WOMAN AS SEXUAL COMMODITY REFLECTED IN

THE WHISTLEBLOWER FILM

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ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
LETTERS AND HUMANITIES FACULTY
ISLAMIC STATE UNIVERSITY SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH
JAKARTA
2015
WOMAN AS SEXUAL COMMODITY REFLECTED IN

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A Thesis
Submitted to Adab Letters and Humanities Faculty
in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of Strata One

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ABSTRACT

Sheila Khalida Wildanum, NIM: 1110026000026, *Woman as Sexual Commodity Reflected in The Whistleblower Film*. Thesis: English Letters Department, Letters and Humanities Faculty of Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University, Jakarta. 2015.

*The Whistleblower* (2010) film directed by Larysa Kondracki is the unit analysis of this research. The study in this research concerns with the female character named Raya Kochan as the victim of sex trafficking. The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. And all data are collected from the script dialogues and the pictures of the film. This research is supported with the concept by Rosmarie Putnam Tong about marxist feminism.

Result shows that position of Raya as a woman in patriarchal culture become subordinate and she get inappropriate treatment such as marginalization, sexual harrasment and violence which lead her to be trapped in sex trafficking. Finally, Raya herself become sexual commodity. It is not only influenced by the political structure, social and economy but also the system of capitalism.

**Keywords:** sexual commodity, sex trafficking, marxist feminism
APPROVAL SHEET

WOMAN AS SEXUAL COMMODITY REFLECTED IN
THE WHISTLEBLOWER FILM

A Thesis
Submitted to Faculty of Adab and Humanities in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for The Degree of Strata One (S1)

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2016
LEGALIZATION

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The thesis entitled above has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on March 30th 2016. It has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, March 30th 2016

Examination Committee

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, March 2016

Sheila Khalida Wildanum
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This paper is presented to English Letters Department of Letters and Humanities faculty UIN of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as partial fulfillment of the requirement for strata one degree. The writer would like to express the highest gratitude to her beloved mother and father; Dra. Marchalena and Marsoli M, who provide her all the contribution that she need during the study, hope and motivation. The writer also want to thank her brother Raynond for always being a good role model for the writer. Most of all, she dedicated this thesis for her beloved grandmother, Siti Chadijah who give her endless love and prayers.

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Jakarta, February 2014

The Writer
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A.  Background of the Study

In a patriarchal culture, men always be a powerful and dominant over women. Women often get marginalization, subordination, stereotype and violation from men. Moreover, men can turn women become sexual commodities because women have their sexuality as their labor product. And it violates women right because it harms women both physically and psychologically.

In some case, women used as sexual commodities. For example in sex trafficking case, the traffickers treat trafficked women’s sexuality as sexual commodities which can be sold and bought. By forcing them to do sexual service to pay their debt in order to get freedom, but it is just a false promise from trafficker. Millions of women worldwide live and suffer in slave-like situations and women make up two thirds of the world's human trafficking victims.

One of the films which presents women as sexual commodity is The Whistleblower by Larysa Kondracki. This is a thriller film which was released in 2010 and based on true story of Kathryn Bolkovac as a peacekeeper in the United Nations in post-war Bosnia. This film depicts her experience in finding the sex

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trafficking ring which utilized by bad UN officers itself\(^3\). However the year of 1999 shows in the beginning of the film, means this film wants to describe the past event of the real story of the film.

According to the year which shown in this film, Bosnia at that time is the country which still has unstable situation both in socio-economic and political after Bosnian War. Bosnian war itself caused by inter-ethnics war between Bosnian muslims, Croats, and Serbs. Related to sexual violence and sex trafficking, firstly each ethnic uses this system under orders in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing\(^4\). Then this system turns into sex trafficking which earn a enormous profits for people in power who utilize it. Women who become victims of sex trafficking treated as sexual commodities. When the demand of women for sex is not enough to filled by local women, the traffickers and bad UN officer start to seek for other women in other country. This recruitment happens in many bad ways such as abduct, fraud, and illegal immigration. Finally, it leads sex trafficking to grow rapidly.

This film tells us about Raya Kochan who wishes to have better life than in Kyiv, Ukraine. Suggested by her friend Luba, they both join the service of illegal labor which offered by Roman (Raya’s uncle). He promised them to have a work at five-star overseas hotel with high salaries in Budapest, Hungary. But unfortunately, this is just a false promise which made them fell into large-scale sex trafficking in Bosnia which utilized by many corrupt internal personnel of


\(^4\) Inger Skjelsbaek. Victim and Survivor: Narrated Social Identities of Women Who Experienced Rape During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Berkeley: University of California, 2003) p. 2
United Nation or UN. Corrupt internal personnel of UN is bad UN officer who rather misusing the policy in order to organize sex trafficking to gain enormous profit than defending human right, hereinafter referred as bad UN officer.

Sex trafficking turn Raya become sexual commodity because traffickers treat her sexuality as commodity that can be traded. They forced her to provide sexual services until the debt has paid off. The traffickers promise will release her after the debt has paid off but it is just a lie. In other events, Raya and Irka (one of the trafficked women) meet Kathryn Bolkovac (the good police officer of UN) after they escaped from the raid at the Florida Bar which is the one of the places that sex trafficking happened.

Instead of being prostitute as only for a job, Raya should face the sexual violence as sex slave. The traffickers and costumers of the bar allow to do any kind of sexual abused even sexual violence to her. As commodity, Raya’s value as human being is reduced by value of the market. So The traffickers and costumers can do whatever they want as long as Raya can be use to sexual purpose. It shown in the film when she depicts of having many scars and the nurses at Zenica shelter found the object (coins) in her womb.

After that, Raya stay in Zenica shelter (a shelter for sex trafficking victims) as Kathryn tries to protect her, investigate and solve her case. Instead of going back and seeing her mother again, Raya is suddenly taken back by traffickers when she is close to repatriation to her country.

Raya should face the sexual violence as punishment which given by the traffickers for running away. They don not respect her as human because they
make Raya having an alienation from human being to a commodity of sexual purpose. This sexual violence is dehumanizing her as a person. Then the traffickers move her into another bar to clear up the trace. When Kathryn comes to the bar to save Raya, Kathryn asks her to walk out from the bar and promise that she will get her own freedom. Nonetheless, group of bad UN officer are suddenly coming to the bar and standing behind Kathryn. These bad UN officers come to prevent Kathryn to save Raya. One of them shake his head to Raya and cueing her to ignore the Kathy’s offer. Raya really wants to escape from the bar but she becomes too afraid to get punishment again if she disobey bad UN officer’s order. Because of that, forcefully, she is crying and reject Kathryn’s offer. In here, the traffickers taking control over their commodity which is Raya by make her obey because of fear. Then Raya should face a death penality in order to solve the trafficker’s problem. The trafficker shoot her in the head and her body is found in the forest on the other day.

This film describes how Raya turn into sexual commodity that can be traded by trafficker to the costumer. Marxist feminism view capitalism as a system of exploitative power relations. Raya also has alienated from herself, her sexuality as her labor product, and human beings because her labor is uncompesated. Raya position as trafficked woman and her experiences in sex trafficking are the examples of oppresison from political, social, and economy as explained in Marxist feminism view.

This research wants to show how Raya Kochan as victim of the sex trafficking gets oppression from system of capitalism and become sexual
commodity. Because in capitalism, woman's body was treated like an item that can be trade thus her sexuality becomes a commodity.\(^5\)

**B. Focus of the Research**

Based on the background study above, the research focuses only on the main character named Raya Kochan which reflected as sexual commodity in *The Whistleblower* film directed by Larysa Kondracki through Marxist feminism.

**C. Research Question**

From the background study and the focus of the study above, the research would like to propose the statments of the problem as:

1. How does the woman in the patriarchal culture become sexual commodity reflected in *The Whistleblower* film viewed from Marxist feminism theory?

**D. Significance of the Research**

Generally, this research is expected to be able give more information about Marxist feminism approaches on literary works. Furthermore, this research is expected to give early data contribution for similar following research and also can enlarge knowledge about sex trafficking issue which still remains a concern until now.

By analyzing this movie, the researcher hopes that the result of the research would be beneficial for the reader who interested to understand film through context in film studies and can be used for English Department, Faculty

of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as one of the references in studying film.

E. **Research Methodology**

Basically, methodology is a set of principles which is the underlying of how the research be done. The methodology of this research such as:

1. **The Method of Research**

   In this research, the writer uses qualitative method with descriptive-analysis as the result of the research. This method prioritizing the depth of appreciation in the interaction between the concepts which being studied empirically.

2. **The Objective of the Research**

   The purpose of this research is to analyze how the Marxist feminism value showed by Raya Kochan through her experience as sexual commodity in the *The Whistleblower* film, which leads to gain the value of Marxist feminism through occured events toward Raya Kochan which are shown in the film.

3. **The Technique of Data Analysis**

   The data is gathered from several sources; such as film, books, articles, journal, and any informations from the internet. The collect data will be analyzed with theory of film context in Marxist feminism approaches to reveal the types of oppression toward women which influenced Raya in *The Whistleblower* film.

4. **The Instrument of the Research**

The study uses the writer herself as the main instrument to obtain qualitative data about marxist feminism value of sexual commodity in the film. In a way to watch movie repeatedly, identify, and provide notes that can give more information about it.

5. The Unit Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is *The Whistleblower* directed by Larysa Kondracki and written by Larysa Kondracki and Eilis Kriwan. *The Whistleblower* is starred by Roxana Condurache as Raya Kochan, Rachel Weiz and Rayisa Kondracki. This film distributed by Samuel Goldwyn Films on September 13th, 2010 and filming location is Romania. This film won three awards including the 2010 Whistler Film Festival, Palm Springs International Film Festival 2011, and the Seattle International Film Festival 2011. As well as being nominated in the Cinema for Peace Awards 2011 and the Genie Awards 2012.

F. Time and Place of the Research

This research was conducted in 2015, begin at March 31st. In the library of English and Letters Department, Faculty Adab and Humanities, in the library of State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and other libraries that can support reference materials which are needed by the writer.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Previous Research

*The Whistleblower* film had been analyzed by other researchers. The writer found the other researchers who analyze *The Whistleblower* film by using other theory in Brawijaya University site\(^7\), Muhammadiyah Surakarta University\(^8\), and Binus University\(^9\). The researchers used feminist approach to reveal the women struggle, women’s right and role and also sexual objectification of main character Kathryn Bolkovac which appears in the film. They used descriptive analysis method to reveal their findings. The researchers also explained how the main character Kathryn Bolkovac struggles to investigate and reveals human trafficking crime in Bosnia. From the brief explanations above, the writer wants to make this research different and more detail than the previous research. The previous research analyzed Kathryn Bolkovac as the main character who struggles to investigate and reveals the crime in many view, the writer here analyzes Raya Kochan as victim of human trafficking through Marxist feminist approaches in

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order to give something different to the readers. In other words, the writer uses other view and theory to give to the readers that this film can be analyzed through some approaches. This research also can be considered as a reference for next researchers.

B. Sex Trafficking

1. The Definition of Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking defined by United Nation as the recruitment, receipt, enticement, harboring, obtaining, providing, transferring or transportation of a person by means of threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sex trafficking is the most common form of human trafficking detected by national authorities. Human trafficking itself is an example of violence against women which is one manifestation of gender discrimination. It can victimize anyone, adults and children, men and women which generally are in vulnerable circumstances, usually most in cases refers to the trafficking of children and women.

2. Sex Trafficking Issues

After understanding the definition of sex trafficking, it is also important to learn more about sex trafficking related issue because it is still a growing global problem and the activities are undetected or unreported. Millions of women worldwide live and suffer in slave-like situations. Sex trafficking as one of the

human trafficking which is a form of modern slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others, and women make up two thirds of the world's human trafficking victims\textsuperscript{11}.

Related to the film which has concern with the victim of sex trafficking in Bosnia, where Raya has trapped in sex trafficking. Nikolic-Ristanovic explains that sex trafficking firstly emerged after cold war in Balkans (historical and geographical names which used to describe Southeastern Europe where Bosnia is also part of it) while it used as transition city. \textsuperscript{12} During the ethnic conflicts, sex trafficking is strongly connected to war rapes and forced prostitution, because the methods which used is bringing women into rape camps and brothels. News about it appeared early in December 1993 in the article "Shame in Bosnia," written by British journalist Roy Gutman and was published in Newsday. \textsuperscript{13} He reported about Muslim women were forced into prostitution and held in Sexual slavery by Serbs at one brothel in sarajevo. While Muslim women enslaved by Serb soldiers for sexual exploitation, abductions of Serbian women who were held in Sexual slavery in brothels run by Croats in Croatia. United Nation troops are also participating in raping Muslim and Croatian women taken from Serb-run rape or death camps. It reported that the United Nation presence has apparently increased


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
the trafficking in women and girls through the opening of brothels, brothel-massage parlors, peep shows, and the local production of pornographic films.

As British feminist researcher Liz Kelly points out of Bosnia, one of the most common routes into the sex industry is rape, which makes women "unmarriageable." Within male-female relationships, rape corresponds to the behavior of conquering troops toward occupied territories. As a consequence, raped women bear the message that "their" men were not able to protect them as well as that they are worthless as "property." Consequently, armed conflict makes survival of raped women even more precarious. Then in the post-war period, the demand for sex work further increased with the arrival of peacekeeping troops and the private military companies that accompanied them, and with the presence of large numbers of international organizations. This demand for sex workers cannot be met by local women, trafficking of foreign women from poor countries supplements the supply. Finally, Sex trafficking grows and spreads out to another poor country which is nearby to further. This is the reason why sex trafficking issue is still grow and continued until now.

3. Identification of Sex Trafficking

Basically, sex trafficking cannot be separated from the demand for victim of sex trafficking itself, because it is a continuous criminal activity committed by those who are seeking profit from selling human beings for sex purpose.

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According to Donna M. Hughes, the elements which contribute to the demand for the purchase of human beings for sexual exploitation\textsuperscript{15}, such as:

a) The men as the costumer of sex trafficking.

The men who purchase the trafficked women from sex trafficking are usually without any identities. They can use the women for entertainment, sexual gratification, and acts of violence. Actually, men who purchase sex trafficking women are more likely to have more sexual partners than the men in lonely. They are searching for more sex acts that their wives will not do and they can have sex without relationship responsibilities. In other words, the men who purchase sex acts do not want to respect women and they can humiliate, degrade, and hurt the trafficked woman or child, if they want.

b) The exploiters who make up the sex industry.

They are including traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners make-up what is known as the sex industry. They operate the business of sexual exploitation because make money from the sale of sex as a commodity.

c) The nations that are destination countries.

In destination countries, strategies are often devised to protect the sex industries that generate millions, even billions, of dollars per year for the economy. Nations become contributing passively to sex trafficking by tolerating or legalizing prostitution. Because through the normalization of prostitution, they use power and influence to shape laws and policies that maintain the flow of women to their sex industries. Then when prostitution is

\textsuperscript{15} Donna M. Hughes, \textit{The Demand for Victims of Sex trafficking} (United Stated: University of Rhode Island, 2005) p. 7-8
legal, governments expect to collect tax revenue. The more nations regulate prostitution and derive tax revenue from it, the more actively they become part of sex trafficking. Nevertheless, the officials in the destination countries itself do not want to admit responsibility for the problem of sex trafficking.

d) The culture that tolerates or promotes sexual exploitation.

As a particular mass media, the culture is playing a large role in normalizing prostitution by portraying prostitution as glamorous, empowering, or a fast, easy way to make money. The growth and expansion of the sex industry is closely intertwined with new technologies such as internet and other types of new information and communications technologies. When they use it to transmit the live images around the world, sex industry sites on the internet become popular and highly profitable. It can increase the number of pornographers who wants to traveling to poor countries, where they can abuse and exploit women and children with fewer risks. Although trafficking for prostitution is widely recognized, trafficking of women and children for the production of pornography receives less attention.

According to some estimates, approximately 79% of trafficking involves sexual exploitation, and 19% involves labour exploitation. This percentage was caused by the highly demand for victim of Sex trafficking. This demand was also be the main causes for the occurrence of sex trafficking. Furthermore to

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investigate the process of sex trafficking, there are several identified common patterns for recruiting victims into sex trafficking\textsuperscript{17}, such as:

1. A promise of a good job in another country
2. A false marriage proposal turned into a bondage situation
3. Being sold into the sex industry by parents, husbands or boyfriends
4. Being kidnapped by traffickers.

Recruiters or the traffickers are often very familiar persons to the victims, such as neighbor, friend, a friend of a friend, boyfriend, acquaintance, and family friend. In the other hand, the victims face many challenges in accessing help. They may not speak English. They may not know where they are, because they have been moved frequently. They are often not allowed to communicate with family or friends. And they may have trouble trusting others, due to their trafficker’s manipulation and control tactics.

4. Purpose of Sex Trafficking

As described above, the purpose of sex trafficking is sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation and sexual violence are umbrella term means an act which contain a variety of harmful and sexually abusive behaviours such as all forms of sexual abuse, sexual assault and enslavement.\textsuperscript{18} Enslavement or commonly known as sexual slavery means a limitation of one's freedom of movement and power to


\textsuperscript{18} Stephanie Delaney, Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation & Sexual Violence in Disaster & Emergency Situation (Bangkok: ECPAT International, 2006) p. 8
decide matters relating to one's sexual activity.\textsuperscript{19} In contrast to the crime of rape, which is a completed offence, sexual slavery constitutes a continuing offence. Forms of sexual slavery for example; be practices for the detention of women in "rape camps" or "comfort stations", and forced in "temporary marriages" with soldiers. Another manifestation of sexual exploitation, such as; brothels, mail order brides, sex tourism, pornography, prostitution, stripping, lap dancing, and phone sex companies.

C. Sex Trafficking in Marxist Feminism

In analyzing the sex trafficking issue in this film, the writer uses the approach of Marxist feminism. Especially to understand women as comodities in the problems of women. According to Muhammad Farkhan in his book titled \textit{Proposal Penelitian Bahasa dan Sastra}, Feminist theory as literary studies can be directed towards a review of the problems which are still discriminative. In this case, literary studies can explore the forms of injustice, either emerged by women or men, such as the making of unfair regulations, or the behavior which is degrading to women.\textsuperscript{20}

1. Etymology and Definition of Feminism

Etymologically, feminism is from the Latin word \textit{femina} which means having a sense of femininity.\textsuperscript{21} According to Oxford Dictionary, feminism

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Muhammad Farkhan, \textit{Proposal Penelitian Bahasa dan Sastra} (Jakarta: Cella, 2007) p. 48
\item \textsuperscript{21} Dadang. S. Anshori, \textit{Membincangkan Feminisme: Refleksi Muslimah atas Peran Sosial Kaum Wania} (Jakarta; Pustaka Hidayah, 1997) p. 19
\end{enumerate}
definition is a belief in the principle that women should have the same right as men. In United States, organized women's movement firstly appeared in convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, proclaimed another version of United States declaration of independence from “all men are created equal” should be read as “all men and women are created equal”.

The history of early feminist movements is divided into three waves. The first wave comprised women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, promoting women's right to vote. Because suffagists chose to believe that simply by gaining the vote, women had indeed become men’s equals.

The second wave campaigned for legal and social equality for women which began in the mid-1960s. Along with the publication of the book titled *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan which make United Stated society aware of gender inequality.

The third wave is a continuation of and a reaction to the perceived failures of second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1990s.

According to Soenarjati Djajanegara the main purpose of feminism is improving women's position and status in order to have equality with the position and status of men. Feminism is not women movement which intend to dominate men, but intend to have same position and right as men despite of they are very different with men in biologically.

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separated from the gender inequality issue. Gender itself is the behavior and identity which are considered according between women and men (femininity and masculinity), formed socially and culturally.\textsuperscript{28} Difference of gender become a problem if there is gender inequality inside it. Woman is an object which always receive the gender inequality. Because gender commonly uses as the basic system to diver the position between men and women by patriarchal society. Feminism is a response againsts the gender inequality which defense woman right from marginalization, subordination, stereotype, and violence toward woman. According to Mansour Faqih in \textit{Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer} Book\textsuperscript{29}, the causes of gender inequality are:

1) Marginalization of women in every aspect of life (family, job, society).

2) Subordination as impact of assumption which women are too irrational and emotional to make an important decision.

3) Stereotype which is prejudice to women. For example; women always blamed for sexual harrassment case because women’s primp considered as provoke men to do sexual crime.

4) Violence againts women, means all kind of violence toward woman both in physically and psychologically because of assumption that woman is weaker than man, then man can hit woman freely. The example of violence againts women, such as: a) Domestic Violence; b) Rape (marital rape or normal rape); c) Stonig and Honor Killings; d) Selective abortion;

\textsuperscript{28} Tong, \textit{Op.Cit.}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. p. 72
e) Female Genital Mutilation or FGM; f) Forced Marriages mostly Child Marriages; g) Forced Pregnancies; h) Human Trafficking and Sex slavery.

5) Job segregation by sex, domestication of women in jobs as a result of the assumption that women only fit for domestic job.

This film tells about how sex trafficking exploit woman’s sexuality as commodities which is available to be traded and the war is the basic causes of sex trafficking. As Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic stated in his journal titled “Sex trafficking: The Impact of War, Militarism and Globalization in Eastern Europe”\(^\text{30}\). There are several issues emerged to the society through war, such as; unemployment, poverty and lack of prospects. This condition will cause the social changes. One of the main consequences of social changes is the sharpening of social differentiation between a small part of very rich and a large part of poor people. It has important consequences in the creation of differentiation between gender role in earning an income.

Women are always 'being second class' compared with the opposite sex, male. Basically when families and households under patriarchy, the women's activity inside the house such as washing, cooking and nursing a baby considered as unproductive activity rather than men’s activity which always considered as productive because it get wages.\(^\text{31}\) Therefore women still considered as people who do not give much contribution in materially, but men always considered a strong people who can give much contribution in materially. Women become the underdog because of the economic situation and demands. Then women become


subordinate from men because of a material base. This phenomenon also influenced by the structure of the society which is patriarchal, because patriarchy is a political system ruled by men which women have subordinated from social and political status. Due to economic problems, women should find a job to get a better life. It make desperate women become easily vulnerable to false promises and deception of sex trafficking which disguise as women’s migration recruitment.

As described above, the purpose of sex trafficking is sexual exploitation. Woman who has trapped in the sex trafficking will have debt bondage by the traffickers. Which forces her to sell her body for sexual act such as prostitution in order to pay her debt to the traffickers. In prostitution, women has similar situation with workers who "sell" themselves to others and then be rewarded. Woman becomes alienated in this case. She did the work for the sake of others, then she would alienate herself from her job. In capitalism, woman's sexuality becomes a commodity, her body is treated like an "item" that can be traded. If woman becomes a commodity then she is no longer considered as a subject but becomes an object. According to Ann Foreman, if the alienation toward women becomes too disturbing, the women would consider herself not as a person but as "the other".

Women become oppressed because of the unbalanced political structure from after-war affected, a patriarchal society and they do not have the instruments of production that can be used to make money to their economic

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34 Ibid., p. 147
problems. As a result, women neither have the power in the family, in the community, nor in the country.

2. Marxist Feminism

From all feminist theory, one of the most suitable theory to analyze this film is the theory of Marxist feminism. Marxist feminism is a branch of a feminism focused on the oppression toward women is not the result of deliberate actions of one individual, but rather a product of the political structure, social, and economic where the individual lives. It appeared in 19th century within first wave feminist on economic aspect, which comes up from the doctrine of Karl Marx about human consciousness is determined by the material and social life. As Richard Schmit emphasized in his paper titled Introduction to Marx and Engels, the statement “Human beings create themselves” is should be read as “Men and women, through production collectively, create a society that, in turn, shapes them”, and not to be read as “Men and women, as individuals, make themselves what they are”.

Marxist feminism views capitalism as a system of exploitative power relations. Capitalism is viewed as a system of exchange relations, it is described as a commodity or market society in which everything, including one’s own labor power, has a price which can be sold and bought. In capitalism, employers can exploit workers by giving underpaid and have a monopoly on the means of production. But when the workers have no value which can be traded, in case of women condition such as poor, illiterate, and unskilled women, they will choose

35 Ibid., p. 139
36 Ibid., p. 140
37 Ibid., p. 141
to sell her sexual or reproductive services. However, one’s leverage in the market place is quite limited if one has no value to sell besides one’s body.

In Marxist feminism, the oppression toward women basically formed by many factor, one of them is alienation. In Marxist, Allen Wood suggested “we are alienated if we either experience our lives as meaningless or ourselveworthless” and according to Heilbroner, this sense of fragmentation and meaninglessness is particularly strong under capitalism.\(^38\) Human existence loses its unity and wholeness in four ways, such as; first, workers are alienated from the product of their labor. Because they are not able to determining when, where, how, and to whom these commodities will be sold. Second, workers are alienated from themselves when work is experienced as something unpleasant. When the potential source of workers’ humanization becomes the actual source of their dehumanization, workers may undergo a major psychological crisis. Third, workers are alienated from other human beings because the structure of the capitalist economy encourages and even forces workers to see each other as competitors for jobs and promotions. The last, fourth, workers are alienated from nature because the kind of work they do and the conditions under which they do it make them see nature as an obstacle to their survival. This alienation can affect women more than men and if the alienation toward women become too disturbing, the women would consider herself not as a person but as "the other".

\(^{38}\) *Ibid.*, p. 146-147
According to Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, it showed how changes in the material conditions of people affect the organization of their family relations. Male dominance, in the forms of patrilineage and patriarchy, is simplified as the result of the class division between the men who have ownership and the women who do not have ownership. Women becomes not having ownership because rather than men activity which always considered as productive, the women's activity inside the house becomes unproductive because it could not get wages. thus men become dominant over his economic power, within the family which men are the bourgeoisie and women represent the proletariat.

As things which happen to the workers, inequality of wealth is the cause of prostitution. Women are very likely to sell her body to fulfil their needs because they are not have marketable skills and access to get the real job with decent wages. Prostitution as one product of sex trafficking also appear in Marxist feminism. In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript*, Marx argues that the prostitution is a specific expression of the common prostitution of the workers and it is a relationship which involved not only the prostitute and pimp but also the capitalist.

The further understanding about Marxist views over prostitution are; first, prostitution is a class phenomenon because prostitution is similar with other job which provides a salary. Same as a worker, the reason for woman selling her body is the economic situation where she cannot do the work or working below

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39 Ibid., p. 150-152
40 Ibid., p. 265
41 Ibid., p. 172
capacity. Second, this view shows the alienation which experienced by prostitute. Prostitution, either as wife or prostitute, alienated herself from her job because of her job is done not for herself but for others.

Similar with workers who alienated from their job, from themselves and from their humanity itself, wife-prostitute and prostitute became dehumanized and their value as human beings is reduced by the value of the market. This concept is more distrub for prostitute, because what would sold is the most closest to her such as; her body and her sexuality. Woman's sexuality becomes a commodity, her body was treated like an "item" that can be traded in capitalism. Therefore, fight against capitalism also means fight against prostitution.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, the writer will explain how the woman in patriarchal culture used as a sexual commodity. Raya Kochan as female character experienced sexual harassment, violence and her body also is being traded by the trafficker in this film. Nevertheless as subordinate woman, Raya could not resist the enslavement and inhumanity which is happened to her.

A. Woman as sexual commodity

In Marxist feminism, this movie shows that the persons who suppress trafficked women mostly are men as the traffickers, costumers, and even the bad UN officers who are also the mastermind of sex trafficking. Men are the employers who can sell women’s body. Men are also the bourgeois who can buy the women’s sexuality. On the other hand, women are workers who provide their sexuality as labor power and their body as commodities. Marxist feminism depicted women as the proletariat because they have to struggle from economic pressure which are similar with workers⁴². They become dehumanized because their values as human beings are reduced by the values of the market. They had experienced alienation from bourgeois through capitalism. In capitalism, woman’s sexuality becomes a commodity, her body is treated like an item that can be traded. The nation takes role as capitalism because the bad UN officers as nation

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⁴² Ibid., p. 152
representatives just became mastermind of the sex trafficking instead of saving the trafficked women.

*Raya*: I have to get home. Mama's gonna kill me.

*Luba*: No. You are staying with me tonight. Roman wants us there at nine in the morning. Raya we've been over this. It's just a few months working in a hotel.

*Raya*: Yes, but...

*Luba*: You want to work at Copyshack like your mother? He said it was both of us or nothing!

*Raya*: No.

*Luba*: Fuck your mom! (00:01:14 - 00:01:58)

The film begins the hangout place where many teenagers have fun together, drink a beer and hear a loud music. Raya wants to go home because it is late but Luba hold her hand and convince her to stay. Because tomorrow they want to meet Roman, Raya’s uncle, to apply working few months in overseas hotel. Luba even satirize about her mother’s job in copyshack.

This intimidation firstly came from Luba as her friend who intend to says that Raya has a chance to work overseas and she should not get the job in copyshack as same as her mother. Luba wants to tell Raya that she can get better job which providing more profit in order to get better life. As described above in Marxist feminism, in capitalism, inequality of wealth is one reason for women to get work and then they can fulfill their need with their income. Women become suppressed because of economical problem. Since women should compete with others to get job which have better salary. Women become alienated from human beings because the structure of capitalist economy encourages and even forces the
workers to see each other as competitor for jobs and promotions. The better
salary which is offered by the company will affect the prosperity of the women
who work in it. Thus women will be easily lured by high-paying jobs due to
economic pressure. Even though it is just a trap of sex trafficking.

Roman : What will you say at border?
Raya : I am Natalya...
Luba : I am Natalya Verbova. I am going to Budapest to buy
carpets for reselling.

(00:03:22 - 00:03:36)

Raya becomes upset and refuses it, leaves Luba and goes home. Yet when
she just gets home, her mother scolds her about coming home so late. Which
makes her run away from home and comes back to Luba. In the next day at
Roman place with Luba, Roman asks Raya to lie in the border area. She should
wear a fake name and introduce herself not as Raya but as a girl named Natalya
Verbova. Also she should say that she is coming to budapest not for working at
hotel but just to buy a rug and resell it. Then Roman takes a picture of Raya for
her passport. Roman as Raya’s uncle acts as the recruiter who trick Raya by
offering her a good opportunity to work in overseas hotel. He even shows her a
brochure to convince her about the hotel profile. Raya does not know that her
uncle wants to smuggle her into another country and makes her become illegal
immigrant by telling a lie about her identity and her purpose for crossing border.

In causes of sex trafficking, the recruiters or the traffickers are often very
familiar persons to the victims of sex trafficking. Mostly, the victims will trust
someone that they have already knew then keep continue to believe in false

\[43 \text{Ibid., p. 146}\]
promise, certainly without they realize it. Marxist feminism view this as exploitative relation from employer to worker. Employer will do everything to gain the labor power of a worker. Including a lure of high-paying job and good facilities of the job. A chance to work in overseas which earn high salary make candidate even society crave the job. This industrial strategy in Marxist feminism is called *commodity fetishism*.44

![Raya looks pale and her face is bruised](image)

**Picture 1. Raya looks pale and her face is bruised**

In picture 1, Raya’s face does not only looks pale but also bruised. It shows what happened to Raya after tricked by her uncle and trapped into sex trafficking in Bosnia. Both Raya and Irka, her other friend, are found by good UN officer named Kathryn at the ethnic riot in Sarajevo, Bosnia. It is absolutely not in Budapest as the first destination when she is offered to work at. The opportunity to work in five star hotel at Budapest is just a fraud by her uncle. Raya and Irka have escaped from the traffickers in Florida Bar when the raid is held in it. They run to forest near the ethnic riot is held and accidentally meet Kathryn. Then, Raya is fainted of her illness.

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The bruise on Raya’s face at picture 1 is the evidence of violence against woman which Raya has experienced as the trafficked woman. This violence comes from the traffickers and costumers who mostly are men. They can hit her freely because they not respect Raya as human being who has human right. The traffickers and costumers bear no responsibility for committing crime such as violence because they have control over Raya as a commodity. In Marxist feminism, Raya who is a trafficked woman becomes dehumanized. Raya’s value as human being is reduced by the value of the market because of her sexuality becomes a commodity for sex trafficking.

*Zenica Keeper:* This is our volunteer nurse. She says Raya has bad infection. The nurse found objects inside her.

*Kathryn:* Excuse me?

*Zenica Keeper:* Coins. (00:33:15 - 00:33:40)

The reason Raya looks pale because she has illness. When Kathryn brings her to Zenica shelter where the place for caring trafficked women of sex trafficking. The nurse in Zenica shelter says Raya has bad infection because there are coins inside her body. The statement coins inside her body means the coins are in her womb. This coins are put into her womb by the costumers or traffickers which have sexually torture her. This coins must be dirty or rusty which can infect her body from inside.

The coins inside her womb is also the evidences of sexual violence toward Raya. The traffickers can do sexual torture by put coins in her womb. It happens because Raya no more recognizes as human beings but as commodity. Similar with capitalism, sex trafficking is also system of exchange relation but the
commodities which will be traded are not labor power of a worker but women’s sexuality of women’s body. The traffickers as the employers who own their commodities (which is women’s sexuality) are allowed to exploit their worker (trafficked women) in many ways including beating, torturing and raping.

Kathryn : Look, I know you’re scared to talk but... if you can tell me that this is the man then...
Raya : Then what? You put him in jail?
Kathryn : No, he has diplomatic immunity. That means he's protected by the UN. But Tanjo can go to jail. He can go to jail. And if you both say in a court... that Tanjo has been taking payoffs from this man... then his name will go on record... and the UN has to do something. They can’t knowingly have one of their men involved in rape... kidnapping and torture.
Raya : How do you do this if you work for the UN?
Kathryn : I'm an American police officer. It doesn't matter who I work for... I wouldn't let anybody get away with this.
Irka : So if we go to court you promise you can stop these men?
Kathryn : I can't promise I can stop all these men. I promise...
Raya : If you cannot promise then why do we agree? There is too much danger to go speak in a court, even this... to say anything to you. How do I know this is safe?

(00:43:23 - 00:44:37)

Raya and Irka are interrogated by Kathryn for sex trafficking case in Florida Bar but they are afraid of their safety if they tell it. Raya even says that it is too dangerous to speak at a court even speak to Kathryn. Raya is asking Kathryn if Kathryn could guarantee her and Irka’s safety for their willingness to speak in the court and Kathryn agreed. She knows that her position as witness is too risky because she will face not only traffickers but also the bad UN officers as government representatives who have power to control the regulation in the country.
Similar bourgeoisie are very adept at fooling the proletariat. The traffickers as the bourgeoisie often manipulate the trafficked women as their proletariat. Raya as one of this trafficked women also often tricked by trafficker. It continuously happens and makes her psychological has trouble trusting others. Raya experienced a major psychological crisis which makes her scare to speak out. Related to Marxist feminis, it becomes evidence that the traffickers as employers have taken control over their worker which is Raya, through make her scare and she becomes too afraid to disobey the traffickers.

In Picture 2-3, the traffickers’s car is hit Viko’s car and they are taking Raya by force. It happens after Kathryn gives Raya to Viko (the other good UN officer) in order to bring her to the safe house. This accident is intentionally done by trafficker to get their trafficked women back. The traffickers strike Viko till dying. Then they take her forcefully. Raya fights for her own life by trying to escape from traffickers once, but when she is close to repatriation, the traffickers abduct her again. One of the traffickers also hits Raya when he questioning Irka’s

\[\text{Ibid., p. 145}\]
position as she is also escaping trafficked woman. Raya is crying in pain when she is dragged and beaten mercilessly by trafficker.

This picture shows that traffickers as employers want their commodities back then they can exploit it again. Raya as sexual commodity is assessed still have potential to be used and to get profit from her. The reason why the traffickers abduct her again because they do not want to lose their commodities. In this scene Raya clearly gets physical violence from traffickers because she is no more considered as human being but just as commodity. Her value of human being is decreased by violence against her which has separated her from human right. This scene also proves that Raya is having alienation. Similar with the workers, in Marxist feminism, who are alienated from their work product. Raya is not be able to determine when, where, how, and to whom these commodity (her sexuality) will be sold yet she even has no control over herself. Her freedom as human is taken away from her by the traffickers.

Picture 4-5. Raya sexually tortured by traffickers

In the picture 4-5, the traffickers, forcefully, bring Raya back to the room for trafficked women. The traffickers then torture her in front of all the trafficked
women in the room and also in front of Luba as example of punishment for escaping out. Raya is hit by trafficker then he is sexually torture her by put an iron rod into her genitals till it bleed. The violence which is experienced by Raya in this scene is extremely inhumane. This harsh type of violence against woman is not only hurt her physically but also hurt her in psychologically. It humiliates her because it happen in front of all trafficked woman in the room. It dehumanizes Raya as a person.

Marxist feminism views this phenomenon through the explanation from Karl Marx in *Capital* about the employers who have monopoly over instruments of production, then the workers will have to choose between being exploited or becoming unemployment. In here, by doing a violence toward Raya, traffickers (or as the employers) will make Raya and other trafficked women as commodities obey their order. The traffickers are having a control over the instrument of production which is the trafficked women’s fear. Then trafficked women have to choose to obey whatever traffickers said or got hard punishment. The traffickers as the employers can do anything to exploit Raya as the worker. Traffikers are allowed to hit even sexually torture her if she could not do what they want, or if she makes a mistake while doing a job. Once again, traffickers have taking control over their commodities.

Picture 6

**Picture 6. Raya is being placed in a shelter for trafficked woman at OASIS Bar**

From the picture 6 we can see that Raya is being exploited and being placed in a shelter for trafficked woman at OASIS Bar. Inside, there are trafficked women who have the condition like Raya. Then from the dialogue below, it said that Raya should work for the employer (trafficker) without any reason of sickness.

*Pimp Lady* : You work in two hours.  
*(Pimp Lady Left)*  
*Woman 1* : You sleep on whichever mattresses are free.  
*Woman 2* : They bring us food in the morning. You have to eat it all, or you get fined.  
*(Raya getting sick)*  
*Woman 1* : Come sit down. Don't let them see you like this. Okay? What is your name?  
*Raya* : Raya Kochan.  
*Woman 1* : I've nearly paid my debt. Then I can go home.  
*Luba* : It's all bullshit.  
*Woman 1* : No. He sent a girl back three months ago. I was here. What is your name?  
*Raya* : She is Luba. Luba Pallch.  

*(01:04:51 - 01:06:16)*

After that, the traffickers move Raya and Luba from Florida Bar to other bar named AO3A (but read as OASIS Bar). Unfortunately when Raya arrives in
the shelter, she has to serve the employer’s order without any objection. At the dialog above also shows that one of trafficked women believes that she will be released because her debt is nearly paid off, but it is not. In this scene the traffickers also give a faith to the trafficked women that they will release them if the debt had paid off. Marxist feminism describes this as the employers who are giving workers an ideology, which is trick the workers to believe that the employers seems give an attention to them.47

Marxist feminism views this as exploitative system from capitalism. The employers (who exploit the workers) are just want to pay the workers for their labor power without paying the actual expenditure on the productivity of their commodities.48 The traffickers do not care about Raya condition, they just want Raya to sell her sexuality again without providing her medication for her wound or even a time for her to get rest after they sexually torture her. Traffickers here act as employers who just want the benefit.

![Picture 7. Raya gets sexuall abuse](image)

This picture 7 is potrayed in the bar, like or dislike, Raya must gets sexual abuse by costumer. The costumer is allowed to rub her breast as he pleased.

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In Marxist feminism view, the costumer plays as bourgeois who can buy women’s sexuality as commodities in sex trafficking. He can do whatever he wants toward Raya because he owns the money. Raya as the proletar has no power to refuse it because she needs the money to pay her debt.

Kathryn : Okay, girls, come on. You’re safe. Just come. All right, come. Let’s go. Don’t be afraid, we can all go now. Raya, come on. It’s going to be okay. All right? Now. Come on, Raya. Let’s just...

(A group of Bad UN Officers came and standing behind Kathryn, Raya suddenly looks afraid)
Kathryn: Come on, what’s the matter? What? What’s the matter? What’s...
(Kathryn realize who was behind her back, and started upset to them)
Kathryn: What the fuck are you doing here?
Bad UN Officer: We got a call about this raid.
(Kathryn is angry and push him and the bad UN officer push her back)
Bad UN Officer: Get your hands off me.
Kathryn: Fuck!
(Then Kathryn continue ask Raya)
Kathryn: Don’t look at these guys. Don’t be afraid of these guys. Just say you want to go and I can walk you... Raya, I can walk you out of here, right now. You just have to say you want to go, that’s all. Don’t look at him. Look at me. I want you to look at me. You are safe.

(Bad UN Officer shook his head to Raya)
Kathryn: Listen to me. Don’t look at him. Out of here! Just get out! Fuck! Okay, Raya just look at me. Look at me. Please. Okay. Just say yes. Just say yes. It’s all you have to do. Raya, please. Just say you want to go

Raya: No
Kathryn: Just say you want to go.
Raya: No

(01:21:29 - 01:23:06)

When Kathryn raid OASIS bar and arrest Ivan as the owner to save Raya and other girls, Raya feels relief and also smiles. She thinks that her suffer is end.
Thus her smile in her face turn into stare afraid as the group of uninvited bad UN officers are suddenly coming to the bar and standing behind Kathryn. Different with Kathryn, this group are the bad UN Officers who have cooperated with traffickers. These bad UN officers come to prevent Kathryn to save Raya. One of them shake his head to Raya and cueing her to ignore the Kathryn offer. Raya really wants to escape from the bar but she becomes too afraid to get punishment again if she disobey bad UN officer’s order. Because of that, forcefully, she is crying and rejecting Kathryn’s offer.

This scene similar as described by Donna Hughes\(^49\) about the elements which contribute to the demand for the purchase of human beings for sexual exploitation, one of them is the nations which are the destination countries for sex trafficking. With tolerating or legalizing prostitution, and misusing the power and influencing to shape laws and policies which can maintain the flow of women to sex industries, the bad UN officers as nation’s representatives hold the power of laws and policies but they misuse it. The bad UN officers as nation representatives who suppose to save Raya, contrary, not letting Raya to escape from sex trafficking. It because they support sex trafficking through their power of laws and policies.

As capitalism views, they take control over their commodities by using their power of laws and policies to the wrong side. They keep the commodities stay still in the circle of sex trafficking, as long as it makes profit to the nation. Similar with trafficker as employer, this bad UN officers as capitalists take control

\(^{49}\) Donna M. Hughes, *Op. Cit.* p. 7-8
over Raya as their valuable commodities by order her to stay in the bar. Raya who knows their power of the nation becomes scare of them and obey their order. As commodities, her mind and act are fully controlled by them because frightened of sexual torture which she has experienced before as punishment for disobedience.

![Image](image1.png)

**Picture 8. Raya is killed by Ivan the trafficker**

After getting out of prison, Ivan as the owner who is also the trafficker then comes back to the bar and cruelly shoots Raya in the head in front of other trafficked woman.

![Image](image2.png)

**Picture 9. Dead body of Raya found in forest**
Capitalism is viewed as a system of exchange relation which everything is measured by value of the market. Raya as a commodity is no longer giving a benefit but just a trouble. Get rid of her is a good solution for trafficker as employer. Marxist feminism views capitalism as a system of exploitative power relation. The traffickers as the employers can exploit the trafficked women even more than as workers, but as a commodities. If the trafficked women as commodities are no longer usable then the traffickers can easily dispose them by just killing them. And after killing, the dead body is only disposed as the traffickers will. See picture 9.

The cause of Raya’s oppression is not coming from the result of deliberate action of one individual, but rather from sex trafficking as a product of political structure which is capitalism. The trafficked woman such as Raya is hardly to get protection of her right because she is crossing-border the country illegally. She was positioned as a trafficked woman and being treated as a slave. Then she sells her sexuality in order to pay her debt to the trafficker, because of that her social status is low in society. Economic problem is one of her motivate to become immigrant for working overseas. But unfortunately this is just lure her into eternal enslavement of sex trafficking. Finally, it clearly describes that oppression towards Raya, as Marxist feminism believes, is not by one deliberately action of one man but a product of the political structure, social, and economic where she lives.

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CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The writer analyzes *The Whistleblower* film using Marxist feminism overview and she revealed how *The Whistleblower* reflects Raya Kochan as sexual commodity. The writer uses qualitative descriptive method with *The Whistleblower* as the unit of analysis. The research question has answered by the writer through the explanation of the pictures and the dialogue text of the film. The writer also uses other source outside the film to support the analysis.

From the research findings, the writer draws a conclusion that the oppression toward Raya is not coming from deliberate actions of one individual of men, but from a result of the system of capitalism which makes her become sexual commodity. This film describes sex trafficking as a product of political structure which is capitalism. Raya’s social status is low in society because she was positioned as a trafficked woman and being treated as a slave. Then, economic problem is one of her motivate to accept the offer of working overseas. Nevertheless it is just false promise to lure her into sex trafficking.

Through marxist feminism view, the writer finds political structure, social and economic aspect which being source of oppression toward Raya. And it is proved through events which Raya has experienced as trafficked woman in *The Whistleblower* film. The writer also finds the alienation toward her. Raya is no
longer have dignity because she gets violence and exploitation as sexual commodity through sex trafficking.

B. Suggestion

In this research, the writer use Marxist feminist theory to reveal the oppression toward women which are from political structure, social and economy of capitalism. This film can be seen in different point of view, because of that the writer suggest to the other researchers to use another theory or concept in order to find the different result. For example, this film could be analyzed through feminism approach to reveal women as victim and violence toward women. Therefore the writer hope this research gives more contribution to all students of English Letters in State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah and all student of other universities who want to analyze film through this concept and theory.
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APPENDICES