

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays gender discrimination still occurs in Indonesia, and it has become a serious problem in our society. One kind of gender discrimination is Sexual Objectification in which women become the main target of sexual objectification. Sexual objectification to women, for example, takes place in many areas of life, including the media. There are so many advertisements that appear in TV, magazines, videos or movies that star sexy girls as their models. The advertisement accentuates their products by showing women's body. In this case, a woman can be seen as sexual objects. Sexual objectification occurs when people do not respect other people equally for example, some opinions that assume if men have a higher position than women. Some men might treat women as sexual objects and make them as sexual pleasure.

The issue of sexual objectification is not only found in advertisement, movies, internet or magazines, but also found in literary works such as novels, poetry, short stories, and etc. Sexual objectification can take on the forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, and pornography. One kind of sexual objectification that often happens today is rape. Rape, for example, is one form of sexual objectification. The data from Kalyanamitra shows if in Indonesia, every 5 hours there is one rape case

(Sulistyaningsih & Faturochman, 2002, p. 2). It means that rape is a very serious kind of sexual objectification in this country. Sexual objectification happens when women's bodies are viewed primarily as the physical object of male's sexual desire (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011, pp. 6-8). The sexual objectification became a main issue in 1960's-1980 along with the emergence of the second wave feminism. The Second wave feminism is the period of feminist activity and the movement that first began in the early 1960's-1980 in the US, and eventually spread throughout the western world and beyond. The range of issues in second wave feminism is sexuality, family, the workplace, de facto inequalities, official inequalities and reproductive right (Bisignani, 2015).

There are some previous studies about sexual objectification. The first article talks about "The Sexual Objectification of Women in Advertising: A Contemporary Cultural Perspective" written by Amanda Zimmerman and John Dahlberg. This article discusses how women become sexual objects, especially in advertising, especially in this era. The article discusses the effects of women's attitude toward the perspective of feminism. The women perspective changes, especially about fashion. According to this article, women who star in the advertisement can affect sex and sexual behavior. As the portrayal of women as sex objects in advertisement became more common, young, educated women were less offended. The result of the article said that young and educated women now casually accept the sexual objectification of their gender (Zimmerman & Dahlberg, 2008, pp. 71-78). The second article talk about sexual objectification is "Objectification Theory, Self-Objectification, and

Body Image”. It is written by Calogero in 2012. Based on this article, objectification of women happened when it comes to negative consequences for women’s body image. Sexual objectification includes gazing or leering at women’s bodies, sexual comments about women’s bodies, whistling or horn at a female, taking photographs of women’s bodies and body parts with a cell phone, pornography, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape. From this article, there are some mental and negative health consequences because of both sexual objectification and self-objectification such as “body shame, appearance anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and sexual dysfunction” (Calogero, 2012, pp. 574–580)

This research focuses on the sexual objectifications issue. The object of this study is *Potions and Paper Cranes*, a novel written by Lan Fang. This novel brings the issues of sexual objectification. This novel mesmerizing prologue opens in 2003 in Surabaya, Indonesia. Afterward, the timeline slips to the 1940s during World War II, describing life on the island under Dutch, and later Japanese, occupation. The setting of the novel is the Japanese colonial era in Indonesia. The Japanese occupation was more like another colonial period than a period of war. Some Indonesian women and a few Dutch women became sex slaves. Generalizing about Indonesia during the 1942–1945 occupation periods are extraordinarily difficult, not only because of varying policies and conditions in the separate administrative divisions, but also because circumstances changed rapidly over time, particularly as the war turned against Japan, and because Indonesians’ experience varied widely

according to, among other things, their social status and economic position (Hays, 2015).

The novel presents three women characters. They are Sulis, a young woman who sells herbal potions in Surabaya's harbor; Matsumi, a geisha brought to Java by Japanese general; and Lestari who is Sujono and Matsumi's daughter. The women characters in this novel experience physical, emotional, and sexual violence. Sulis has experienced rape before she got married to Sujono. Even after she was married, she experienced marital rape. Matsumi has experienced becoming a prostitute and sexual pleasure for Sujono. The other women characters are Lestari who become the rape victim when she was young by her stepbrother.

The writer is interested in analyzing the *Potions and Paper Cranes* novel because the topic contains Sexual Objectifications that is relevant to her as a woman. This novel showed that in the colonialism era, women did not have the same right like men and they exploited to become the sexual pleasure for men. On the other hand, this novel was interesting because each character in this novel had the right to speak about their life experiences. Even though the characters in the novel told the reader about their own story, but the story of each chapter in the novel are still connected to each other. *Potions and Paper Cranes* novel contains several topics such as history, gender discrimination, sexual objectification, and love.

In this thesis, the writer used Second Wave Feminism theory. The theory drew attention to domestic violence, marital rape, establishment of rape crisis and battered women's shelters (Bisignani, 2015). Because Sexual Objectification that contained in

Second Wave Feminism, this research focused on the three women characters, namely, Sulis, Matsumi and Lestari who experienced prostitution, rape and marital rape in the novel.

## **1.2 Field of the Study**

The field of this study is Literature, especially analyzing a prose work, that is, a novel seen from a feminist point of view.

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

In analyzing *Potions and Paper Cranes* novel, the study is limited to a discussion on the sexual objectifications experienced by three (3) female characters, the impacts of the objectifications, and how the characters deal with those objectifications.

## **1.4 Research Question**

1. What are the forms of Sexual Objectifications experienced by the main female characters?
2. What are the impacts of Sexual Objectifications to the main female characters?
3. How do they deal with their objectifications?

## **1.5 Objective of the Study**

1. To describe the forms of sexual objectifications experienced by the main female characters.
2. To analyze the impacts of Sexual Objectifications to the main female characters
3. To analyze how they deal with their Sexual Objectifications

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to gain more knowledge about feminism especially sexual objectification based on *Potions and Paper Cranes* novel. This study analyzed the action and behavior of the women character that becomes the victim of sexual objectification. This study is expected to make the reader understand more what sexual objectification is, the forms of sexual objectification and the effect of being victims of sexual objectification. Further, the reader will know more about how women treat as sexual objectification and how to prevent become the victim of sexual objectification.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

### 1. Sexual Objectification

Sexual objectification is the reduction of a woman's body to its parts or functions, including the misperception that those parts or functions are capable of representing the woman as a whole (Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005, pp. 420-421).

### 2. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any action occurring within the workplace whereby women are treated as objects of the male sexual prerogative (Tredeau & LaFontaine, 1986, p. 20)