Through the process of close reading, it can be implied that both novels explore various themes. *The Valley* mainly discusses the issue of identity, mother-daughter relationship, cultural hybridity, romance, and women's resistance towards the social injustice they experience when their world collides with the

sphere of sexual exploitation in the patriarchal Shanghai society. Meanwhile, *Beauty* revolves around the themes of patriarchal culture, motherhood, magical realism, history, romance, and more.

In addition, the background of both novels also differs in historical and writing-process contexts. *The Valley* is set in Shanghai China, which is the international settlement of foreign people and local Chinese during the end of Qing dynasty, transitioning to a republic. This setting is inspired from Amy Tan's picture of her grandmother wearing clothes resembling the courtesans' fashion, which drives Tan to investigate more of her family lineage and her personal identity as a writer, as she informed in her lecture of *The Valley* posted by The John Adams Institute on Youtube (The John Adams Institute, 2021) .

Furthermore, still based on her lecture, Tan informs that her reason to write *The Valley* (as her first novel in eight years) is also driven by her restlessness to figure out her grandmother's life who had to marry in a young age to a scholar (who later passed away) and after that became the fourth wife of a wealthy Chinese man living in a mansion in the island of Chong Ming Dao right outside of Shanghai. Yet, eventually, Tan's grandmother decided to take her own life in the age of 36 because the position of being the fourth wife was considered as disgraceful. As a result, Tan's grandmother becomes her muse in writing, especially in the writing process of *The Valley*, where she imagines how is it like for her grandmother to live through a hard life without any inability to speak for her own self. In the end of the lecture, Tan states that the enigma of herself is also the enigma of her grandmother; she said, "What happened to [my grandmother], what she felt, and how she constructed

her life has very much to do with how I constructed my life” (The John Adams Institute, 2021).

Meanwhile, the background and writing-process of *Beauty* also presents an equally interesting aspect. In 2022, Eka Kurniawan was invited to *Festival Literasi (FESLIT) 2022* (Literacy Festival 2022) held by The Ministry of Finance of Republic of Indonesia, to discuss about his book *Beauty Is a Wound* (Kemenkeulib, 2022). Similar (but different) to Tan, his choice of story setting is also derived from his past. Kurniawan describes that during his childhood, he often hung out at the truck rest-area near the local market, where his mother owned a shop there. When asked about Halimunda, the fictional location he invents in *Beauty*, he explains that the location is a mix of inspirations where Halimunda is not only a seaport, alluding to Cilacap (a city in central Java), but also a place where the prostitution business also flourish. Hence, the mix of aspects in terms of Halimunda’s location also reflects the mixed composition of elements in the book (Kurniawan categorizes it as a general fiction) consisting of historical allusions, horror, local beliefs, tales, and many more. Thus, he writes *Beauty* in the style of retelling a tale where the narrator knows everything that is going on.

In terms of writing process, Kurniawan took approximately 2 years to finish the draft and published it in 2002 as his debut novel. When the interviewer asked him the reason why he inserted so many graphic contents in the story, Kurniawan replied that what he did was only to write and finish the novel, without having any idea who will read or publish it, or is that kind of writing style prohibited. In addition, he also mentioned that his way of writing is direct and not figurative,

inspired from the horror and *silat* (martial-arts) book he used to read back then. He informs the audience that when he started to write chapter one, he has no idea how will the story be like. Yet, the plot progress as he continued to write while featuring unique characters in his story. Thus, concluding Kurniawan's intricate work, Mrázek (2016) comments that *Beauty* is a book "a real thing" with Dewi Ayu's presence as the beautiful, wounded Mother Indonesia throughout the Indonesian history from the Dutch and Japanese colonial era, the revolution for Independence, the Old and New Order, the *Reformasi* until the present age.

Departing from the context provided above, there are six female characters analyzed in this thesis. They are: Violet (main character), Magic Gourd & Pomelo from *The Valley of Amazement* and Dewi Ayu (main character) Alamanda & Rengganis from *Beauty Is a Wound*. All of them did not have an equal share of experiencing all ten sexual objectification categories at the same time since each character is given different portions in the story. Some only experience eight out of ten, or nine out of ten. However, what can be implied from the data found is that every type of experienced sexual objectification is usually related to one another (for example, Violet experienced not only reduction to the body but also violence), as Nussbaum informed that objectification is a 'loose cluster term' which cannot be easily defined by one single characteristic, yet involving multiple features at a time to represent the multifaceted nature of evil when one denies another's subjectivity and the (potential) dangers that comes with it (Rector, 2014, p. 20). In addition, the experience of sexual objectification occurs in distinct contexts. Therefore, this section of analysis elaborates on various cases of sexual objectification which the six female characters experienced in different conditions; such as human trafficking

and intimate partner violence (IPV). The perspective of socialist feminism in examining these specific conditions would be present in each discussion.

Thus, the analysis begins by Recalling the theory of objectification, there are ten types of objectifications. They are: instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, denial of subjectivity, reduction to the body, reduction to the appearance and silencing (Langton, 2009; Nussbaum, 1995; Rector, 2014). When these categories are done to a female in a sexual way or association, they are defined as ‘female objectification’ in this thesis. All of the 10 types of objectification mentioned above are present in both of the selected texts.

A. Female Objectification in Human Trafficking

This section aims to explore cases of sexual objectification experienced by the female characters in human trafficking. There are three sub-categories of human trafficking which are discovered in the two books, namely the evidence of sexual exploitation, child abuse and rape. Each of these points would be elaborated altogether, since sexual exploitation and child abuse also overlaps with one another in this context.

According to United Nations’ Article 3(a) of “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children” published in 2000, when a person is trafficked, they are recruited, transported or transferred somewhere else, forced to stay in the place controlled by the criminals (before and during their abuse process; receipt of persons is also included (Hodge & Lietz, 2007, p. 164). The female victims are threatened, coerced, abducted, deceived by lies and their vulnerability abused by the trafficker. Sometimes, they are given

money or they receive payment or other forms of benefit from the trafficker, so the trafficker can obtain the victim's 'forced' consent to be exploited (Hodge & Lietz, 2007, p. 164).

Victims were recruited into sexual exploitation in many different ways and suffered greatly. Generally, exploiters target vulnerable individuals and took advantage of the victims' weaknesses; they were promised a better life, 'purchased' from their guardians under the name of marriage or adoption, tricked into a loving relationship, or to the most extreme, they were kidnapped from their homes (Hodge & Lietz, 2007). For example, Violet is a sexually exploited and trafficked victim since she is a vulnerable and dependent individual, a child entrusted to Fairweather, who was kidnapped, tricked and promised to be given a 'better life': to be taken to the American Consulate in order to reunite with her mother onboard the ship heading to San Francisco. Hence, sexual exploitation is obviously a part of human trafficking. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Asia Pacific defines sexual exploitation as an abuse (done on purpose) of someone else's vulnerability of weakness (for example, survival, food rations, education, books, transport, etc.), trust, in order to get sexual favors; trafficking and prostitution is included as well (UNHCR, 2023). Furthermore, the trafficker may offer the victim money or social, economic or political benefits (UNHCR, 2023).

From the following instances of the excerpts taken from *The Valley* and *Beauty*, sexual objectification is perceived as inevitable in the acts of sexual exploitation. Sandra Bartky states that the act of sexual objectification occurs when an individual's sexual attributes or functions are isolated from their overall personality and viewed solely as instruments or symbols that represent them; hence, according to this definition, individuals who engage in prostitution are subjected to

sexual objectification (Rector, 2014, p. 29). Although Violet and Dewi Ayu's first personal encounter with sexual exploitation vary differently, all of them were treated as (sexual) objects in various degrees by the perpetrator and degraded as a person, either reduced to their appearance, body, as an instrumental, etc. Furthermore, the notable intersection between sexual objectification experienced by the characters and their story of being sexually exploited is their oppressed state, an oppression tangled between the capitalist and patriarchal system running in society—this is the focus of socialist feminism which would be explored and synthesized further in this section.

1. Violet

Sexual objectification in terms of denial of autonomy, inertness and instrumentality are evident when Violet was sold off by Fairweather as a child to the prostitution house which belonged to Mother Ma. The moment Fairweather dropped off Violet, she was seized by other courtesans and little maids who forced her to come inside and denied her autonomy to be free. Little Violet's cries of refusal was in vain. Inertness is also evident; just because Violet was a child, Fairweather took advantage of Violet's age and helplessness – he treated Violet as someone lacking capacity and agency to act. Furthermore, instrumentality is also evident because Fairweather used Violet to clear his debt with the Green Gang:

Before I could think, they grasped me at the elbows, and pushed me forward. I balked and explained we were going to the consulate instead, but they did not let go ... My heart was racing and panic choked my throat. "I'm a foreigner," I squawked in Chinese. "You are not allowed to do this to me ..."
(Tan, 2013, pp. 94–95)

To support the analysis above in terms of literary nuance, characterization is also an important element to pay attention to because with characters, the story

now has a purpose and characters enable one to care about the issue occurring inside the story (Reams, 2015, p.2). In this context, readers understand how Violet and other characters (in the following section) perceive female objectification through important aspects of characterization, which are: physical description, action, reaction, thoughts and speech (p.4). In this excerpt, Violet's reaction and speech clearly reflects her desperation to break free from being forced into sexual exploitation. Her refusal, anger, anxiety and panic of being forced as a courtesan is directly described by Tan, that her heart is racing and panicking as her speech above indicates her strong refusal of going into the Hall of Tranquility.

Violet's refusal of being forced into sexual exploitation is caused by many factors. The most obvious one is the fact that she is conflicted to be half American and half Chinese, where in the first half of the book, her pride as an American refuse to be subdued and even leads her to consider herself superior than Magic Gourd or other Chinese courtesans. Violet's initial attitude of western superiority is in sync with the historical backdrop of the beginning of China-America relations, where America proudly recognized and honored Anson Burlingame Embassy nationally as emblem of American civilization to open the way for diplomacy with China, to advance the Pacific Trade, and to give America "a full control of Chinese relations with Europe" (Yi, 2019, pp. 85-87). As Sun (2021) describes in terms of story setting which supports the growth of Violet's characterization, The Hall of Tranquility is the place where Violet learns to hide her pride as (partially) an American, and where she learns to accept her Chinese identity after she is given lessons revolving the courtesan world (Sun, 2021, p.173). Furthermore, Violet's conflict of identity in the state of in-betweenness, is also strengthened by the literary

symbolism of the painting made by Lu Shing, titled “The Valley of Amazement”; as Vechorynska (2020) commented, the symbol of the painting changes over time as the plot progresses, which eventually leads Violet to the discovery of her real Self (neither inclining unequally to her Chinese nor American identity) (Vechorynska, 2020, p.655).

Violet’s refusal towards the case of sexual exploitation resonates with various cases of human trafficking, a serious issue occurring in all parts of the globe, not only limited to China. Although Violet’s story is not based on real life events, literature has a primary role to be the gateway of critical thinking to open the eye of readers, pushing them to reflect upon the issues happening around them in terms of politics, socio-economy, history, and so on. Therefore, this thesis does not only examine the two novels only within the boundary of literary aesthetics, but draws relevant connections to the real world and sees what lies behind the text. Hence, to make Violet’s story relevant to the global issue of sexual exploitation in human trafficking (or sex trafficking), this thesis provides relevant background of analysis in the following paragraphs below, where sexual exploitation does not only occur in the international scale, but also in the domestic scale with the local context of Indonesia.

In terms of the international scale of sexual exploitation, the International Labor Organization (ILO) informs that in 2017 there are 24.9 million people in the world who are victims of human trafficking. 71% of the victims are women and girls where 4.8 million are forced into sexual exploitation, children included (Safe Horizon, 2022) . Before 1990s, Asia was seen as the largest place for sexual

trafficking; however, sex trafficking has spread to all parts of the world involving 3 different countries of the victim's origin (where they were taken from), the victim's transit country (where they were 'trained') and the victim's destination country (where they were 'sold' by their pimps or exploiters) (Hodge & Lietz, 2007). Countries where prostitution is big, legalized or tolerated became the magnet for sexual traffickers. Many victims of human trafficking come from Asia, Africa, the CIS, Latin America or Eastern Europe.

In terms of domestic scale, human trafficking is one of the most urgent issue in Indonesia as well. On 5 April 2023, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Mohammad Mahfud Mahmodin or Mahfud MD went to visit Batam to have a dialogue with Romo (Father) Chrisanctus Paschalis Saturnus, a social activist advocating for migrant workers who were victims of human trafficking, and visited Santa Theresia Shelter (The Jakarta Post & Fadli, 2023). As reported by Antara News et al. (2023), Mahfud MD strongly remarked that "human trafficking is a despicable crime against humanity, and the government already has relevant slaws on this issue" while emphasizing the need for a collective action to stop this cruelty. Afterwards, Mahfud MD also attended the public discussion held by BP2MI (The Agency of for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers) at Batam themed "Perang Semesta Melawan Sindikat Perdagangan" (Universal War against the Syndicate for Indonesian Migrant Workers) on April 6, 2023 (Antara News et al., 2023; The Jakarta Post & Fadli, 2023). Based on the Instagram post uploaded by Mahfud MD (@mohmahfudmd) in relation to his participation in BP2MI's public discussion, it is informed that there are 2.605 cases of human trafficking from 2017-2022, and 50.9% involves children

while 46.14% involves women as victims, with 2021 as the highest year with 624 cases; Mahfud MD also remarks that he already obtained the list of the syndicate's network (Mahmodin, 2023).

Returning again to the context of Violet's story, this thesis wants to show that literature has the power to open the eyes of readers when they start to question the relevance of text to the real world today and to investigate what is behind the text – in this case, the discussion centres of female objectification in sexual exploitation. With the global data presented before, readers should realize that sex trafficking rooted in female objectification (as illustrated in Violet's journey) has caused a great damage to humanity in real life as informed by the number of victims reported by ILO; furthermore, with the domestic-scale data, readers (especially living in Indonesia) should be aware that this issue is real and also happens within an arm's reach, that anyone living close to someone can be victims of sex trafficking. In the end, it can be said that all crimes in the world, including the case of sex trafficking, is rooted in objectification done by one towards others. The two novels under discussion are only mediums of critical thinking to perceive injustice in everyday life.

Thus, departing from the provided data to support the analysis, this thesis specifically explains the mechanism of (sexual) objectification which is illustrated in Violet's case along with the other analyzed female characters in the two novels under discussion. Rector (2014) explains that when a human does not see a sense of oneness and commonality in others, they are more likely to objectify them, leading to the potential for accepting or engaging in violent behavior towards them.

In simpler terms, when someone lost the ability to empathize and show compassion towards others, to feel their pain as if it were one's own, and to see their 'self' separated from 'others' instead seeing themselves in others, they are more likely to misapprehend "what human beings are in their totality" (Rector, 2014, p. 21). What Fairweather did to Violet, in the context of sexual objectification, exploitation and trafficking, falls into the spectrum of objectification in the sub-category of moderate derivatization.

According to the feminist scholar Ann J. Cahill (2011), to derivatize means to perceive another being primarily or exclusively as a projection, reflection, or representation of another being's identity, fears, desires, and other characteristics. When the subject is derivatized, they can be reduced to the existence and other features of the derivatizing subject; the other aspects of the subject's individuality or subjective experience are dismissed, neglected, or undervalued (Cahill (2011) as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 27). Fairweather no longer viewed Violet as a person with her whole faculties of being, but separated Violet's emotions (along her feelings and status as a child wanting to be reunited with her mother) from her sexual functions, therefore creating her as a reflection of his own desires to carry out his plan to pay off his debt to the Green Gang by selling the beautiful Eurasian daughter of Lulu Mintrun.

It is true that Violet is a charming Eurasian beauty with fair complexion, green eyes and black hair. Her mother is American and her father is Chinese. In the context of Shanghai as an international settlement during that time, many people from the West, especially to America, came to China and settled in Shanghai. In the

story, Violet is considered as exotic by the Chinese men because she has a Western look. Yet, at the same time, her looks are ridiculed by her female friends because she does not look like other regular Chinese girls. Her ‘exoticism’ of being a partially white woman leads men to objectify her by body and appearance, to satisfy their desire and curiosity of sleeping with a white woman who also speaks Chinese.

This part is also associated with the study conducted by Farrer (2010). Although Farrer’s discussion revolves around 1980s where Western working men living in the coastal areas of China develops a sexual preference of Chinese girls (Farrer, 2010, p. 69), Farrer’s analysis is still relevant with what Violet experienced earlier back then when America and China came into contact. Why? Because interraciality is considered as the disadvantage and advantage of one’s sexual capital at the same time, either it results in empowerment or alienation (p. 69). In page 191 (Tan, 2013, p.191), Violet confirms this idea by saying: “Eurasian looks had become my advantage and not my flaw. Besides Loyalty, eleven men hosted debut parties for me.” To borrow Farrer’s framework of analysis, it can be inferred that Violet possesses the interracial sexual ‘capital’ to survive in the world of courtesans which draws Loyalty Fang to purchase her defloration. As a result, in the capitalist and patriarchal lens, Violet experiences female objectification in the process because her interracial sexual capital is the ‘asset’ which determines the value of her ‘purchase’. In other words, Loyalty Fang is free to ‘use’ Violet as much as he please, in a negative way.

Thus, she experienced sexual objectification in terms of reduction to the appearance. Her worth as a human being was measured by how her beauty and how much her defloration would cost, which is profitable for the courtesan house since

her value is elevated due to her attractive appearance. Because of her appealing look, Loyalty Fang was interested to purchase Violet's defloration.

“... Everyone is talking about your Eurasian blood as an advantage. ... It was rather like elevating your value... It must mean he will buy your defloration.”
(Tan, 2013, p. 190)

Violet experienced sexual objectification in terms of fungibility and violability during her defloration. She experienced violability since intense pain and penetration were present when Loyalty Fang slept with her for the first time. Despite her pleas for Loyalty to stop, Violet realized that this was a business transaction, as evidenced by her statement, “he had paid for my pain”¹; it can be inferred that Violet's integrity as an individual was exchanged for money and that her worth as a human being was reduced to mere numbers, thus she experienced fungibility:

Nothing had prepared me for this...I pleaded for him to stop. But why should he stop? This was not romance or yearning. He had paid for my pain. This was business. (Tan, 2013, pp. 199–200)

Fungibility, violence and instrumentality which she experienced was also evident in the excerpt below. Fungibility is shown from Loyalty's remark that Violet was expensive and her price is twice of another popular courtesan's, meaning that her worth is replaceable by another courtesan and valued by money like a “whore” as felt by Violet the moment she hear his words. Violence is shown from Loyalty's questions about the pain he inflicted on her last night. Violet described that he seemed to be proud of what he had done, as if Violet is an object worth to be hurt or penetrated. Lastly, Violet was treated an instrument to satisfy Loyalty's lust regardless of the pain she felt.

As I lay clutched with pain, he murmured, “You were expensive, Violet, nearly twice what I gave to another popular courtesan.”... I felt I had

instantly become a whore.
(Tan, 2013, p.200)

He asked many questions about the pain ... He almost seemed proud that he had injured me.
(Tan, 2013, p.201)

In addition, looking at the analysis above from the perspective of characterization in literature, it is inferred that Violet shows her misery of her body being sexually objectified by Loyalty Fang. This is reflected in Violet's thoughts (that she feels like a whore), her speech (of pleading Loyalty to stop), and her reaction (of lying clutched in pain). Furthermore, in the following paragraphs (Tan, 2013, p. 201), Violet inquires to Loyalty, which part of her spirit does Loyalty like? Was it because she has given him a useful business advice in the beginning? Will he pay her more, because her advise gives Loyalty more business profit? She added in the end, "you paid for my bud, not my spirit" (p.201) and "please take me away from here" (p.201). Thus, her speech shows how she suffers from being sexually objectified.

To examine Violet's story of her defloration, Loyalty's act of sexually objectifying Violet also falls into the category of (mild and moderate) derivatization. Cahill contends that apart from the domain of cognitive and intellectual capacity, the body and psyche experience is also central to the personhood (Cahill (2001) as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 27). When someone does not appreciate or take into account a person's subjectivity within the context of their body, it can be proposed that they deny the person's subjectivity (Cahill (2011) as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 27). Mild derivatization occurs when Loyalty was interested to purchase Violet's defloration because of her Eurasian looks, unconsciously he was reducing Violet to a reflection of his sexual desires, a

derivative of the male gaze in perceiving beauty and a commodified body. Meanwhile, derivatization escalated to the moderate scale when Loyalty purposely inflicted pain upon Violet during her defloration for his own satisfaction and projection of lust, justified by his costly transaction to purchase her virginity.

Violet's received treatment from Loyalty, to be a projection of men's sexual desires, is only one out of hundreds of what other Chinese courtesans experienced during that time. In Catherine Vance Yeh's book, *Shanghai Love: Courtesans, Intellectuals, and Entertainment Culture, 1850-1910* (2006), the Shanghai courtesan is the emblem and spiritual embodiment of the city itself; Shanghai and the courtesans are the juxtaposition of 'dream' and 'hell' at the same time (Vance Yeh, 2006). On one hand, her image is described in Sun Yusheng's ancient novel *Dreams of Shanghai's Glamour (Haishang Fanhua Meng)*¹ as an inseparable persona of Shanghai, where she swoons and lures the newcomers to waste their fortunes by drowning themselves to unconsciousness in Shanghai's glittering dream: dreams of drunkenness, grandeur, beauty, pillow talk, madness and emptiness (p. 253). This notion is provoked by Yusheng's remark at the end of the novel: "since there is no part of Shanghai that does not belong to the realm of dreams, those who enter it are without exception persons in a dream" (p. 253). This idea that the Shanghai courtesan is a bodily manifestation of the dream is a strong impression that Shanghai is indeed "the land of fantasy"; it is a metaphorical name alluding to the influence of the book *Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin (1791). On the other hand, the Shanghai courtesan is also associated with the hell-like city as described by Yi Hong in *Living Hell (Renji Hiu)* (1923) where

lawlessness, demons, monsters run free with evil centered at the Shanghai prostitution world (p. 253). Thus, the Shanghai courtesan's image is bifurcated:

“The Shanghai courtesan thus became the multifaceted and changing metaphor for this city. She was the product of greed and openness; the freedom and splendor she exhibited represented the city's wealth as well as its hollowness. She at once embodied the dreams of heaven and the nightmare of hell.” (p.253)

To connect this aspect with sexual objectification, it can be implicitly inferred that the image of the Shanghai courtesan (including Violet, Magic Gourd and Pomelo from *The Valley*) is a reflection and projection of the patriarchal and capitalistic male desire, the glorified Shanghai dream. This Shanghai dream is not something which Violet desires as affirmed in the related study conducted by Sun (2021); initially, Violet refuses to be a prostitute “but under absolute power, she accepts her identity as a prostitute, though with unwillingness” (p.173). Yet, this dream is coveted by Violet's society. It thrives within the deeply-rooted Confucian culture.

As informed by Micollier (Micollier, 2004) the topic of sexual pleasure in China has traditionally been regarded as a transgression against the tenets of Confucianism. This cultural taboo has persisted for centuries and continues to be observed in contemporary times (Micollier, 2004). Notwithstanding this societal prohibition, literary classics from the Ming and Qing periods, such as *The Golden Lotus* and *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, feature intricate portrayals of the delights of intimacy, romance, and sexuality; consequently, successive emperors have prohibited these works due to their perceived violation of Confucian modesty (Micollier, 2004). A Chinese wife's primary role was to continue the family lineage through reproduction to obtain sons, and to maintain harmony in the family,

Confucianism did not encourage women to be tempted and guilty from enjoying sex; marriage was certainly not the right place to seek erotic pleasure nor sexual appeal since it is perceived as something unstable which endangers the family and social order (Micollier, 2004, p.15). Hence,

Confucian ideology implicitly admits that sexual drives and desires have to be fulfilled outside marriage. A whole social context encourages the development of ‘commercial sex work’ and a number of female sex worker’s roles. (p.15)

To put into instance what Cahill had explained on derivatization, Violet is perceived as a projection, reflection or representation of the derivatizing subject’s (Loyalty, and other men he represents) ‘forbidden’ desire of extramarital erotic fantasy which is prohibited in the Confucian-rooted Chinese society. Violet was reduced to the existence of the derivatizing subject in accordance to their fantasy, that her individual trait and overall personhood is dismissed. This is shown in the last instance, a case where Violet undergone sexual objectification in terms of violability and reduction to the body when she had to perform the explicit (government-prohibited, Confucian-subversive) *The Plum in the Golden Vase* as Golden Lotus at Endeavor’s party. Traces of violability can be seen from this excerpt, where Violet had to receive (fake) whipping from Endeavor before she was killed. Violet was also humiliated because she was treated as an object, where she was reduced to her body as Endeavor asked Violet to produce realistic screams.

Endeavor wielded the whip and I provided the requisite shrieks ... what stung was my humiliation when Endeavor asked me to squirm a bit more and to scream with more realism and volume (Tan, 2013, p.339).

During this process of sexual exploitation, Violet was also abused as a child. According to the Government of Netherlands, the scope of child abuse extends

beyond mere physical violence inflicted upon a child and encompasses any type of maltreatment inflicted by an adult that is either violent or threatening to the child; the broadened definition of child abuse includes instances of neglect, in addition to other forms of abuse (Government of the Netherlands, 2016). In general, child abuse can be classified into five distinct types (Government of the Netherlands, 2016): The first is physical abuse, which encompasses all forms of physical violence directed at a child (1). The second type is emotional or psychological abuse, whereby an adult consistently belittles, shows hostility towards, or intentionally frightens the child (2). The third type is physical neglect, in which the child's essential needs for care and nurturing are not met (3). The fourth type is emotional or psychological neglect, which refers to an ongoing absence of positive attention, love, warmth, and security for the child; this category also encompasses situations where a child is exposed to violence between their caregivers or parents (4). The fifth type of child abuse is sexual abuse, which involves any form of sexual contact forced upon a child by an adult (5). In *The Valley*, Violet experienced physical abuse. Meanwhile, Magic Gourd experienced sexual abuse (this would be explained further). Yet, it should be taken into account that sometimes Violet and Magic Gourd may experience multiple types of child abuse at the same time, and one type of child abuse may happen because it was caused by another. As Rector (2014) explains on the wide spectrum of objectification, the nature of evil – in this case, (sexual) objectification – is multifaceted.

Violet experienced physical abuse for the first time when Mother Ma hit her when she first arrived at the courtesan house. When Violet first arrived, she refused working as a prostitute and made attempts to rebel. Mother Ma was clearly not

pleased at Violet's attitude and delivered several blows to Violet at the side of her head along with more slaps, expecting Violet to work hard to return Mother Ma's investment in her.

I've made a hefty investment in you. Will you work hard to be worth the burden of feeding you?" ... she delivered a fisted blow to the side of my head next to my ear... I had never been struck before... She slapped my face and more stinging tears rose. (Tan, 2013, p. 97)

Tan's use of indirect characterization in terms of Violet's thought and reaction towards the female objectification in the form of child abuse in sexual exploitation shows Violet's immense suffering. Without saying directly that Violet is suffering in the hands of Mother Ma, readers can understand Violet's misery. Reams (2015) states that one of the useful functions of indirect characterization is to avoid misunderstanding of saying some things directly due to its sensitivity (Reams, 2015, p.30). These elements of characterization such as thoughts or reactions are powerful tools to construct the image of a character in the readers' mind (p.30).

From the excerpt above, there are several types of child abuse which was inflicted upon Violet. First, Violet was abused physically through violence. Second, she was also abused emotionally and psychologically; Mother Ma's slapping caused Violet to cry because it was her first time to be struck (p.97). Furthermore, she was abused emotionally not only because of the violence directed at her, but also from Mother Ma's pressure for Violet to be profitable to ensure Mother Ma's investment in her was 'worth it'. Third, emotional or psychological neglect was not present, because there were no positive attention, love, warmth and security given to Violet. Although Violet's physical needs was met by the food given by Mother Ma, Violet

was still sexually abused because she was going to be made a courtesan; and obviously, Violet's need for care was not met either. All these things are related to the nature of sexual objectification in the context of child abuse, because one step of objectification of child abuse (such as physical abuse) would lead to another, and eventually aims to abuse the child in a sexual way by coercing her to work as a courtesan.

2. Magic Gourd

Magic Gourd, Violet's best friend, mentor and mother-like figure, also had to endure painful child abuse before and after she was forced into sexual exploitation. When she was five, Magic Gourd was sold by her uncle to a merchant's wife as her slave. From her story, she experienced various kinds of sexual objectification. First, she experienced inertness; her uncle took advantage of her young age because she was only a child who did not have the capacity to resist an adult. Next, her worth as a person is reduced to her body who was sold as if she was "a piglet who would grow fat and tasty":

I was only five, just a tiny girl, when my uncle took me away from my family and sold me to a merchant's wife as her slave. ... I cried all the way to the rich man's house. He bargained and sold me as if I were a piglet who would grow fat and tasty.
(Tan, 2013, p. 123)

When she was nine, the master sexually abused her to fulfill his lust. As an enslaved child, Magic Gourd had no right to refuse because her mistress also obeyed him and had no idea that the master's act was done behind her back. Magic Gourd was not only treated as an instrument, but she was also violated, treated as something owned and denied of her subjectivity and autonomy as a child at the

same time. As a result, Magic Gourd was pregnant at 11 and was not made as the concubine of her mistress' son.

And that is who I would have become if the master, that ugly dog's ass, had not ordered me one day to take off my clothes so he could be the first to break me open. I was nine. I could not refuse. That was my life, to obey the master because my mistress obeyed him. When it was over, I was bleeding and could barely stand from the near-fainting pain
(Tan, 2013, pp. 124–125).

Magic Gourd also endured violence since she was 11. She was pregnant after her mistress' husband raped her. Violence was not only exerted upon Magic Gourd by the perpetrator, but also done by the maids who were ordered to get rid of the baby growing inside her; Magic Gourd had to endure the extreme pain during the abortion process. Afterwards, in great pain, Magic Gourd's vagina was sewn up from a horse's tail so she would be sold to a courtesan house as a virgin. Thus, traces of sexual objectification in terms of violability, denial of autonomy, denial of subjectivity and reduction to the body are present. Magic Gourd did not only experience violence, but her rights of safety and freedom from sex work as an 11-year-old child is denied because she is reduced to a piece of flesh which could be treated in any way.

Another maid brought me a broth and she put this in a long glass tube and stuck this inside me. I had no idea what she was doing until I felt it pierce me and I screamed and screamed as other servants held me down...I found out later the maid had sewn me up with the hair from a horse's tail so that I could break open again like a virgin. But now pus was growing where a baby would have been. (Tan, 2013, p. 125)

Magic Gourd's story of child abuse continued. Magic Gourd was treated as a dehumanized object worth to be violated, denied of her subjectivity and autonomy, and reduced to her body function when she was sold to a rich scholar as 'Dewdrop'. Although the scholar was not angry at Magic Gourd when he

discovered the horse tail, Magic Gourd was terrified that he would be furious and beat her to death. From this notion, it could be inferred that Magic Gourd knew violence done towards a courtesan was something common. She also described that the courtesan house owner was pleased that there was so much blood too on the bed sheets, indicating that the courtesan house owner did not care about Magic Gourd's feeling and state of age as a 13 year-old child who had to sleep with a scholar (denial of subjectivity and autonomy) but instead only cared about the 'virgin' blood spilled on the sheets, hence viewing Magic Gourd not as a human but only as a 'lifeless' body.

When the scholar took my hips, I clamped my legs together out of fear that he would soon discover the truth. ...Blood poured out...After he left, I waited for the madam to come into the room and beat me... Instead, she came to me and inspected the blood on the bed. "So much!" she exclaimed in a pleased voice. ... (Tan, 2013, p. 127).

Similar to Violet's story, it is concluded that Magic Gourd endured all layers of child abuse which all eventually merge and leads up to sexual abuse. Her uncle belittled her cries of refusal from being sold.

Tan's powerful employment of indirect characterization helps readers to understand Magic Gourd's painful struggle to be sexually objectified since her childhood shown through her narrative above. Although Magic Gourd's first-person portion of storytelling in *The Valley* is less compared to Violet's as the main character, Tan consistently builds a world for readers to immerse in the sufferings of objectified female characters through various small details of the characters' stories and perception upon sexual objectification. The characters have many ways to describe their harrowing stories of being pulled into sexual exploitation, yet they only have one message, which is female objectification is something painful. Thus,

Reams explain the use of indirect characterization by saying that indirect characterization is utilized “to exemplify the qualities and traits by which the author wants his or her character to be identified” although the writer employs various styles in terms of “unique speed, tone, and devices to develop their characters as they see fit” (Reams, 2015, p.40).

To present a more in-depth analysis, Violet and Magic Gourd’s characterization is also supported by the backdrop of sexual exploitation and child trafficking. In the historical context, the widespread commodification of women in Chinese society is primarily due to the social system that considers women as a marketable and replaceable product (Gronewold, 1982 as cited in Micollier, 2004, pp. 10–11). This aspect is in line to another related study written by Putri (2020), where she concludes that oppression by the patriarchal system is fostered and maintained not only by the powerful but also through culture, tradition and social values (p.129).

During times of economic hardship, the inferior status of women in Chinese society has led to extreme measures, including the intentional killing of female infants. The ‘*mui-tsai*’ or ‘*mooi-jai*’, typically young girls who were sold by their parents, were commonly referred to as ‘small slaves’ and were exploited in brothels, as concubines, or as farm laborers (Micollier, 2004, p.11). The sale of wives as slaves by their husbands was also a prevalent phenomenon during this period (p.11). This makes sense very much; as mentioned in Chintescu’s analysis on *The Valley* (2021), marriage in China is a complex system where it is not grounded on feelings; Chintescu describes that marriage is business where the “bride and groom to be are imprisoned for life” where the couple are strangers to one another (p.292).

Returning to the commodification of the female sex as shown in sales of wives, despite being prohibited by Imperial law and Confucian ethics, which condemn the exploitation of relatives for financial gain, these practices were likely deeply ingrained in Chinese tradition; hence, as estimated, this market involved about two million people during the 1920s (Micollier, 2004). To infer, departing from the aforementioned definition of child abuse given by the government of Netherlands, child trafficking is also part of child abuse. What Violet and Magic Gourd experienced remains relevant to cases of child trafficking occurring in the world today.

On the global scale, according to the data of Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022 published by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), women and children are more vulnerable to violence inflicted by traffickers (UNODC, 2022, p. xii). This observation is supported by an analysis of court cases, which reveals that female victims are three times more likely than male victims to be subjected to physical or extreme violence. Similarly, children are almost twice as likely as adults to experience physical or extreme violence (p.xii). To provide more concrete figures, a review of UNODC court case summaries involving 1,790 female victims and 327 male victims across 622 trafficking cases that resulted in convictions between 2012 and 2020 showed that 44% of women experienced explicit physical violence, 26% experienced threats and psychological violence, and 9% experienced extreme violence (p.xii).

Meanwhile, on the local scale, according to estimates from Borgen Project (Brown, 2021), there are between 70,000 to 80,000 minors who are victims of sex trafficking in Indonesia. Shockingly, up to 30% of all commercial sex workers in

Indonesia are young girls who are being exploited in this manner; often, these children are coerced into sex work by their own acquaintances or relatives (Brown, 2021). It is worth noting that Indonesia functions both as a source and a destination country for child sex trafficking, with cases of child sex workers being transported to other regions such as Malaysia, Taiwan, and the Middle East (Brown, 2021).

What was done to Violet and Magic Gourd falls into the moderate and moderate-to-extreme kind of derivatization. Moderate derivatization is shown by Mother Ma's action towards Violet and Magic Gourd's experience of being sold as a slave; meanwhile, moderate-to-extreme form of derivatization occurs when her vagina was sewn by horse's tail. What can be concluded from the excerpts here is that Violet and Magic Gourd's personhood were taken away, and they were "depicted and understood only as 'women-through-men' can be" (Rector, 2014, p.28). Although Violet was struck by a woman, it should be taken into account that Mother Ma's actions was greatly influenced by the capitalist patriarchal system where the enslaved worker is expected and oppressed to bring great profit and at the same time would sexually please and satisfy the male customers. Similar case applies to Magic Gourd; although it is not mentioned specifically in the book who orders the horse-tail sewing, a reader can ask: maybe it is the Mistress who is responsible for this action, since Magic Gourd is her slave. Most importantly, it should be underlined that both of them were abused in sexual exploitation for economic reasons; Violet was to be Mother Ma's 'money machine' because she hope for return of investment from Fairweather's deal, while Magic Gourd was sold by her uncle to a rich man in the middle of the night (Magic Gourd also claimed that she was kidnapped) so he could obtain money as well.

Therefore, to connect this case of child abuse with socialist feminism, gendered-base oppression should not be the sole focus of the problem, but also the socio-economic difficulties, poverty and/or injustice which occurs in the backdrop. Power relation between the adult and child is also present, as the adult took advantage of the child's inertness. Most importantly, in the light of socialist feminism, it should be taken into account that the controlling group who first sold Violet and Magic Gourd were men and women who were greatly sexually objectifying them in a capitalistic and patriarchal manner; the subordinate group who were exploited to labor and coerced to 'produce goods' are female. Although Violet and Magic Gourd's story may appear in the form of physical child abuse, the main underlying cause of their abuse was perpetrated by patriarchal oppression executed under the guise of obtaining profit from them (be it monetary or sexual surplus value). Hence, to imply, child abuse is still another form of exploitation; in the case of Violet and Magic Gourd above, this statement from Jaggar (Jaggar, 1983) may apply:

Therefore, so long as men as a group [generally, but not exclusively] control and derive primary benefit from the labor of women as a group, socialist feminists view men as a group or class that exploits women as a group or class (p.136).

3. Dewi Ayu

Dewi Ayu's experience of sexual exploitation occurred in a different context under Japanese's occupation of Halimunda, historically parallel with Japanese's conquest of the Dutch East Indies during World War II. She was not only sexually exploited, but was also the victim of war rape and exchange rape. Dewi Ayu, an Indo, along with the other Dutch female prisoners were deceived into working as Red Cross volunteers at Mama Kalong's, and transported to a new house

away from their prison camp. However, it turned out that they were made as the Japanese troops' 'comfort women'.

Various types of sexual objectification were evident in Dewi Ayu's experience when she and her friends were forced to work as prostitutes. First, they were treated as instruments to fulfill the Japanese soldiers' sexual needs. In addition, their feelings and refusal to be made as prostitutes were denied – hence, they also experienced sexual objectification in terms of denial of subjectivity and autonomy.

“You said we were going to be Red Cross volunteers!”
“Volunteers, yes,” said Mama Kalong, “but maybe not Red Cross.”
... “So you think you know what is going to happen to us?” asked Ola.
“Yes,” she replied, “we are going to be made into prostitutes.”
They all knew it, but only Dewi Ayu was brave enough to say it.
(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 64)

The girls' identity was changed, including Dewi Ayu's, as they were given new names. This is an instance of denial of subjectivity; implicitly, each of their personal experience is ignored as their new names altered their identity. Moreover, there are also traces of instrumentality and reduction to the body. The girls' new names indicate that their sole purpose in that place were to be prostitutes; meanwhile, the soldiers' purchase of tickets to sleep with them reduced their value as human beings to commodified bodies.

An officer brought some sheets of paper, giving one to each of the girls. There was Malay writing on them, which turned out to be the names of different flowers. “These are your new names,” said the officer. ... They were ordered to go to their rooms while a number of Japanese men lined up at a table on the veranda to buy their tickets.
(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 68)

Thus, on their first night at Mama Kalong's, the Dutch girls rebelled, attempted to escape or hide from the soldiers (p.69). However, their efforts were useless as the

Japanese soldiers ran and caught them. What made Dewi Ayu miserable that night was to hear her friends' terrified shrieks and screams.

That night they were taken by four or five men each. What made Dewi Ayu suffer was not the crazy tireless screwing that froze her body in a quiet and mysterious paralysis, but the screams and sobs of her friends.
(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 70)

Dewi Ayu was assigned to a Japanese officer who resembled a sumo wrestler in stature due to his enormous figure, and he also carried a samurai sword attached to his waist. She experienced sexual objectification in terms of violability, because she refused to engage in sexual intercourse by remaining still. The Japanese officer threatened Dewi Ayu with his samurai sword until its tips inscribed a mark on her cheeks, and slapped her cheeks afterwards.

... When the Japanese officer barked at her to take her clothes off, she remained perfectly still, as if she wasn't even breathing. Annoyed, the Japanese took out his samurai sword and brandished it until the flat of its blade touched Dewi Ayu's face, and he repeated his orders. But Dewi Ayu remained immobile, even as the tip of the sword inscribed a mark upon her cheek. ... (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 69)

Dewi Ayu's attitude towards female objectification in terms of sexual exploitation during the Japanese occupation is not directly mentioned by Kurniawan, unlike Tan who directly tells the readers of what Violet feels. This is also caused by the usage of third-person narrative by Kurniawan in writing *Beauty*. Thus, most of the descriptions of what Dewi Ayu feels about the conquest of her body is conveyed through indirect method of characterization. As Reams (2015) explain, indirect characterization is central to a story narrative, because in that way, the writer has the power to persuade readers believing whether or not a story character has the competence to shape the plot; hence, every word utilized in indirect characterization must be deliberate to foreshadow a character's surprising

action in the future, that they are capable of doing it without shocking the readers (Reams, 2015, pp.41-42). To contextualize analysis above, Kurniawan shows the readers that Dewi Ayu is brave to face the fact that they are going to be made as prostitutes as shown through her speech when she arrives at Mama Kalong's as so-called 'Red-Cross Volunteers' (in other words, Japan's comfort women). Next, her refusing attitude towards sexual exploitation is also greatly seen through her act of staying still when sleeping with the Japanese soldier who carries his samurai. Thus, readers are able to infer that Dewi Ayu is suffering because of female objectification.

To look into the background of Dewi Ayu's story, according to Horvath and Woodhams (2013, pp.132-133), sexual violence during the war – including rape, prostitution, sexual slavery, sterilization or pregnancy – may deliberately target individuals who are considered as members of the 'enemy' group when political or ethnic cleansing takes place and is considered an effective tool; the targets are not limited to females only but males as well. It should be taken into account that various acts of rape often occur extensively alongside with other atrocities, such as war or genocide, where soldiers would abuse this chance (p.133). This findings is in line with the study published by Asnani (2020), where Dewi Ayu's life, which reflects the lives of women during colonialism who are sexually exploited, is truly oppressed, as the women has to carry the burden of suffering and injustice as well throughout their lives. This case is not only seen in Japanese soldiers' abuse towards the Dutch women such as Dewi Ayu and her friends, but also done by the guerilla soldiers who suddenly ambushed Mama Kalong's house who raped them. The guerilla ambush became more violent by involving rape when the soldiers figured

out that inside the house were Dutch women. Thus, this type of rape is known as war rape, which also occurs alongside this context of atrocity, namely sexual exploitation.

When they discovered that all of them were women and all of them were Dutch, the men grew even more violent. They tied up some of the women in the kitchen, and the others were dragged off to the bedrooms to be raped. (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 77)

The excerpt above is an instance of war rape, which can be categorized as a strategic intention conducted by the Indonesian guerillas in the story. Referring to Rector's category of derivatization (2014), this category of war rape is classified as the severe mode of derivatization which heads to the extreme form of objectification, dehumanization, which considers someone as something less human (subhuman), not fully human (partially human), and worth treating brutally (Rector, 2014, pp. 32-33). Hence, the process of rape, especially war rape such as mentioned above, is a complex one because it involves the transition between derivatization to dehumanization. When the Japanese troops raped the Chinese women during the rape of Nanking, the Japanese troops considers its victims humans when the rape act took place; yet when it was over, as they murdered the woman, they no longer considered her a human but "thought of her as a pig" (Chang, 1997 as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 40). This instance is similar to what Dewi Ayu and her friends encountered, as the Dutch women did not only become victims of rape but also targets of death (as four women died).

Dewi Ayu also went through exchange rape during her detainment at the prison with other female Dutch prisoners before transported to Mama Kalong's. Exchange rape is defined as "the use of female genital contact by males as a bargaining tool or sign of solidarity" (Rozée, 1993 as cited in Horvath and

Woodhams, 2013, p. 14). Exchange rape occurred when Dewi Ayu wanted to help Ola's sick mother in the Japanese prison camp by exchanging her body for medicine and doctor as she turned herself to the commandant. In this excerpt, many types of sexual objectification are evident. First, instrumentality is present as seen from how he used Dewi Ayu as his tool to satisfy his lust. Next, reduction to the appearance and body is also present from how he viewed Dewi Ayu's beautiful look and from the way he treated her body.

“Medicine and a doctor?” He already knew a few Malay phrases

...

With one caress the commandant touched her whole face, his fingers creeping like a lizard over her nose and her lips, pausing at her chin to raise her face higher. (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 54–55)

Dewi Ayu's story is a reflection to what happened to thousands of female prisoners and war victims of the Japanese conquest over the Dutch East Indies. Between 1942-1945, Indonesian and Dutch women were imprisoned and forced to work in military troops to serve the Japanese soldiers, because during that time the Japanese believed that satisfaction of sexual needs was significant for the troops (McGregor, 2016). The act of luring Indonesian women into forced prostitution under false pretenses, such as offering education, nursing training, or performance opportunities, resulted in a number of women being sent to remote locations where they were ultimately forced to work in brothels or Japanese internment camps located in Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Ambon, Flores and Timor. (McGregor, 2016, pp. 2-7). The phenomenon of sexual violence committed against women during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia was investigated by the Ex-Heiho Forum, an organization composed of former auxiliary military personnel (McGregor, 2016, p. 2). The Forum claimed to have documented 22,454 cases of sexual violence

committed by the Japanese military and civilians against women in Indonesia (p.2). In contrast, an official report released by the Dutch government in 1994 estimated that 200-300 Dutch and Indonesian women were "recruited" into the prostitution system (p.2).

Harrowing stories of Japanese sexual exploitation done to Indonesian and Dutch women were testified by survivor activists. Tuminah, the first Indonesian woman to share her story, informed that she was captured with other women during Japan's first entry into the city of Solo; although Tuminah's father was complicit for selling her virginity away to be a sex worker and family provider, the fact that Japan exploited her as a comfort woman could not be denied (p.6). Next, Mardiyem (the most famous Indonesian survivor) recounted how she was deceived by an Ambonese woman in Yogyakarta named Zus Lentji (working as a musician) that a job opening as a performer in Borneo was available; instead, the 13-year-old Mardiyem was sent to a brothel in Telawang, around Banjarmasin, where she was sexually exploited by the Japanese as she experienced multiple rape, beatings and abortion at the age of 15 (p.6). Dutch women experienced similar fate as well. Ruff O'Herne was a Dutch woman with a Dutch-Indonesian grandma who stepped out to share her story; she hoped that she could assist other Asian victims to testify their story due to the existing colonial superiority which undermined Asian women's experience of sexual violation during the times of war and to combat the negative stigmas given by the society to the sexually Japanese-enslaved women (pp.3-4). Ellen Corry van der Ploeg, inspired by O'Herne, shared her story too; partially Indonesian, like Dewi Ayu, Van der Ploeg was chosen with other women aged 15-24 from Halmaheira internment camp in Semarang and was deceived into believing

she would work in a cigarette factory, but was instead forced to work in four brothels (p.5).

The sexual exploitation which Dewi Ayu experienced in *Beauty* represents the harrowing stories of Indonesian and Dutch women; the treatment they received fall into the typical pattern of sexually exploited and traffic victims in general undergone. Victims in general were manipulated psychologically in order to comply to the act of sexual trafficking – even they had no choice to be exploited sexually in order to survive (Hodge & Lietz, 2007, p. 168). They received threats and intimidations such as: their loved ones would be hurt, their digital footage of being sexually exploited would be leaked to their family, they would be hurt with weapons or forced to watch their friend murdered; all kinds of violence were directed towards the victim as they experienced various kinds of rapes, torture and even inhuman acts leading to murder (pp.164-165). This was done by their exploiters, offline clients and commands of online clients (pp.164-165). It is inevitable that sufferings of trauma and mental disorders exist among women and girls who experienced sexual trafficking and exploitation, besides physical suffering. Hossain et al. (2010) conducted research using the subscales of Brief Symptom Inventory and Harvard Trauma Questionnaire on 204 women and girls from 12 countries (9 from Eastern Europe and 3 from West Africa and the Carribeans), where more than 80% experienced sexual violence, threats of harm towards themselves and highly restricted freedom. The result of the research is that victims experience higher levels of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), depression and also anxiety (especially if the victims have been trafficked for a long time) (Hossain et al., 2010, p. 2442).

To synthesize the information above with the wide spectrum of sexual objectification, what Dewi Ayu and her friends went through was the moderate and severe form of derivatization. In moderate derivatization, acts of exploitation and abuse done by the powerful is present (Rector, 2014, p. 29). Meanwhile, severe derivatization may feature acts of torture and violence as the perpetrator “somehow maintain a modicum of the victim’s humanity in their awareness” (p.29). It is truly clear that Dewi Ayu and her friends were reduced to their appearance and bodies as instruments of the Japanese soldiers’ violent sexual thirst (who also incorporate other elements of sexual objectification); their feelings and emotions were denied at the same time, eventually leading Dewi Ayu’s friends to a depressive psychological state, similar to what Hossain et al. (2010) described. Yet, Dewi Ayu showed greater resilience and strength to face crisis compared to her friends – this would be elaborated in the later chapter.

In the light of socialist feminism, sexual exploitation is perceived as the product of the system of capitalism and patriarchy at the same time. This understanding of socialist feminism’s perspective can be traced back to its roots, where it is a fusion of Marxist feminism and Radical feminism. According to Jaggar (Jaggar, 1983, p. 133), “traditional Marxism stresses commonalities between women and men of the same class” while “Radical feminism stresses the commonalities in the experience of all women, from the president’s wife to the anti-war demonstrator” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 133). If traditional Marxism argues that the human needs means food, clothing and shelter (the result of labor), socialist feminism contends that the human needs do not only include the aforementioned items but also these items for the sake of human survival: reproduction (bearing and

rearing children), sexual satisfaction and emotional nurturance (p.135). It should be underlined that of course everyone in every society wants these needs to be fulfilled; hence, every society needs to produce the means to satisfy these demands, especially the demand for reproduction, sexual satisfaction and emotional nurturance – only humans are capable to produce, distribute and exchange them through labor (p.135). Jaggar argues, historically, one of the ways to achieve it is not only through the facility of marriage, but also prostitution; hence, this is an economic system, where money is not always the currency for exchange (p.135). Here, socialist feminism utilizes the radical feminist view that areas of sexuality and procreation can be analyzed within the realm of political analysis; therefore, to infer from the socialist feminist point of view, marriage and especially prostitution (where sexual exploitation is deeply associated), is defined as part of political economy (p.135).

Departing from this concept of human needs, emerges a power relation between the controlling and subordinate group who does the work (or labor). Jaggar states that socialist feminism has the conviction that (predominantly, not exclusively) men are the ruling group when it comes to the production of children, the fulfillment of sexual needs and emotional satisfaction; meanwhile, the laboring group who produce these goods are (predominantly, almost exclusively) women (Jaggar, 1983, p.136).

In other words, there is power struggle between men (who are generally, not exclusively, the controlling group) and women (who are generally, almost exclusively, the subordinate group). The controlling group has the capability to force and exploit the subordinate group “to do sexual, procreative and emotional

labor for them” to a harmful extent and at the same time the controlling group has the power to “define what work was done and how it was performed” (p.136) – name it sexual exploitation, child abuse in relation to sexual trafficking, intimate partner violence, and all kinds of rape. This thought is illustrated by Mrazek’s remark on Dewi Ayu’s portrayal as whore during and after the war, that her duty is to bring ‘happiness’ to Halimunda; Dewi Ayu pleases both men and women, because the key to everyone’s ‘happiness’ is men’s ‘happiness’, thus she makes everyone living in harmony as many men from places far away keep coming and coming to the brothel (Mrázek, 2016, p. 150). In other words, Dewi Ayu is trapped in the never-ending circle of demand for ‘happiness’ as defined by a capitalist and patriarchal society, where capitalist-patriarchal ‘profit’ does not always come in monetary surplus but also in ‘happiness’ or sexual exploitation of women. Since women are placed in a vulnerable position (such as being the exploited group), Jaggar states that men benefit from the women’s vulnerability to be sexually assaulted, such as rape, thus domestic labor becomes the means of exchange for men’s protection (Kennedy, 2003, p. 158). This case is also evident in Dewi Ayu’s experience of exchange rape, where she offered her body to the Japanese commandant in offer to obtain doctor and medicine for Ola’s mother in the concentration camp.

These forms of exploitation, especially female exploitation, may not always result in a surplus value or profit, but it is still considered as exploitation in the Marxist understanding, because various kinds of exploitation itself may hide under the guise of something else more subtle. If a form of exploitation is not *only* driven by capitalism and the thirst for surplus value alone, a form of exploitation

(especially recalling the case of sexual objectification in *The Valley* and *Beauty*) is driven by the patriarchal system actively embedded under the social system of a particular culture, as perceived in the light of socialist feminism. This aspect is confirmed in the related study on *Beauty* written by Nurrahman and Rosyidi (2020), that female prisoners of war are degraded as the second-sex in the 'second' class to become tools of Japanese soldiers' lustful desires since "It was one way to save money since war cost so much and women wasn't the priority after all"; in addition, the female prisoners are treated as "pets" not only for the sake of safety from genital diseases but also for Japan to exhibit its power in the face of the political opponents (p.97).

Therefore, to conclude this section at this present point, the wide spectrum of sexual objectification inflicted upon the female characters (as explained above) is the gateway to sexual exploitation driven not solely by capitalism alone but also by the patriarchal 'conquest' over the derivatized, commodified and exploited female body to satisfy the reproductive, sexual and emotional needs.

B. Female Objectification in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Traces of various female objectification are present in several cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) as experienced by the female characters. IPV is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as "any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship" (WHO, 2012a). IPV covers the following characteristics: physical violence includes to hit, slap, kick or beat someone (1); sexual violence means forcing or coercing others to engage in sexual intercourse or similar types of this kind (2); emotional or psychological abuse is to insult, belittle, constantly

humiliating, intimidate (destroying things may be involved), harm-threatening (including threatening to take away one's children) (3); controlling behavior is to limit the victim's financial access to resources such as their education, employment or medical care or even isolating them from their loved ones; this also includes the perpetrator's act of monitoring the victim's movements (WHO, 2012). According to the Gender Data Portal from the World Bank, psychological, sexual, and physical violence are also involved in IPV and can be done by a current or former intimate partner, or even by the husband (World Bank, 2022).

As stated in previous sections, literature has a primary role to be the gateway of critical thinking to open the eyes of readers, pushing them to reflect upon political, socio-economic, historical (etc.) issues happening around them and to draw relevant connections to the real world in order to see what lies behind the text. Cases of IPV illustrated in the lives of Violet, Pomelo, Alamanda and Rengganis are relevant to the stories of female victims of IPV around the world. In October 1 2022, the World Bank reported that 30% of women – which is 736 million women globally – have experienced intimate partner violence (World Bank, 2022). Research findings indicate that a quarter of adolescent girls (or 1 out of 4) who have engaged in a romantic relationship will have already experienced physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by a partner by the time they reach 19 years of age (World Bank, 2022).

1. Violet

In Violet's case of IPV, she experienced physical violence which goes hand in hand with sexual violence done by her second husband. There are traces of sexual objectification of instrumentality, reduction to the body, ownership and denial of

subjectivity. Instrumentality can be seen from Violet's story after she met Perpetual, a self-claimed poet and fake widower who manipulated Violet to come to Moon Pond village and be his wife. It was in one of the parties hosted by Loyalty Fang that Violet met Perpetual of the Sheng family of An-hwei Province. Both bonded by sharing their loss of loved ones: Violet mourned for Edward and Flora, while Perpetual lamented over his dead wife, Azure (it would be revealed later that Azure was not dead at all, and that Perpetual was a crazy and abusive man who beat his wives). Desperate for a safe place of belonging and freedom from the courtesan life, Violet fell for Perpetual's convincing lies.

Only later when Violet (accompanied by Magic Gourd) arrived at Moon Pond village, 300 miles away from Shanghai, that she discovered Perpetual was a violent man with a cruel sexual temperament; Violet became one of his instruments to fulfill his lust and pride. First, Violet was brought up to the Moon Pond mountain path by Perpetual, and he chose the route where he could exhibit his new courtesan from Shanghai to the villagers. Next, after arriving at the mountain path, Perpetual forced Violet to fulfill his sexual needs. Violet did not want to and lied that she was having her monthly flow; instead of letting Violet go, Perpetual still forced her to give him oral service.

But I soon figured out why he took this route. It was the best place to show me off—Perpetual's newest courtesan from Shanghai.

...

"Turn around then and lean against that boulder with your bottom facing me. I'll enter you from behind..." ... the way he talked about sex now was vile... I nodded to keep him from growing angrier ... He told me to go down on my knees to service him with my mouth (Tan, 2013, p. 383).

From the instances above, especially the second one, Perpetual dehumanized Violet as a person. As (sexual) objectification is a multifaceted

concept not only involving a single characteristic such as instrumentality (Rector, 2014, p. 20), traces of reduction to the body, ownership and denial of subjectivity can also be seen in Perpetual and Violet's conversation, where Perpetual treated Violet as something he owned, able to order around and sexualize without taking account of her feelings. This statement above is supported through the direct characterization of Violet through her thought upon perceiving Perpetual's act of female objectification. After Perpetual's act of sexually objectifying her on the mountain path, Violet thinks out loud that "the way he talked about sex now was vile" (Tan, 2013, p.383). In other words, Violet disagrees to be treated as an object.

Traces of sexual objectification in terms of reduction to the body and fungibility is evident in the next case below. During various sexual intercourse, Perpetual treated Violet in an inhumane way. That time, Violet inquired Perpetual of the secret grotto because she was planning to escape. However, Perpetual treated Violet harshly in a sexual manner by forcing her to get on her knees to give him oral service. He did not only reduce her as a whole human by doing such acts, but also degraded Violet's self by calling her names on purpose such as "whore" or "slimy bitch cunt" (Tan, 2013, pp. 402–403).

He pushed down on my shoulders and told me to get on my knees ...
 he filled my mouth with his stem.
 ... "Open wider, you whore!"
 I struggled away. "How can you call me such a thing?" ...
 ... "Can I help what escapes my lips when I lose my senses?"
 He filled my mouth again, and again he called me names. "Faster, you
 slimy bitch cunt." (Tan, 2013, pp. 402–403)

Trace of sexual objectification in terms of ownership is evident in Perpetual and Violet's interaction (Tan, 2013, p. 405). Perpetual inquired Violet's thoughts about her thoughts towards him. He commanded Violet to open her eyes wide.

Violet tried to hide her fear towards Perpetual, because she knew how oppressive he could be. There, he stated his will to never let her go, and that she will always belong to him. Violet was startled at Perpetual's statement.

I let my eyelids fall halfway closed to effect a dreamy look.
"Open them wide," he ordered. "I want to know all of you. I see it now. There it is, your precious thoughts. And here is mine: I will never let you go."
(Tan, 2013, p. 405)

Violet's shock towards Perpetual's statement is described clearly in her direct characterization through her thoughts. In the following sentences after the paragraph above, Violet describes how oppressive Perpetual's sense is in her mind; "it took the remaining strength of [her] mind to fight off [her] fear" (Tan, 2013, p. 405). To imply, Violet is a victim of Perpetual's symbolic violence because Perpetual's psychological oppression in the form of sexual objectification is so great. Although Tan only mentions explicitly once that Perpetual's act is something oppressive and Violet is genuinely scared of Perpetual, this passage is still important because direct characterization is essential to "[form] the foundation of fact on which the rest of the character's story is built" (Reams, 2015, p.28). Therefore, readers can understand the identity of the particular character and what role the character holds in the story (p.28).

Perpetual's act of ownership towards Violet is connected to his action of violence inflicted upon her and including his indirect act of silencing her. Perpetual was not pleased to hear Violet's reminiscence of Edward, Flora and her past relation with Loyalty Fang. Once, he was informed by Azure's maids that Violet was crying. He inquired about it to Violet, and she lied that she missed other things from Shanghai. He succeeded to retrieve the information of Violet's remaining feelings

towards Loyalty, her first suitor who bought her defloration. After accusing her, Violet was rutted by Perpetual violently. Hence, Violet also experienced sexual objectification in terms of violence and silencing.

“A woman is always fond of her first,” he said. “You must have welcomed him over the years without a businesslike feeling...”

...

He rolled me over before I could answer and rutted me like a lunatic monkey, grunting and shouting. He had gone mad.

(Tan, 2013, pp. 407–409)

However, Perpetual’s act of violence and silencing Violet does not stop here. Perpetual continued to inquire about Violet’s thoughts about Edward. Yet, Violet was reluctant to engage in conversation regarding Edward and attempted to disengage from the conversation. Despite this, Perpetual insisted on discussing Edward and accuses Violet of hiding him. Perpetual believed that Violet missed Edward and asserted that the only way for their love to be complete was for Violet to let go of Edward. Perpetual further denigrated Edward, referring to him as a foreigner who married Violet for sexual gratification. Violet denied the accusation and requested that they change the subject. Perpetual’s response was violent; he slammed himself harshly into Violet, while saying that he wanted everything from Edward and the other men had from Violet. She described Perpetual’s treatment towards her as violently suffocating and that she had no breath to speak as he slammed into her. Then, Perpetual inquired whether he hurt her and that was Violet thinking of Edward, her husband. Violet lost control of her grief and felt immense hatred toward Perpetual, yelling that she was always thinking of Edward and Flora, that she would never love Perpetual and he should let her go. Perpetual was furious

at Violet's response. As a result, he gave Violet several blows at her back, the side of her head and the back of her head. Violet lost consciousness afterwards.

"I'll always love him! He gave me respect and love. He gave me my daughter. And she's more precious to me than anyone else on earth."

...

"You love them both more than me?"

..

"I've never loved you," I said. "You should let me go."

...

And then he punched me.

...

I felt a nauseating kick to my back and I fell forward. Before I could catch my breath, he kicked me again, then grabbed my hair and pounded the side of my head with his knuckles.

...

(Tan, 2013, pp. 410–412)

Two weeks later, Perpetual asked Violet to engage in sexual activity with him once again. In this situation, signs of inertness, denial of subjectivity, reduction to the body and fungibility are evident: Perpetual exploited Violet's vulnerable state and submissive position as his wife; Violet was unable to refuse Perpetual's advances, as doing so would have resulted in further physical abuse. In other words, Violet was treated as an individual devoid of agency. Furthermore, Perpetual denied Violet's experience or condition that she was not fit to have sexual intercourse; he only viewed Violet as a body which could be sexually exploited, and reduced Violet to her sexual function which is replaceable with another woman such as Pomelo below.

Two weeks after the beating, he asked if he could make love to me. He said he would be gentle. He wanted to do nothing ever again to hurt me. What could I do? Where could I go? What would he later do to me if I refused?

"I am your wife," I said. "It's your privilege."

My body shuddered when he touched me.

(Tan, 2013, p. 414)

Violet continued to suffer Perpetual's violence. He would beat Violet once a week. He would abuse Violet by slap the back of her head, kick her behind and her legs, yanked her hair and shoved her to the floor. Hence, sexual objectification in terms of violence is evident in this excerpt.

About once a week, Perpetual would become livid and beat me.
... He would slap the back of my head instead, circle me, and kick my rump and legs. He would shove me against the wall and force me to look at him, then yank my hair and shove me to the floor.
(Tan, 2013, p. 414)

As Tan presents scenes of Perpetual's abuse towards Violet, Tan's powerful use of indirect characterization keep filling the picture. Most of the time, she utilizes the medium of thought to describe Violet's situation. Violet's body does not only shudder when touched by Perpetual, but she feels like perpetual's hands resembles "stone weights over [her] dead flesh" which causes her to vomit afterwards (Tan, 2013, p.414). Furthermore, Tan does not only give graphic scenes of Perpetual's abuse towards Violet as presented above, but also inserts small details that Violet "[curls] into a ball" when she is nauseated to proceed being abused by Perpetual, and "[uses] her memory to make him vanish" (p.414) to describe Violet's misery of being sexually objectified. At one point, to give contrast of the indirect characterization in order to achieve the same effect of showing Violet's extreme psychological and physical pain, Tan makes clear of Violet's suffering by directly saying that Violet loathes Perpetual and is determined not to display her fear (p.414).

2. Pomelo

In *The Valley*, hints of Perpetual's violent and physical cruelty toward his wives can also be seen in Pomelo's story. When Pomelo arrived at Moon Pond for the first time, Azure spoke to her from her (supposedly) deathbed. She warned Pomelo of Perpetual's abusive behavior.

“He can be cruel ... He cannot help it. He has sickness in his brain. You should escape before you suffer from it.” (Tan, 2013, p. 374)

Perpetual's abusive behavior is also reflected from his words. In this excerpt, Violet, Magic Gourd and Pomelo ran away from Perpetual's house. Pomelo stayed behind to protect her friends and because her feet was bound as well that she could not walk fast. Perpetual was catching up on her, and she received violent threat from him from afar that he would beat them to death.

... Perpetual was now two short turns beneath her. He stopped and raised his arm again. “I'll beat you bitches to death!” (Tan, 2013, p. 426)

Pomelo, as the second wife of Perpetual, has no choice but to save herself and protect Violet and Magic Gourd during their escape. As a result, she rolls down the stone downwards the hill which crashes and destroys Perpetual's body. Tan utilizes direct characterization to inform that Pomelo is shocked to kill perpetual and cursed him for making her do that. Directly, through Violet's perspective, Tan informs the readers that Pomelo needs to kill her abuser to save herself along with Violet and Magic Gourd although this memory will haunt Pomelo for the rest of her lives (Tan, 2013, p.532). Therefore, through Pomelo's act, Tan informs the readers

how big the female characters' oppression is, because they desperately want to live and be free from sexual abuse.

To analyze Pomelo's characterization in facing long-term female objectification in the form of Perpetual's abuse, mental health perspective can also support the background of this analysis. According to Mass General Brigham (2023), survivors of domestic violence are impacted in ways mentally, ranging from major depressive disorder to post-traumatic stress disorder (Mass General Brigham, 2023). Furthermore, survivors have the potential to obtain the mindset that they have no power to change a violent behavior nor possess the resources to take control of their situation (Mass General Brigham, 2023). Thus, contextualizing this story, Pomelo's act of killing Perpetual shows how desperate she is to escape and that she makes a great and painful leap to take control of her situation.

3. Alamanda

Alamanda experienced IPV through date rape and marital rape when she was married to Shodancho. Rape is part of the greater umbrella of 'sexual violence' which refers to a wide range of sexual acts devoid of consent – this includes rape; non-penetration sexual assaults; sexual mutilation and slavery; forced prostitution, sterilization and pregnancy (ICC, 2011 as cited in Horvath and Woodhams, 2013, p. 134).

Meanwhile, International Criminal Court in 2011 Articles 7 (1) (g)-1 and 8 (2) (b) (xxii)-1) defines 'rape' as

the penetration of the anus or vagina with any object or body part, or of any body part of the victim or perpetrator's body with a sexual organ, by force or by threat of force or coercion, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or against a person incapable of giving genuine consent (ICC, 2011 as cited in Horvath and Woodhams, 2013, p. 134)

Many women around the world are victims of rape. World Health Organization (WHO) reports that more or less 1 out of 3 women has the possibility to undergo sexual violence in their life, and 7% of the women might go through rape or attempted rape; although this is an urgent issue, the United Nations (UN) reported that specific laws regarding rape has not been established by more than 72 countries around the world (Wisevoter, 2022). Botswana, Lesotho, Grenada, Sweden, Eswatini, South Africa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Panama, Iceland and Suriname are ten countries with high global rape statistics; meanwhile, Indonesia is placed at the 134th position in the world, with the rape rate of 0.48 out of 100.000 (Wisevoter, 2022).

Horvath and Woodhams (2013) distinguish between three types of rape. The first one is 'opportunistic rape', when the rape act is executed for private reasons. Second, 'strategic rape' is involves pattern of the rape act done under the intention to achieve a group objective, which is directed by a commander of a group (p.135). The third one is 'practice rape', where the rapist may be driven by private reasons but at the same time is still tolerated although it is not quite effective in terms of strategy, and sometimes the rapist done the action to conform to other members' behavior in their unit; usually this type of rape act is derived from a certain from a field unit and later replicated by other groups in other units (p.136).

Various types of sexual objectification also occurred in the date rape case experienced by Alamanda and done by Shodancho. According to Cornell Law

School Legal Information Institute, date rape occurs when an a person or acquaintance forces or coerces the victim to have sexual intercourse before or after a voluntary social engagement; it is done without consent, and the victim and perpetrator may have some kind of romantic relationship or a potential for sexual relationship (Wex Team, 2022). Date rape commonly involves drugs, alcohol and other chemical restraints to take advantage of the victim’s vulnerability through the means of force, and these drugs are also known as ‘date rape drugs’ (like the one Shodancho uses on Alamanda). In addition, date rapists may be done by relatives or someone who is involved romantically.

Traces of sexual objectification in the date rape committed by Shodancho. It is evident that sexual objectification functions as the bridge which eventually facilitates the rapist to achieve his intended action in mind. Before he raped Alamanda through sedation on their date, he began by lusting over her appearance and body when he saw her photograph. Hence, traces of sexual objectification in terms of reduction to the appearance is evident when Shodancho “daydreamed about the girl’s beauty”; meanwhile, reduction to the body is seen from the way he sexualizes Alamanda’s body from the way he imagined that he was actually caressing her body and then drowned in lust:

He daydreamed about the girl’s beauty, and her body, and he found himself lost in a desire ... caressing the paper as if it was the girl’s very body, tracing the outline of her body with his fingers, and then he was even more dissolved in lust ...

(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 161)

After sedating Alamanda at their date, Shodancho raped her. When Shodancho took advantage of Alamanda’s weak position and vulnerability, he treated her as someone who lack capacity to act or someone who has no agency; in

other words, what Alamanda experienced was sexual objectification in terms of inertness. Alamanda was also sexually objectified by Shodancho when he denied her autonomy (her refusal to engage in sexual intercourse), when he treated her as a tool to fulfill his lust (instrumentality), as a body without a soul (reduction to the body) and as a individual worth violating through unconsented penetration (violability). As a result, Alamanda's worth as a human was reduced to an object as seen from her desperation to escape and her wish to die instead of being raped presented through Eka Kurniawan's utilization of indirect characterization in terms of reaction and thought. In other words, Kurniawan tries to tell the readers that Alamanda suffers from being sexually objectified.

... As time passed she felt all the weaker, until her body and her hands and even her feet stuck tightly to the surface of the bed, and she wasn't able to move them even the tiniest bit.

...

Alamanda now didn't just want to howl, she wanted to slit her own throat so that she would die before the man did anything else. ... without wasting much more time he penetrated her.

(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 165)

Dewi Ayu, Alamanda's mother, was well aware of what happened when Shodancho carried (the sedated) Alamanda home. Although Shodancho said to Dewi Ayu that Alamanda was carsick, Dewi Ayu knew that Shodancho sedated and raped her daughter to fulfill his lust. Hence, their conversation below indicated that Alamanda experienced sexual objectification in terms of reduction to the body and also instrumentality.

She was laid out across her bed as Dewi Ayu asked what had happened.

...

"She's just carsick."

“It’s because you ravaged her body without permission, Shodancho,” replied Dewi Ayu, whose life experience led her to understand what had happened...

(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 167)

The second type of rape Alamanda experienced was marital rape. Marital rape is “unwanted sexual contact within marriage” (Rozée, 1993 as cited in Horvath, Miranda A.H. and Woodhams, 2013, p. 14), and to contextualize this definition, it is part of IPV. Alamanda’s experience of going through marital rape displays multiple types of sexual objectification.

Instrumentality is evident in this case, where Shodancho tied her up on the bed to fulfill his sexual needs. Denial of autonomy also can be seen from how Alamanda’s unwillingness to have sex with Shodancho is denied, and from the evidence that Shodancho tied her limbs to the corners of the bed – disabling her from escaping (inertness). Next, Alamanda’s individuality and humanity was also reduced to the body a Shodancho treated her as a ‘lifeless’ body, separated from her soul, worth to be painfully violated and penetrated (violability).

She didn’t know how long she lay there unconscious, but when she came to, she found herself still lying on her back naked. Her hands and feet were tied to the four corners of the bed.

...

For the first time since he had kidnapped her from the bathroom, Shodancho smiled and said, “Now I can have sex with you whenever I want!” ...

(Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 177–178)

... Shodancho raped his own wife, until the end of the exhausting battle, ... [Alamanda] fainted. Shodancho ended up with two scratches on his face and Alamanda with an extraordinary pain in her crotch.

(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 177)

Through indirect characterization, Kurniawan presents Alamanda’s suffering and anger of being sexually objectified by her own husband. The most obvious is through Alamanda’s speech in following sentences where she curse her

husband Shodancho, saying “Fuck you, you raping satan!” or “Devil rapist, what have you done? ... If you are looking for a hole to stick your dick in, every cow and goat has one.” (Kurniawan, 2015, p.178). Therefore, Kurniawan makes Alamanda’s position clear against female objectification.

To perceive these problems within the lens of socialist feminism, I recall the previous points which Jaggar (Jaggar, 1983) has made; (predominantly, not exclusively) men is the ruling group of the production of goods produced by (predominantly, almost exclusively) women; and these mean goods are reproduction along with sexual and emotional satisfaction (Jaggar, 1983) and that “men have in turn used their power as wage earners, the institution of heterosexuality, and marriage to control women’s reproduction” (Jaggar, 1988 as cited in Kennedy, 2003, p. 156).

This point is illustrated by the IPV of Violet, Pomelo and Alamanda. Violet wanted to marry Perpetual with the hope to be free from the courtesan world and to be loved fully as a person and a respectable wife, like what she experienced in her previous marriage with Edward; little that she knew she would be abused in her marriage with Perpetual. Pomelo, Perpetual’s second wife who was previously a courtesan as well, came for similar reason like Violet and ended up being sexually abused before Violet came to Moon Pond. Both of them tried to escape with their money, but their jewelry was hidden by Perpetual somewhere in a cave. In Alamanda’s case, Shodancho abused his power as Alamanda’s husband and broke his promise to her that they would not engage in any sexual intercourse (which Alamanda initially believed). Thus, the female characters’ bodies were

commodified within this particular institution, where the domestic abuser confined their wives within the personal and private sphere, called ‘marriage’.

As a result of the commodification of women’s body by the male controlling group, where (almost exclusively) women are considered as laborers, women like Violet, Pomelo and Almanda experienced alienation. Since socialist feminism is also rooted from a Marxist perspective, Jaggar described that women’s alienation is defined as: “things or people which in fact are related dialectically to each other come to seem alien, separated from or opposed to each other” (Kennedy, 2003, p. 157). Jaggar also adds that the contemporary women, as products of history, are alienated because of capitalism, fetishism of commodities and separation of home and workplace (Kennedy, 2003, p. 157).

Through this definition of alienation, Violet, Pomelo and Almanda were viewed through the capitalistic patriarchal lens. Their worth as a full human being was sexually objectified and alienated at the same time; they were seen as a commodity, something worth to be treated in any way within the domestic realm, isolated from the public sphere. In addition, the female characters were not only alienated sexually, but also physically because they moved to live in the husband’s house. Hence, this isolated situation gives power to the perpetrator to exercise further violence to the victim: “the more isolated the locale, the more freely a subculture of violence can develop” (Rector, 2014, p. 38)

4. Rengganis

The last instance of rape presented in this section of IPV is rape by fraud, as experienced by Rengganis (Dewi Ayu’s granddaughter) who was raped by Krisan, whom Rengganis loved (although they were cousins). Generally, rape by fraud is

categorized into six types with some aspects overlap one another: “fraudulent treatment (1), sexual impersonation (2), sexual scams (3), sexual theft (4), abuse of authority (5), and sexual extortion (6)” (Falk as cited in Mullen, 2018, pp. 1035–1036). In Rengganis’ case, the Krisan’s rape by fraud act displays an overlap of three categories: sexual impersonation, sexual scams and sexual extortion. I elaborate on this point after explaining the sexual objectification which occurs during this act.

Rengganis the Beautiful was the daughter of Maya Dewi and Maman Gendeng. Her dream was to marry Krisan, and Krisan took advantage of her feelings towards him (as elaborated in later paragraphs); hence Krisan is categorized as an intimate partner of Rengganis. Even after Rengganis was murdered by Krisan, she still loved him as shown in the later story plot when Kinkin summons Rengganis’ ghost. There, Rengganis states that he still loves Krisan although she is already dead.

Rengganis was described as a beautiful girl indeed, like the legendary Princess Rengganis which Maman Gendeng adored, with “half feet tall and eighty-eight pounds”, “gleaming ripe body” and “long hair as black river of ink” (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 280–281). One day, Krisan raped Rengganis in the school bathroom and did not take any responsibility for his actions (p.310-311); in fact, no one knew it was Krisan.

Although Krisan and Rengganis were cousins, along with Ai, Krisan had long kept his eye on Rengganis’ body. Sexual objectification occurs long before the rape, as Krisan reduced Rengganis to her appearance and body:

Krisan was in awe of Rengganis the Beautiful’s body, which was both beautiful and provocative. Delicious, that was the only word for it. He often

imagined her firm round breasts and her softly curving waist, and now he could see almost everything. (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 311)

Furthermore, Krisan's act of sexual objectification towards Rengganis was not single-layered, but multi-layered. He did not only separate Rengganis from her personhood, but also gazed her in a fungible way, which means she was only perceived by her function of sexual organs and replaceable by other individual (such as Beauty). Krisan described that Ai was the girl he loved, but Rengganis was the girl he wanted to have sex with.

There are two kinds of women that a man can love: the first kind of woman he loves in order to dote upon and cherish her, and the second kind he loves in order to fuck. Krisan felt he now had both kinds: Ai was the first kind of girl, and Rengganis was the second. (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 313)

Krisan's perception of fungibility towards Rengganis was also shown in later excerpts, after her murder. When Krisan had sex with the hideous Beauty, he felt that everything was the same. There was no difference having sex with Rengganis nor Beauty, because both of them had what he was looking for: they were equally reduced to the body and sexual functions.

Sleeping with Rengganis the Beautiful and sleeping with hideous Beauty wasn't all that different. Everything was the same, everything made his genitals spew...
(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 361)

Eventually, in the school bathroom, Krisan took advantage of Rengganis. Another type of sexual objectification is also present during this act, where Krisan did not only take advantage of Rengganis' appearance, body and sexual organs but also her intelligence and made her as his instrument. Since Rengganis was not smart and sincerely loved Krisan, Krisan took that chance to achieve his intention. In several days before, after jokingly asked Rengganis whether or not she wanted to

marry him and she said yes, Krisan told Rengganis that they should have sex because that was what married people do and that he could teach her (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 315). That was the first deception Krisan gave to Rengganis, abusing her intelligence and feelings of love towards him. Naively, Rengganis agreed, and that opportunity finally arrived in the school bathroom. The second deception given by Krisan, still abusing Rengganis' intelligence and feelings, was when he told her to tell others that she was raped by a brown dog with a black snout (because he often pretended to be a dog). In addition, he also ordered her not to tell anyone that he was the rapist, and promised Rengganis that he would marry her if she was pregnant. Rengganis willingly complied and genuinely believed his promise. Hence, this instance is considered as sexual objectification in terms of inertness and instrumentality: the other person is treated as if she does not possess agency; in this case, Rengganis' level of intelligence was taken advantage of – furthermore, she was treated as a tool to satisfy his lust.

“You can just say that you were raped by a dog.”

“I wasn't raped by a dog.”

“Well, aren't I a dog?” asked Krisan. “You have often seen me bark and stick out my tongue, haven't you?”

“I have.”

“So say that you were raped by a dog. A brown dog with a black snout.”

“A brown dog with a black snout.”

“And don't mention my name in this business, not even once.”

“But you are going to marry me, right?”

“Yeah. If it turns out you really are pregnant, we can start making plans.”

(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 317)

Contextualizing this case with the act of rape by fraud, this instance includes the aspect of sexual impersonation, where the rapist pretends to become someone else so he could achieve his sexual intention; sometimes, rapists pretended to be the

victim's sexual other (Falk as cited in Mullen, 2018, pp. 1035–1036). However, in this case, Krisan implicitly impersonated a dog who raped Rengganis and ordered her to report so. Krisan orders Rengganis to say that she is raped by a dog because he often joked in front of Rengganis, pretending to be a dog by sticking out his tongue and copies a dog's bark; hence he knows he can take advantage of Rengganis' lack of intelligence by tricking her to really admit that he *is* a dog and her rapist. In addition, this instance of rape also involves sexual scam because vulnerable victims are targeted; although this type of sexual scam often occur in the entertainment industry or pornographic content production (Falk as cited in Mullen, 2018, pp. 1035–1036), Rengganis was also vulnerable in terms of intelligence and situation of being in the bathroom alone. Lastly, sexual extortion is also present because the rapist, Krisan, exploited the power he had from the familial relationship with Rengganis, his own cousin – from the information that sexual extortion commonly deals with abuse of authority (Falk as cited in Mullen, 2018, pp. 1035–1036).

During the process of Krisan's rape of Rengganis in the school bathroom, Rengganis does not show any negative attitude towards Krisan. This is in line with the analysis that Krisan takes advantage of Rengganis' feelings and lack of intellectual capacity by portraying Rengganis as submissive through indirect characterization in terms of reaction. When Krisan tells Rengganis to have sex with him, Rengganis does not show any signs of protest (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 316-317). From these portrayals of Rengganis, readers are able to conclude the meaning that Rengganis is not aware that she is being treated as an object as Krisan's instrument to achieve his intention through this opportunity.

The last instance of deception which Krisan exercised to Rengganis was that he tricked her to go into the boat with him with Ai's corpse, and later killed Rengganis by strangling her and threw her into the ocean. Initially, he deceived Rengganis that they could get married on the boat; little did she know that she was to be murdered. Again, he took advantage of Rengganis' feelings towards him. Thus, Krisan also exercised sexual objectification in terms of violability to his own cousin. However, Rengganis, through Kurniawan's indirect characterization of reaction, implies that she has no idea of Krisan's evil plan of murdering her and that her struggle to break free from Krisan's strangle is too late.

Rengganis the Beautiful turned around, looking out at the horizon, her back to Krisan. She waited until she saw Krisan's hands making a fast circle, and before she realized what was happening, she was being strangled ... They fought for about five minutes, before Rengganis the Beautiful lost the fight and lay sprawled out on the bottom of the boat, dead, right next to the corpse of her cousin.
(Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 310–311)

There are several implications which can be drawn from the rape cases above in the light of socialist feminism to examine Alamanda and Rengganis' experience. Generally, socialist feminism views that the issue of rape is caused by the systemic oppression of a patriarchal society (where sexual objectification in the male gaze takes place) which is exacerbated by capitalism (where exploitation has the possibility to hide under the term 'surplus value') – or it can go the other way around. Departing from this understanding of socialist feminism's perception upon the issue of rape, this theory enables a critical reading of the selected novels because all of the female characters are living closely to the world of prostitution, where there is not only commodification of the body in capitalist surplus but also the business of prostitution is derived from the masculine desire to have their sexual

and emotional needs fulfilled. Although Rengganis and Alamanda do not work in the business of sexual exploitation (like Violet, Magic Gourd, Pomelo and Dewi Ayu do), they are the granddaughter and daughter of Dewi Ayu; in addition, Krisan and Shodancho (the male objectifier of Rengganis and Alamanda) has a desire to sleep with Dewi Ayu – in fact, Shodancho has slept with Dewi Ayu by forcing her. Thus, this explanation shows how the female characters' world is not only shaped by the patriarchal culture but also the masculine capitalist drive to take advantage of the working class (which are the female prostitutes), therefore formulating an understanding of the root cause of the issue of rape. Thus, this explanation shows how the female characters' world is not only shaped by the patriarchal culture but also the masculine capitalist drive to take advantage of the working class (which are the female prostitutes), therefore formulating an understanding of the root cause of the issue of rape.

As a response, to fully eradicate the cruelty of rape, socialist feminism requires a systemic transformation in society to totally abolish capitalism and patriarchy. However, the first step of the journey should be to examine one's position in society and how they relate with others. In "Feminist Responses to the Politics of Rape: Identifying the Women's Perspective", Kennedy (Kennedy, 2003, p. 159) contends that "the biggest problem with addressing an issue like rape is that it forces one to delve into the very fundamental ways one understands her or himself as an individual and in relation to others" (Kennedy, 2003). This thought is in line with Nussbaum's explanation of objectification – which can be applied to the rape case experienced by Alamanda and Rengganis – that when person X (the intimate partner) objectifies person Y based on the degree of misapprehension occurring in

the world where X is living, X started to perceive and degrade other humans less than what they actually are; thus “the greater [a human being’s] perceptual error, the greater their potential to do violence to others” (Nussbaum, 1995 as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 22). Implicitly, this is the general mechanism of the act of rape: alienation that comes hand in hand with sexual objectification (including the misapprehension of others) opens the pathway to rape.

Alienation, in this context, also means that women are viewed through men, as Cahill suggested (Cahill, 2011 as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 28), hence causing women to be alienated from themselves and from other people in society. When women see themselves through the perspective of men, they valued themselves in accordance with how men valued them – for instance, how they look, how they dress, how they do makeup, how appealing is their body, etc. as portrayed by the media – instead of measuring themselves by their own feeling or thoughts as a whole human being (Kennedy, 2003, p. 158). This idea is also reflected on Cahill’s thought on derivatization, where she says that this ethical behavior reflects how the feminine subjectivity and sexuality, along with women’s actions and choices, are considered as a derivative of the masculine subjectivity and sexuality and a reflection of men’s desires (Cahill, 2011 as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 28). In other words, the perception of women through men leads to alienation, and in the case of rape, alienation also occurs in terms of bodily experience.

The feeling of alienation is central to victims who were raped. Alienation, according to Bromwich (1991) in reference to Wordsworth, is to be “dispossessed of one’s full human faculties” (1991, p. 139). To elaborate more from the sociological perspective, alienation is characterized with powerlessness,

meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement (Seeman, 1959). In other words, alienation means to be estranged from humanity (Bromwich, 1991) – this is one of the visible characteristics of derivatization and dehumanization occurring throughout the objectification process. Hence, Ehlers et al. (1998) examined the role of mental defeat and alienation in predicting response to exposure treatment of PTSD on 20 women who encountered sexual assaults. Ehlers et al. (1998) discovered that “patients who did not plan or who gave up thinking about how they could minimize harm during the rape and especially those who felt completely defeated and lost the sense of being a person with their own will responded less well to repeated imaginal reliving of the traumatic event” (1998, pp. 464–465). In other words, the victims were alienated from themselves due to the trauma they experienced and did not retain their sense of autonomy; they felt entrapped, lost control, humiliated and hopeless (Ehlers et al., 1998; Hossain et al., 2010).

To connect the statement above with the text under analysis, when Alamanda and Regganis were raped, their personhood is also denied because their bodies were also stripped off from their dignity. Although their feelings were not described in first person narrative by Eka Kurniawan, it was clear that their whole faculties as human beings are dispossessed. Hence, to acknowledge one’s full personhood means to respect their body as well because all human experiences occur within the context of embodiment” (Cahill, 2011 as cited in Rector, 2014, p. 27). Within the patriarchal society Alamanda and Rengganis were living in, their experience of rape was denied not only because they were sexually objectified, but also because of the male gaze deeply ingrained in the society which is appearance-

oriented and body-oriented, (perhaps, almost) neglecting the psychological and emotional pain experienced by its victims where lasting physical wounds are absent; hence, the thought of neglect might be placed upon women in this way: “because she looks fine, then she must be fine (Kennedy, 2003, p. 158)”.

In accordance with the context of rape experienced by Alamanda and Rengganis (Dewi Ayu’s case in previous section is applicable as well), rape begins after women were alienated within the perspective of men, with sexual objectification as the ‘facilitator’ of this intricate and multi-layered process. Socialist feminism contends that “men have in turn used their power as wage earners, the institution of heterosexuality, and marriage to control women’s reproduction” (Jaggar, 1988 as cited in Kennedy, 2003, p.156). In the context of analysis, men’s control does not only extent to marriage (such as Shodancho’s marriage with Alamanda and Krisan’s empty promise to marry Rengganis) but also to prostitution.

As a result, when one does not have any more capacity to deeply relate with others or place themselves in the other person’s shoes, they will lose or have lost their empathy and compassion, and will be more likely to inflict derivatizing or dehumanizing acts upon others (Rector, 2014, p. 23). This is what happened to the female characters under analysis. They were stripped from dignity and humanity (exemplified by Rengganis’ eventual murder) because the rapists have lost their empathy and compassion as loving human beings. As Rector remarked, when one starts to lose their sense of unity in others, the greater the possibility is for them to objectify and treat others in a violent way (Rector, 2014, p. 23).

Thus, the social relationship of victims with their perpetrator are majorly grounded on the basis of politics and economy governed by men, who determine their position whether they are in the private sphere (synonymous with women's providence of reproduction and sexual, emotional satisfaction) or the public sphere (synonymous with women's involvement in decision-making in society). Thus, to infer from the excerpts above, the rapists of the female characters only perceive the female victims are only placed in the private or domestic sphere, hence causing these characters vulnerable of sexual assaults as they are sexually objectified and misapprehended by the male gaze. Yet, as feminism aims to spread awareness to society that the personal is political, socialist feminist perceive that these rape acts inflicted upon the female characters should be taken into a political and economic sphere (or the public sphere) – as believed by radical feminists that sexuality is able to be examined through political lens, and as believed by Marxist feminist that sexuality too is controlled by consumerism. This analysis of the female characters, which is an illustration of other women out there in the world, confirms what Jaggar state that in the contemporary society today, women are viewed as sexual objects because they are defined by the sexual desires of men, and this idea is accepted in the acts of rape, prostitution and sexual double standard (Kennedy, 2003, p. 158).

According to Kennedy's view in explaining the point of view of rape through socialist feminism, socialist feminists believe that rape occurs because women are forced to rely on men due to their lack of economic independence and alienation from each other and the market(Kennedy, 2003). What is meant by 'lack of economic independence' is the factor that men who hold power in the economic system also control the value of women's sexuality, which can be bought and sold

like a product (p.159). In other words, men as the capitalistic group of controllers over women's sexuality are those who set the bar of how goods and services are valued in society, including the 'goods' and 'values' which (predominantly, almost exclusively) women are able to produce, such as reproduction and sexual, emotional satisfaction for (predominantly, not exclusively) male.

This is shown in the rape cases experienced by the female characters, where power inequality is evident between the female subordinate group or laborers (victims of rape) with the male controlling group (rapists), exacerbated by sexual objectification driven by capitalism – where profit is not always a monetary surplus value – and patriarchy – as the male characters place women solely in the personal, private sphere where they are prone to be sexually assaulted .

Beyond the discussion of how female objectification is portrayed in the two novels, there are further implications which can be drawn in this chapter. First, socio-cultural implications show how female objectification gives a significant impact on the lives of women not only limited to the public sphere, but also in the private sphere. In the public sphere, the findings reflect how female objectification seems to be 'normal' (in a negative way) in one's everyday life and environment; thus, this kind of mindset perpetuates society's action of objectifying women and makes women's struggle even more difficult to be freed from intertwining forms of oppression – especially from the oppression of patriarchy-driven capitalism.

Second, emotional and psychological implications are also significant points to underscore. Female objectification does not only harm women physically, but also emotionally and psychologically in terms of self-esteem, the image of their body, and also their formation of identity. These points are crucial to note, because

it does not only influence how they treat themselves but also how they treat other women, especially those who have similar experience. For example, do they objectify themselves? Do they also objectify other women, without realizing it?

Third, the most important implication highlighted is how objectification in general, including sexual objectification, influences one's understanding of humanity. To imply from the findings above, objectification is the starting point of every kind of evil and injustice in this world. When one no longer views oneself to be connected to others, nor to see oneself in others, they may lose compassion towards other people and unconsciously stands in front or runs into the gate of dehumanization. Human trafficking and intimate partner violence are only two examples of these dangers posed and driven by objectification; internalized objectification is the enemy of humanity. Thus, the findings above serve as a reflection and reminder for readers to be aware of every action they take in life, and how they treat themselves and other people.

CHAPTER IV

RESISTANCE OF FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION

IN THE VALLEY OF AMAZEMENT AND BEAUTY IS A WOUND

After examining the cases of female objectification in human trafficking and intimate partner violence in *The Valley* and *Beauty* experienced by Violet, Magic Gourd, Pomelo, Dewi Ayu, Alamanda and Rengganis and drawing implications from the portrayals of female objectification, this chapter examines how the female characters resist female objectification. Resistance of female objectification in human trafficking and intimate partner violence would be analyzed through Foucault's lens. This examination would be carried out in the light of socialist feminism while making Foucault's understanding of resistance as the basis theory of this chapter.

Hence, the first step would be reviewing the Foucault's understanding of power and resistance. According to Foucault, power comes hand-in-hand with resistance; where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault, 1978; Lynch, 2011; Mills, 2003). Here are several important characteristics of power: Power flows within society through relationships (1). It is not only wielded by a particular group (2). Power is omnipresent, available everywhere and in everyone (3). Intentionality is important to power to achieve certain goals (4). Power is productive, empowering, and transformative (5). In every point of power relation, power exist together with resistance (6) (Foucault, 1978, 1980, p. 98; Lynch, 2011, p. 15).

Foucault believes that power cannot exist without resistance; he contends that resistance is already an inseparable part of power (Mills, 2003, p. 40). Yet, if one agrees with his view, it may seem that the actions of those who resist oppression

seems to be worthless since their resistance is something they ought to do – as if their decision to resist is not grounded on their freedom to choose (Mills, 2003, p. 40). The previous sentence which discusses the analysis of power-resistance mechanism may be an instance of what Kendall and Wickham (1999) say, that “the task of [a Foucauldian] analysis ... is to describe the way in which resistance operates as a part of power, not to seek or promote or oppose it” (Kendall and Wickham, 1999 as cited in Mills, 2003, p. 41). Hence, this notion is challenged by the feminist linguist Deirdre Burton (1982), who argues that when one does not make their political position clear in analyzing power relations, such as not choosing which side they are supporting for the sake of being ‘objective’, they are indirectly supporting the status quo (Burton, 1982 as cited in Mills, 2003, pp. 41–42).

To contextualize the thought above with this thesis, the ‘status quo’ present in *The Valley* and *Beauty* is the existence of gender-based and economic-based oppression done towards the female characters. Foucault believes that power is constantly performed (Mills, 2003), and so does resistance. The female characters’ resistance is performed in various ways (or manifested in): resilience, sisterhood and motherhood. As Judith Butler’s idea explains that gender identity is performed – which is in line with Foucault’s concept of performance of power – the female characters’ identity lies in their performance of resistance because power is productive (Mills, 2003). In other words, resistance is the core of the female characters’ identity which comes with a significant cost, with their lives at stake. Resistance is still necessary to make clear one’s political position, as Burton (1982) argues.

A . Resilience as Tool of Resistance against Human Trafficking and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

First, on resilience: Lauren Van Metre, a resiliency expert writing on “Fragility and Resilience” published by U.S. Institute of Peace (2016) defines that resilience is “the ability of a state and society to absorb, adapt, and transform in response to a shock or long-term stressor” where its central feature is “strong social compact between the state and society on their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities” (Metre, 2016). Metre explains that “a social compact, the very heart of resilience, is not only an agreement or a relationship, but a complex set of interactions and associations that act as an immune system, or resilience, to internal and external stress and shock” (Metre, 2016, p. 1). Resilience is also defined as the capacity of people or society to mitigate, adapt and recover from shock to lower chronic vulnerability and foster growth which is inclusive (USAID, 2012 as cited in Smyth and Sweetman, 2015, p.405). In this thesis, the people, community or society which shows the aspects of resilience are the selected female characters.

To contextualize the female characters’ resilience, this thesis shows that resilience is one of the three manifestations of resistances against the oppressive power of female objectification in the forms of human trafficking and intimate partner violence. Through resilience, the female characters exhibit their agency to rise against various dynamics of power which drives female objectification. They display their resilience through ability to endure and survive these oppressive moments; this is an instance of Foucault’s thought where he contends that power coexists with resistance, and that power has the capability to be productive, empowering, and transformative (Foucault, 1978, 1980, p. 98; Lynch, 2011, p. 15).

In this case of resilience, the female characters show adaptation of their situation by forming strategies, accept their situation, and show courage and cooperation with other characters to achieve their way out of their problems.

1 . Violet

There are many instances of Violet's act of resistance to face sexual objectification during her process of being sexually exploited at Mother Ma's courtesan house. As described in the previous section, Violet endured so much physical and emotional pain when she was forced to become a courtesan. One of the ways Violet which becomes her tool of resistance is her resilience in coping with the situation. She recalled her mother's often-said phrase: "a matter of necessity" (Tan, 2013, p. 195). Initially, Violet thought her mother used that phrase to display her haughtiness; yet, she finally learned that her mother used that perspective to accept a bad situation and let go of how she thought of herself. She recalled that her mother afterwards explained to her that particular situations are always present in every difficult situation, and that only Violet herself "can decide what is necessary to achieve the best possible outcome" (Tan, 2013, p.195). In other words, Violet's resilience gave her hope to do what she needs to do to survive in Mother Ma's, instead of pitying, loathing or killing herself.

I recalled that hated phrase my mother used: "a matter of necessity." ... She did what was a matter of necessity. "Every difficult situation has its particular circumstances," she had said, "and only you know what those are. Only you can decide what is necessary to achieve the best possible outcome." ... I resolved I would not kill myself nor lose myself. And with that, I no longer pitied or loathed myself. I was no longer helpless in spirit. (Tan, 2013, p.195)

The thought of sexual exploitation in the courtesan world returned to haunt Violet again after her husband's death (Edward). Violet stopped being a courtesan

after she got pregnant and decided to get married with Edward; she felt truly loved as a person and Edward could see who she was. Yet, after Edward passed away, she was faced whether or not to return to the courtesan world again because not much choice was left for her. The society's image towards the courtesan very negative. Yet, through resilience, she tried to remind herself that she has the freedom to choose her path of life, that she has abilities, intelligence above average and persistence.

For the first time since I was fourteen, I could choose. I would look at my abilities and match them to opportunities. I was more intelligent than most. I had persistence. (Tan, 2013, p.306)

Although she still doubted herself and her track record as a courtesan, she still tried to be resilient to rise above her difficulties and sorrow of losing Edward. In doing so, she opened the pages in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* after Edward's burial. That book was a gift from Edward for Violet, and Whitman's poem reminded Violet of Edward's resilient spirit.

I turned to the familiar page in *Leaves of Grass*, and I read aloud in a steady voice.
"Not I, not anyone else can travel that road for you.
You must travel if by yourself.
It is not far. It is within reach.
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and did not know.
Perhaps it is everywhere—on water and land."
(Tan, 2013, p.283)

The last instance of resilience in resisting sexual exploitation is when Violet decided to visit Loyalty Fang, to request a position at his company. This event happens after Edward's death, and after Violet's abusive marriage with Perpetual (in whom previously Violet hope to be loved as a whole person like Edward did). Violet does not want to return to the courtesan world anymore, and makes up her mind to visit Loyalty.

I had my own plans, and it would begin with a visit to Loyalty Fang—this time to ask, not for a favor, but for a job. (Tan, 2013, p.534)

In her conversation with Loyalty, she asserts that she will prove that she is capable and compatible of the job as a person, not as a sexualized woman such as a courtesan. She adds that she has nothing to do with the courtesan world anymore.

I'll prove on my own that I'm more than worthy of the job and I'm counting on proving this in an office, seated on chairs, and not in your bed. I have put that part of my life away forever." (Tan, 2013, p. 536)

Violet's resilience against IPV during her stay at Perpetual's is also evident in the excerpt below. First, she sees herself as a bird who refuses to stop flying, even though her wings was once carried by winds of lies. She made up her mind to fly on her own and get out from this abusive relationship.

But now I was like a bird, my wings once carried on a wind of lies. I would beat those wings to stay aloft, and when the wind suddenly died or buffeted me around, I would keep beating those strong wings and fly in my own slice of wind. (Tan, 2013, p. 377)

Second, Violet's resilience is also reflected in her memory of Edward's words: "resist much, obey little" (Tan, 2013, p. 421). She recalled those words over and over again, especially the day when those words resound greatly to her when Flora was taken away from her by Minerva. Violet's resilience is rooted in her love towards her baby, Flora. Third, Violet adapts with her situation by discarding her pride to survive within Perpetual's abusive marriage. If not, there is a high chance for her to be killed:

I had discarded pride, that useless burden of self-importance I had carried around like my portable vanity with its broken mirror. Perpetual and I had pitted our pride against each other, and I would have died to prove I was superior. (Tan, 2013, p. 430)

2 . Dewi Ayu

Dewi Ayu's resistance towards sexual exploitation is also reflected through resilience, but in a different way. First, Dewi Ayu displayed her resilience in coping with the terrible news that they were going to be made as prostitutes. When her friends panicked and denied their fate, Dewi Ayu is the first one who said out loud that they were going to be sexually exploited. Dewi Ayu shows acceptance of her fate, facilitated by her resilience.

“So you think you know what is going to happen to us?” asked Ola.
“Yes,” she replied, “we are going to be made into prostitutes.”
They all knew it, but only Dewi Ayu was brave enough to say it.
(Kurniawan, 2002, p.64)

Dewi Ayu's resilience is also evident in the excerpt where she was assigned to a Japanese soldier at Mama Kalong's (where this is also categorized as war rape). Although the Japanese soldier denied her personhood by forcing her to carry out a sexual intercourse with him, while inflicting various kinds of sexual objectification to her, Dewi Ayu rebelled against him by being resilient – her resilience is manifested in her response towards the Japanese soldier in her 'lifeless' and 'unmoving' demeanour towards him. She did not give him the desired response – she “didn't grumble” and even did not “let out even a peep” ; she stayed still like a corpse, which eventually angered him and caused him to hurt her physically (p.69). Yet, after being slapped, she still maintained her indifferent attitude. Her resilience helped her to survive the horror.

Now, growing angry, the Japanese threw down his sword and slapped Dewi Ayu's face twice, which left behind a red welt and caused her body to sway for a moment, but she maintained her demeanor of infuriating indifference.
(Kurniawan, 2002, p.69)

Dewi Ayu's sole misery came from her friends' cries and screams when they were raped. Dewi Ayu pitied them, by saying "You poor women, she thought. Fighting against the inevitable hurts worse than anything else (Kurniawan, 2002, p.70)". Implicitly, it can be inferred that her acceptance to received the inevitable is a form of her resilience.

Dewi Ayu tried to help her friends to accept the fate which befalls them in this process of being resilient towards their sexually exploited condition. She suggested various ideas and strategies, such as lying down like a corpse until the rapists get bored like what she did each night. She even came up with other tactics such as making an effort spend their entire energy to a Japanese soldier which they like, with the hope that he will return again daily to be serviced the entire night, therefore it would reduce the girls' burden of servicing different soldiers. In addition, she mentioned that they could "tell them tales like Scheherazade", ask them to play cards or even flipping the tables by raping the soldiers instead (p.71). To support her friend Ola to survive, she said the following words:

"Ola was raped and she died.' That is not the souvenir that I want to bring back to Gerda." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.70)

Dewi Ayu's resilience is also greatly displayed in her vocal attitude towards the fact that they were forced to become prostitutes – and worse (according to Dewi Ayu), they were not paid at all. When the Japanese general inquired were they prostitutes, she answered in sarcasm, "We are caring for the souls of sick soldiers," (p.73). Thus, she made an ironic reference to Mama Kalong's deceptive treatment towards them, that they were tricked into being made as Red Cross volunteers.

Dewi Ayu's example of resilience during this period of being sexually exploited is in line with Metre's description of the characteristics of resilience

(Metre, 2016). Metre states these characteristics are adaptive leadership, collective response towards shock and the ability to “[tap] into... existing capacities to address the forces of fragility and doing this [act of resilience] through innovation, adaptation, and learning” (p.2). If in the related study Pardi (2020) states that Dewi Ayu “does not feel hopeless to encounter her tough life, but she keeps on struggling for her happiness and her right as a woman” and that Dewi Ayu “is always optimist and hard working to get everything she wants” (p.66), I argue the contrary. What Dewi Ayu did is creating new tactics in adapting and tries to form a collective attempt with other girls to tackle this situation. Hence, resilience is not equated to invulnerability nor fighting for one’s right of happiness; instead, resilience is rooted in the acknowledgement one’s fragility. Therefore, fragility in times of crisis requires adaptive responses through agency (Metre, 2016); this resistance through resilience is manifested in Dewi Ayu’s attitude of acceptance.

3 . Magic Gourd

Violet’s case of IPV in Perpetual’s house also gives a significant impact to Magic Gourd, as Violet’s companion. Although Magic Gourd was not Perpetual’s wife, she saw how Violet was abused physically by her husband, and once Magic Gourd was hit by Perpetual to stop him from abusing Violet. Acting as Violet’s main support, Magic Gourd also displays resilience in resisting IPV done by Perpetual to Violet and Pomelo. Magic Gourd gave emotional support to Pomelo that their plan to escape is doable, despite Pomelo’s bound feet, similar to Magic Gourd’s feet. Yet, she told Pomelo that she is willing to try:

Magic Gourd lifted her own feet up. “See? Mine were bound, too, and I’m willing to try.” (Tan, 2013, p. 420)

Her resilience of heart, feelings of sisterhood towards Pomelo and Violet, and her mother-like love for Violet are the main driver for Magic Gourd to survive. She devotes her entire energy to make dummies to be placed on their beds and gathered food for the past three days for their provisions:

Magic Gourd insisted on fashioning faces for the effigies. She made a mixture of clay mud and sculpted mounds on the stool bottoms, then stuck different-size stones and pegs to create the eyes, nose, and lips. Our faces were quite frightening. Magic Gourd and I had been hoarding food to last the three of us for three days.
(Tan, 2013, p. 421)

4 . Pomelo

Pomelo's resilient attitude is shown in how she made a pair of crutches to help her walk out of broken chair legs, because her feet were bound. She also added stiff leather on the bottom of her shoes; to reduce her feet from swelling, she also brought a pouch of herbs. Hence, in preparation for their escape, Pomelo "practiced by marching back and forth in her room every night" when "she was not with Perpetual and when the maids had gone to bed" (Tan, 2013, p. 420).

5 . Alamanda

Alamanda shows her resilience in facing marital rape done by Shodancho through strategy. Alamanda has learned her lesson not to trust Shodancho, based on her experience of being date-raped by Shodancho. On her first night, she came prepared by wearing a metal underwear which could only be opened using a mantra.

Alamanda said with a mysterious calm, "This is an antiterror garment, Shodancho, I ordered it directly from a metalsmith and a sorcerer. It can only be opened with a mantra that only I know how to recite, and I will never ever open it for you, not even if the sky has fallen."
(Kurniawan, 2015, p. 173)

A similar instance of Alamanda's resistance towards IPV, in this case, resistance towards marital rape, is also shown for the second time. Shodancho humiliated and violated his wife on her bed, after they lost their unborn child named Nurul Aini. The next day, Alamanda disappeared and showed up in the evening – she was wearing a brand-new protection with complicated mantras. If Alamanda is not resilient enough to face her husband, she might run away. But what she does is the opposite.

Alamanda just wrinkled her forehead at this behavior. “You don't have to apologize, Shodancho. I am wearing new protection now, with even more complicated mantras. Even if I'm totally naked you won't be able to penetrate me.” (Kurniawan, 2015)

B . Sisterhood as Tool of Resistance against Human Trafficking and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Sisterhood is an important aspect seen in the selected two novels, a female bond between the female characters. Hooks (1986) as a feminist socialist contends that the foundation of sisterhood should be rooted in solidarity instead of support, whereas solidarity is a sustained, ongoing commitment towards' the circle's collective political goal while support can be occasional. In creating solidarity, conflicts and differences should not be eliminated but allowed in order to achieve a stronger unity and understanding within women in the group (Hooks, 1986 , p.127). Hooks (1986, p.127) states this statement was often misunderstood that sisterhood does not mean to form an exclusive group based on shared 'victimization' of a certain domination, but instead a place to empower women based on shared strengths and resources.

To connect sisterhood with Foucault's thought on power and resistance, the female characters' sisterhood is seen as the collective form of resistance because

support, unite and empower one another to rise against the oppressive forms of female objectification in terms of human trafficking or intimate partner violence. Here, sisterhood as the female characters tool to challenge their oppression displays particular characteristics of Foucault's description of resistance. First, their sisterhood is based on relationship between the female characters; this refers to Foucault's statement that resistance is always present in every power-relations and those who challenge present power are active subjects (Foucault as cited in Lynch, 2011, p.24).

Second, their sisterhood as tool of resistance as categorized as necessary, spontaneous, coordinated, done on the basis of interest, and sacrificial – referring to Foucault's description of types of resistance (Foucault, 1978, p. 96). For Violet, Magic Gourd and Pomelo, their resistance is deemed necessary, coordinated, and sacrificial because their oppression within sexual exploitation and marriage is considered abusive and something urgent to escape from; thus, the three of them coordinates their escape well, and makes necessary sacrifices along the way exemplified by Pomelo's near-death sacrifice to save her friends from Perpetual during their escape. For Dewi Ayu, her sisterhood is necessary, spontaneous, and sacrificial when she is willing to be raped by the Japanese soldier to help Ola get medicine and doctor for her dying mother in prison; Dewi Ayu knows that medicine and doctor cannot wait, that her offer to replace Ola to be raped is sudden, and she sacrifices her body to do so. Rengganis and Ai's sisterhood bond is also unique because it is done on the basis of interest and spontaneous at the same time; Ai defends Rengganis out of interest because she is her cousin, and Ai feels the need to always protect Rengganis.

Third, their sisterhood displays most important characteristics underlined by Foucault in terms of social dynamics. For Violet, Magic Gourd, and Pomelo, their sisterhood leaves a lasting impact to their mind (Foucault, 1978, p.96), because they feel bound for life as described by Violet (Tan, 2013, p.423). For Dewi Ayu and Rengganis, their sisterhood play a crucial role in determining the unity of individuals (Foucault, 1978, p.96) where crisis unites Dewi Ayu – Ola and Ai-Rengganis.

1 . Violet

Violet's resistance towards sexual exploitation is reflected in her sister-like relationship to Magic Gourd, her faithful mentor, companion and mother figure. Violet's perspective towards Magic Gourd is shown in the excerpt below.

I brought Magic Gourd to Flora and said: "This is Mrs. Chen. She's my dearest friend who took care of me for many years. She's like a sister to me." (Tan, 2013, p. 575)

What Violet say is true, because both of them have endured harrowing times together when they are sexually exploited or when Violet was married to Perpetual. When Violet was brought to the Hall of Tranquillity by Fairweather, Magic Gourd was the courtesan who took care of Violet and taught her a courtesan's survival skills to get out of the sexual exploitation alive, from how to dress up, how to do makeup, how to please their clients and how to communicate with other courtesans. Magic Gourd even follows and takes care of Violet everywhere she goes, in good or bad times. They have shared an unbreakable bond of sisterhood.

Violet also resists female objectification in IPV through her sisterhood bond with Magic Gourd and Pomelo. She often visited Pomelo's courtyard with Magic Gourd to play mahjong together. She described that through that bonding, both of

them became the old flower sisters again and made up their mind not to undermine one another (Tan, 2013, p. 415). Eventually, they devised a plan to escape from Perpetual's house together, setting the house on fire and ran away using the route given by Charm's direction (Charm was Perpetual's wife too but already escaped). Sisterhood bond between the three of them grew stronger as they journeyed through the route given by Charm, with Perpetual tailing behind, threatening to kill three of them. Pomelo told them to go ahead and she would stay behind to stall, yet eventually Violet and Magic Gourd decided to return to help Pomelo. At that point, Violet did not care anymore if they were punished by Perpetual, as long as they stick together as sisters.

“You go on ahead,” Pomelo said. She had numb, hollow eyes.

“Nonsense,” Magic Gourd said. “What kind of people do you think we are?”

I agreed. .. I imagined the beating we all would receive ...We would do so together, and our unity would make it bearable. (Tan, 2013, p. 425)

Their sisterhood remains unbreakable in the end, after they successfully made it to Charm's place, out of Moon Pond. They often recounted the times when Perpetual tricked them and all agreed that they do not love him:

Later in the day we spoke of those times when Perpetual tricked us. We all denied that we had loved him. We had been deluded into thinking so. We compared the poems, the promises, the gifts, and the stories of his family. (Tan, 2013, p. 533)

2 . Dewi Ayu

In resisting sexual exploitation, sisterhood is present in Dewi Ayu's actions to help Ola's dying mother. This is where rape exchange also takes place. Initially, the Japanese commandant said that Ola had to trade her body for doctor and

medicine. Ola was shaken by the commandant's request, and Dewi Ayu was enraged; she willingly became Ola's substitute.

"There's no way," she said shortly. "The commandant would only give me medicine if I agreed to sleep with him."

"Let me talk to him," Dewi Ayu said, enraged.

...

"I will take the place of the previous girl, Commandant. You can sleep with me, but give her mother medicine and a doctor. And a doctor!"

(Kurniawan, 2002, p. 54)

A stronger bond of sisterhood between Ola and Dewi Ayu is formed, and thanks to Dewi Ayu's resilience, she was able to endure this. When Ola thanked her in tears, she replied, "It was nothing. Just think of it like I took a shit through the front hole."

(Kurniawan, 2002, p. 55)

3 . Magic Gourd

Sisterhood is evident in Magic Gourd's relationship with Violet before she was going to marry Perpetual as well. Since the beginning, Magic Gourd suspects that Perpetual has bad intentions towards Violet, and that Violet has been brainwashed by his lies and poetry. Magic Gourd has warned about Perpetual to Violet since the beginning:

"Are you telling me his gauzy lies have so thoroughly swaddled your judgment?" Magic Gourd said. "... If you think this poem is a masterpiece, that's proof that you have poetic clouds in your head and can no longer think." (Tan, 2013)

In warning Violet, Magic Gourd also accuses Perpetual to hide something, because when Magic Gourd inquired to Mansion (Perpetual's friend) about Perpetual's wife, Mansion was also surprised that Perpetual has a wife. In addition, Magic Gourd

also foreshadows to Violet what village life is like, since Perpetual lives in Moon Pond village, with the hope that Violet will change her mind and cancel marrying Perpetual. The village is a dreadful place where “women kill themselves” since “there’s no other way to escape” (Tan, 2013), and that Violet’s wish to become “a respectable wife” , as said by Magic Gourd, is only a deceptive illusion offered by Perpetual (Tan, 2013). As the story unfolds, what Magic Gourd say suspect about Perpetual is true.

Eventually, as stated in previous sections, Magic Gourd assisted Violet and Pomelo to escape from Moon Pond. Violet was forever grateful to her faithful sister and mother, as Violet states that “Whenever [Magic Gourd] came over to visit, she liked to recall the difficulties she endured on [Violet’s] behalf” (Tan, 2013, p.555). Even when Violet introduced Magic Gourd to Flora, she told her that Magic Gourd is her “dearest friend who took care of [Violet] for many years” and that “she’s like a sister [Violet]” (Tan, 2013, p.575).

4 . Pomelo

The aspect of sisterhood is evident in Pomelo in escaping IPV. Pomelo shows Violet the note from Charm which describes the escape route; Pomelo has long kept hope alive that she can escape from Moon Pond.

She handed me the note:

Use the directions below to climb Heaven Mountain. At the top, you will see the valley and a dome of rock shaped like Buddha’s Hand.

Look down from the ridge and you will see the town of Mountain View. Go to the House of Charm and I will welcome you.

(Tan, 2013, p.419)

Furthermore, when Perpetual chased them on their escape trail, Pomelo refused to give up despite her bound feet and crutches. She told the girls to keep going while she can stall to stop Perpetual:

“Keep going!” Pomelo said angrily. “After all our planning and effort, you would do me wrong to stay here. I’ll pick my way through. Maybe there’s a bush somewhere ahead. I can hide behind that.” (Tan, 2013)

After Pomelo killed Perpetual out of self-defence, by rolling stones down the valley using her feet, Violet described how strong Pomelo was; her resilience is proven in her fighting spirit: “Pomelo was panting, exhausted, and in pain. What a strong woman” (Tan, 2013, p. 431). Violet knew it was not easy for Pomelo, physically and emotionally, because she has been long abused by Perpetual before Violet and Magic Gourd arrived; Violet described Pomelo’s fighting spirit during the last moments of escape from Perpetual who was tailing behind:

Her face became tight as she described climbing over rocks with feet that felt as if she were walking over coals. It nearly blinded her with agony. The sun would not stop pouring out oven-hot heat. The tigers had lain in wait in the dark forest, and she had jumped at every sound. (Tan, 2013, p. 425)

Thus, Violet sees Pomelo as her sister too bound for life. They have shared their fear and saved each other. “Someone once told me: When you save a person, even unwillingly, you feel bound to each other for life” (p. 423) Violet said, “We had shared fear, and all three of us had lived to recall it. That was enough to make us sisters the rest of our lives” (p. 532).

5 . Rengganis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Rengganis experienced IPV when Krisan raped her by fraud in the school bathroom. As a consequence, Rengganis got pregnant. Rengganis’ parents, Maman Gendeng and Maya Dewi, decided to

marry Rengganis off to Kinkin who fake-confessed that he is Rengganis' rapist; in other words, the consequence of IPV done by Krisan is child marriage. Ai, Shodancho and Alamanda's daughter, came into action to protect Rengganis. Here, sisterhood is evident. Ai is a loyal cousin who is almost like an older sister of Rengganis. Ai protested to her aunt, that she would not let Rengganis marry Kinkin because she does not love her. Little does she know that Krisan is the rapist.

“I don't care whether he loves her or not,” said Ai. “Rengganis will not marry someone she does not love.” (Kurniawan, 2002, p. 294)

To Maman Gendeng, Ai protested by saying why should a pregnant girl get married. It was truly concerning for Ai, especially Rengganis does not desire this marriage.

“This is not right, Uncle,” said Ai. “She doesn't want this wedding. Tell me, why does a pregnant girl always have to get married?” (Kurniawan, 2002, p. 296)

As Hooks states that the 'real' sisterhood should be based on shared strengths and resources owned by its female members (Hooks, 1986), this exchange of shared strength and resource by the female characters is done within the everyday power relation system as Foucault describes, along with their display of resilience or other overlapping bonds such as motherhood. Hooks also believes that a certain sisterhood can grow strongly when each of the members are on the same page, committed to expose, examine, eliminate problems caused by capitalism and patriarchy – through 'good', diversity-rooted conflict in strengthening the sisterhood's growth and mutual understanding, as shown by Violet, Magic Gourd and Dewi Ayu. If power permeates every aspect of life of the active subjects (such as oppression caused by sexual exploitation or child abuse), so does resistance

spread in every area of the subjects (Mills, 2003). Hence, a shared interest and belief between these active, oppressed subjects can unite them to form a political solidarity (since the personal is political) to attempt ending the oppression they had to endure (although it comes with a cost) (Hooks, 1986).

C . Motherhood as Tool of Resistance against Human Trafficking and Intimate Partner Violence

O'Reilly (2019), a matricentric feminist, states that whenever she utilizes the word 'mother', she is referring to individuals who engage in motherwork. Those who engage in this motherwork is not only exclusively limited to biological mothers, but anyone can participate in it as long as mothering activities is a prominent portion in their everyday life (O'Reilly, 2019, p. 13). O'Reilly believes that a mother can be empowered as a woman when her needs and concerns (basically, her well-being) is fulfilled, and that this area of life can be examined through a political and theoretical lens as well (p.14).

Thus, to draw relationship with Foucault's thought that power and resistance, the female characters' ideological and biological motherhood are indeed empowering, transformative, and enabling them to be active subjects to resist oppressive power (Foucault, 1978, 1980, p. 98; Lynch, 2011, p. 15) as they utilize their nurturing nature as strategic essentialism according to their own contexts. For example, motherhood is empowering for Violet, Magic Gourd and Dewi Ayu because it gives them a reason to survive. For Alamanda and Rengganis, their motherhood enables them to resist oppressive powers, either from marital rape or early marriage.

1. Violet

If Vechorynska et al. (2020) highlights Violet's identity through her acceptance and resistance of her ethnicity, this thesis also offers another perspective where Violet's identity also rests on her motherhood as resistance of human trafficking and IPV. Motherhood, as O'Reilly (2019) said is something empowering for a woman when it attends to the needs and concerns of the mother. In Violet's context, Flora (Violet and Edward's baby girl who was born when Violet stayed at the courtesan house) gave her hope for a brighter future, not only to be free from the threat of sexual exploitation but also to be a whole and complete human in its best faculties. This is shown in the excerpt below, where Violet wants to give her best qualities as a person (not only limited to her body nor appearance, as what sexual objectification did to her) and hopes that Flora will live a life free from female objectification. She wanted to give Flora her "love, trust, and complete devotion" along with "honesty, persistence, and curious mind"; furthermore, she also hoped Flora would not be "a captive figure in a painting" like her mother had been, who was sexually objectified by Lu Shing (Violet's father) (Tan, 2013, p.248). Initially, Violet thought that Flora would become like Violet's self, but Violet soon realized that Flora would be a complete human being, unharmed from the pierces of sexual objectification which have been inflicted upon Violet as she was sexually exploited, trafficked and abused as a child.

. . . I imagined her... She was twelve, learning history and elocution, and not the tricks of seducing a man. I imagined her at age twenty, my age, with men who tried to win her favor—not to deflower her or bed her in her boudoir—but to ask her to marry. Or maybe she would not marry at twenty or ever... (Tan, 2013, p.248)

Before she was born, I believed she would be the girl I was supposed to have been. But she was not. She was her own self-being. How lucky I was.

(Tan, 2013, p.293)

Flora too is one of Violet's greatest reasons to survive Perpetual's abusive marriage. Violet said to herself that Flora is her "reason to live, which had enabled [her] to endure being trapped in Moon Pond" (Tan, 2013, p. 537); Violet use her memories of Edward and Flora to make Perpetual vanish, especially when he was sexually abusing her on bed. She recalled how Edward described Flora to Violet, that Violet is "the perfection of love, pure and unharmed" (Tan, 2013, p. 415), and made up her mind that she would protect her child at any cost – and the first step comes with her survival, escaping from Moon Pond and then doing whatever is necessary to look for Flora to tell her daughter that she loves her very much.

I would protect her and all the harm that had been done to me would heal until I was pure again, no hate in my heart, only love. (Tan, 2013, p. 415)

I would rather live and do what was important—to find Little Flora, to let her know how much I loved her. I would do whatever was necessary.

(Tan, 2013, p. 430)

This finding is confirmed by the related study written by Abdillah (2020) that Violet's resistance of IPV and reason to survive is shown through her appreciation of motherhood, especially that Flora is "the child of the man she genuinely loves and actively seeks to be together with, Edward Ivory" (p.65).

2 . Dewi Ayu

Motherhood becomes Dewi Ayu's manifestation of resistance when Alamanda, her half-Japanese baby, was born in Mama Kalong's house. When Dewi Ayu got pregnant, Mama Kalong advised her to abort her fetus with the reason that

Dewi Ayu should think of her family (most of the girls were ashamed to tell to their family that they were forced to be prostitutes due to the society's stigma). Dewi Ayu replied by saying: "Just as you are telling me to do, Mama, I *am* thinking of my family, and the only family I have is this kid inside me" (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 72). Thus, as Mrázek (2016) has written in the review of *Beauty*, Dewi Ayu is indeed a resilient "Mother Courage" whom "loves each of her daughters, the fruit of rape" (p.150) as she accepts what fate has given her; not as a form of submission towards oppression but as a pathway to strengthen her resilient identity.

Eventually, Dewi Ayu got the benefit from her pregnancy because the soldiers were forbidden by Mama Kalong to sleep with her; Dewi Ayu told the other girls to do the same, yet the girls were afraid to return home pregnant compared to being raped every night, unlike Dewi Ayu (p.72). In addition, Dewi Ayu's resistance towards sexual exploitation is not only displayed through her strategy of utilizing her motherhood, but also through resilience shown in her adaptive ways to cope with the situation and leadership to persuade the other girls to do the same. Her resilience and motherhood is also shown when guerrilla fighters did an ambush attack and raped the women. Dewi Ayu had to fight the guerrilla who seized her baby, although she received a cut on the arm:

They tied up some of the women in the kitchen, and the others were dragged off to the bedrooms to be raped. Their cries were even more heartbreaking than when the Japanese had turned them into whores, and even Dewi Ayu had to fight more than ever before, fending off a guerrilla who seized her baby and slashed her arm with a knife. (Tan, 2013)

3. Magic Gourd

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Magic Gourd experienced sexual exploitation and child abuse at the same time. When Violet came into view, into

Magic Gourd's life, their bond of sisterhood becomes clearer. Magic Gourd has helped Violet in all kinds of ways to survive as a courtesan, a wife, a mother and as a person. Therefore, Violet is truly grateful to Magic Gourd. In the excerpt below, Violet describes Magic Gourd not only as a sister but also a mother. Most importantly, Violet realized that Magic Gourd has been the one who gave her a constant, unchangeable love all along; Violet is Magic Gourd's purpose in life. Magic Gourd is always present in Violet's life.

She had been more than an attendant, more than a friend, more than a sister. She had been a mother to me ... And in that way, she had taken me as her purpose in life, the one who gave her meaning. I had had constant love all along. And in recognizing that, I felt moved to tears.
(Tan, 2013, p.255)

Magic Gourd is the only loyal person in Violet's life, and she cannot trust any other person besides Magic Gourd, who always faithfully accompany and protect Violet. Violet concludes, that Magic Gourd is a mother to her who gives her unconditional love. Magic Gourd responded by saying that she is not old enough as a mother, but she was still touched by Violet's words. This point reflect O'Reilly's statement that a mother is not always a biological mother, but it can be anyone who makes motherwork the core of their life (O'Reilly, 2019, pp. 13–14). This notion is shown in the excerpt below.

“You are the only loyal person in my life, the only one I can trust.”
Tears fell from her eyes. “Now you know. I was always the only one.”
“We love each other,” I said with a light laugh. “In spite of all the trouble I've given you, you stayed with me. So it must be that you loved me like a mother.”
“*Wah!* Mother? I'm not old enough to be your mother.” She was crying and laughing.
(Tan, 2013, p.256)

Even when Violet's mother met Violet finally, after years apart, Violet presented to her mother that Magic Gourd is like a mother to her. Even though Violet's biological mother is present, Violet's emotional attachment to Magic Gourd as her 'daughter' is more obvious because they went (through harrowing times together, with resilience and sisterhood) compared to her emotional attachment with her biological mother. Their resistance towards sexual exploitation and the impacts of sexual exploitation is evident in how Violet and Magic Gourd perceive each other.

Mother was free to continue with her expressions of gratitude, using the words like a true mother and mentioned the attributes of one. This unleashed the first of endless stories Magic Gourd had at the ready about the harrowing times we had shared. (Tan, 2013)

4. Alamanda

Alamanda also made use of her motherhood as resistance towards Shodancho's IPV, such as marital rape. When the news arrived, that Alamanda was pregnant, she threatens Shodancho to abort her child if he dares lay a hand on her again. Shodancho, who had waited for a long time for the baby, panicked. He immediately obeys Alamanda.

"The doctor told me that we are going to have a child. You're pregnant, darling," Shodancho continued, hoping to share his happiness.

But Alamanda surprised him by replying, "I know, and I'm going to abort it."

"Darling, don't!" Shodancho begged. "Save that child and I swear that I'll never do anything like that again."

"Okay, Shodancho," said Alamanda. "But if you ever dare to so much as lay a hand on me, I will not hesitate to kill this baby."

(Kurniawan, 2002, p. 182)

5. Rengganis

Meanwhile, Rengganis uses her motherhood to resist the consequence of IPV done by Krisan, which is child marriage. When her baby was born, Rengganis claims that the baby is the child of a dog. Eventually, she resists to marry Kinkin, and disappeared one night before her wedding. What Rengganis wants is to marry her rapist, whom she calls “the brown dog with a black snout”, or Krisan. She left a note to her parents that she left to marry a dog. Her position as a new mother gives her all the reason to do her action, thus she runs off. In other words, her resistance is shown through how she uses her pregnancy as a tool of escape.

Panic began to spread. They returned, hoping they would find her back at the house, but what they found instead was a short message written on a slip of paper: “I’ve gone to marry a dog.” (Kurniawan, 2002, pp. 296–297)

To bring this discussion of resilience, sisterhood and motherhood into the dimension of power relation and resistance, it can be analyzed that the two contesting sides are the perpetrators of sexual objectification and the female characters, which have been sexually objectified. Since Foucault’s understanding of power relation is divided into the social structure and institutions versus the individual (Mills, 2003), it can be concluded that the oppressive institution is human trafficking (where sexual exploitation and child abuse is present) and the opposing sides are those who are trafficked: Violet, Magic Gourd and Dewi Ayu. From this analysis, it can be inferred that the way power works is not imposed traditionally from top to bottom, but power also comes from below through the female characters’ resistance; power also clearly operates in the relationship between the female characters in mundane life that they can unite together to face various cases of sexual objectification.

To conclude this chapter, the essence of socialist feminism's struggle against capitalist patriarchy is evident in the novels under discussion. Although all the female characters are inflicted by all ten types of sexual objectification as explicated by John Rector (2014) (where they have been made as instruments; their autonomy and subjectivity are denied; their personhood is reduced to their body, appearance and sexual functions; they are treated as if they possess zero agency and as if they are things to be owned; they are violated emotionally and physically; and that their voice is silenced) all of this gives rise to resistance. Therefore, where there is power, there is resistance; hence, contextualizing this concept according to the novels under discussion, one may state that where there is capitalistic and patriarchal oppression, there is inevitable rebellion against sexual objectification of women. Resilience, sisterhood and motherhood are the three chain-like manifestations of the female characters' resistance as active subjects in the constellation of power-relations.

Recalling the implications of female objectification at the end of chapter 3, It can be implied that any kinds of oppression and social injustice found in the two novels boils down to the divorce of 'self' and 'other' driven by the lack of one's "human capacity to be emphatic and compassionate...to 'feel with' others as if they were deeply connected to one's own self – as if they were the child of one's womb", as Rector puts it (Rector, 2014, p. 23). In this way, the stories of the female characters' oppression and resistance provoke one to contemplate the social injustice occurring in one's everyday life. It is not only limited to cases of sexual objectification but also other cases of power struggles – be it subtle or distinct; be it inside a classroom or out there in the world.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that the female characters' resistance towards female objectification is possible through the facilities of resilience, sisterhood and motherhood as seen in the light of socialist feminism. Although female objectification is an issue occurring for a long time, resistance remains as an available choice. Thus, it is shown that interwoven patriarchal and economic oppression experienced by the female characters is 'productive' since it gives rise to new forms of behavior such as their tools of resistance.

First, female objectification is portrayed through human trafficking and intimate partner violence (IPV) in both novels. The female characters are sexually exploited and abused as a child when they experienced human trafficking. Their cause of sexual exploitation and child abuse ranges from being kidnapped, sold, and made as prisoners of war. At the same time, they were sexually objectified as women by the perpetrators through the moderate and severe modes of derivatization which almost leads to dehumanization.

Second, the female characters resist female objectification in human trafficking and intimate violence through their resilience, sisterhood and motherhood. Their resilience enables them to cope with difficult situations, to adapt and come up with tactics as shown in Alamanda's resistance towards Shodancho. Sisterhood is evident when the female characters are escaping from an abusive relationship, shown by Violet, Magic Gourd and Pomelo when flee and killed Perpetual by accident, and displayed by Rengganis' cousin to help her protest against child marriage as consequence of Krisan's fraud rape. Motherhood also

becomes the reason for all the female characters to survive, whether or not they are biological mothers. Furthermore, their ‘usage’ of motherhood as tool of resistance against female objectification also varies – some use it as their motivation to endure hardships such as Violet, Magic Gourd and Dewi Ayu; some use it to protect themselves from sexual objectification imposed upon them such as Alamanda and Rengganis, be it abortion or an escape from designated marriage. Although Foucault’s thought on the ‘natural’ co-existence of power/resistance makes the female characters’ resistance seems to appear as something expected and done outside their freedom of choice, their resistance should not be undermined in order not to support the status quo (the existing oppression). Their resistance is still a choice although it comes with a cost.

Socialist feminism has shown that the results is centrally caused by forms of sexual objectification underlined by systemic oppression of capitalism and patriarchy, since one of the main characteristics of capitalism is the drive for profit. Hence, the ruling group, which is (predominantly, not exclusively) men indirectly and directly exploits the subordinate group or workers, which is (predominantly, almost exclusively) women. The surplus of value does not always result in money but also in the form of reproduction of the male’s offspring along with satisfaction of sexual and emotional needs of the male sex. This economic and gender-based power inequality is greatly visible in the female characters’ experience of being sexually exploited, abused as a child, violated by their intimate partner and raped. Thus, this area of ‘commodified’ sexuality and procreation falls into the political domain, uprooted from the isolated private sphere into the public sphere, since the personal is political.

In conclusion, the findings of the analysis shows that sexual objectification along with capitalist patriarchal vein-like power relation have something in common: the female characters' whole personhood is stripped away as they are reduced to a sexual object. However, their act of resistance is a living proof that they have always been active subjects, a breathing human being with a body, soul, spirit and life to live like any other people. Their resistance conveys a message that humanity is deserved by everyone, regardless of their gender, race and class.

Through application of the theories of sexual objectification, Foucault's comprehension of power and resistance, and socialist feminism as the umbrella approach, the results of analysis can be mapped out quite comprehensively (although it offers complex interplay between elements of power and resistance) and opens the way for a further relevant discussion of sexual objectification in the world today.

Thus, this thesis illustrates the mechanisms of the oppressive institutions of female objectification and its individual resistance, yet also put forward the question of other impacts which gender-based and economic-based objectification cause in other types of human exploitation. To better comprehend the implications of these results, future studies can address cases of male objectification, child objectification, or even young adult objectification occurring in different parts of the world and aspects of life. This can be done through a comparison of literary works from several countries while relating it with specific data and statistics of the issue today.

To emphasize this thesis' contributions, this thesis has unraveled how the female characters in *The Valley of Amazement* and *Beauty Is a Wound* are sexually

objectified, and how they resist female objectification. This thesis has also addressed a gap in the wealth of studies mentioned in the literature review revolving around *The Valley* and *Beauty*; while other related studies have discussed how the figures of Violet and Dewi Ayu are shaped through their identity and resistance, this thesis have discussed the sexual objectification experienced by Violet, Dewi Ayu, Magic Gourd, Alamanda, Pomelo and Rengganis (which, in some ways, form their identity as women oppressed by capitalist patriarchy) and their resistance through resilience, sisterhood and motherhood. Even though both novels have different historical background with different time period, it can be concluded that the issue of female objectification have existed for a long time and requires a massive, systemic change to end women's oppression – where socialist feminism believes that the solution is to entirely end capitalism and patriarchy. Although Foucault states that no one can escape from power and that resistance appear to be futile because the oppressed seems to be devoid of choice except to fight back, this thesis offers the idea that resistance remains an open, narrow road bound towards a long journey of freedom for those who refuse to surrender.

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