

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines the portrayal of Camilla Macaulay's objectification in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992) by analyzing its intrinsic components. It focuses on how the character, characterization, conflict, and point of view deepen the understanding of why the object in question behaves as it should. The theoretical framework guiding this research is Fredrickson and Roberts' objectification theory. Through this theory and by examining the intrinsic elements, this study examines how objectification is often overlooked.

2.1. Character

Kenney defined character as, "The simple, or flat, character is less a representation of a full human personality and more the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession" (1966:28). From this statement, it can be understood that a character's personality and behavior are not linked to a person's actual reality. Readers primarily form their impressions of characters through the development of the author's narration, which shapes an image of what the character should be.

2.2. Characterization

Ignasi Ribó stated that indirect characterization occurs when the narrator describes the character's physical, mental, or behavioral traits... Direct characterization reveals the character through their actions, words, appearance, thoughts, or the impact

they have on others (2019:57). This reference explains that characterization involves not only describing a character's personality but also showing how it is expressed.

2.3. Conflict

According to Kenney, Fiction examines different kinds of conflicts. A story might center on an internal struggle within one character (such as desire versus duty), conflicts between characters, clashes between an individual and society, or battles with nature, among others (1966:19). This view highlights the complexity of narrative conflicts, which involve personal, social, and ideological issues. Kenney sees conflict as arising from differences in interests, values, needs, expectations, and ideologies, placing it not only in personal disputes but also within broader social and cultural contexts.

2.4. Point of View

Kenney contends that the choice of point of view can have moral and philosophical implications. A writer with a limited perspective can be signaling misgivings, deliberately or not, about the ability to know anything as it is in itself, separate from the perspective from which it is seen (1966:56). Kenney's comment implies that perspective is more than a storytelling device; it can also be a type of suspicion, casting suspicion on the character in question.

In examining Camilla Macaulay's character in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992), it is necessary to view it from the protagonist's perspective, as Camilla is only a side character. As Kenney stated, a story can be narrated from either the inside or the

outside. When we refer to a story told from the inside, we mean that it is narrated by one of the participants or characters (1966:48).

2.5. Objectification

Objectification is a concept that comes from attitudes that are deemed typical in everyday gender depictions, especially in relation to women. The most well-known theories of objectification include the Objectification Theory proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). Objectification is realizing that many girls and women internalize social norms that objectify them and often criticize their appearance. They also think that this can cause problems with emotions, motivation, and concentration. Objectification has been related for a long time to the conversion of women's agency into a physical trait, sexual attractiveness, or a passive position that serves the pleasure or advantage of others, particularly in patriarchal countries. But many argue that objectification is not merely an issue of perspective. It is a structural and cultural practice embedded in the media, social mores, and power relations.

2.6. Mechanism or Conditions of Objectification in the Narrative

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), in their Objectification Theory, examine objectification as a cultural process in which women's bodies are reduced to objects to be looked at, consumed, and controlled, rather than as beings with agency. Objectification in narrative occurs through various interrelated processes by which a character is shifted from a subject to an object of desire, interpretation, or control. Instead of being portrayed as a subject in their own right, the character is viewed as a

being on the surface, performed by others. Objectification initially arises through varying degrees of access to consciousness.

In some narratives, a character's interior life may not be revealed at all, whereas much more may be revealed about how others interpret the characters. Interpretive dominance further adds to the objectification. The dominant character in authority shapes the objectified character's meaning, including the objectified character's intention and ethical stance. Thus, objectification functions as a form of control that shapes the character's overall agency. While the character appears to make choices, these choices are implicitly restricted by the connotations of being a character of desire. Its body is performative rather than substantive, existing only in circumstances that align with the narrative view. As such, it is apparent that these various concepts illustrate objectification as a fundamental condition by which a character exists within the world of the telling.

2.7. Self-Surveillance

As developed by Vaz and Bruno, building on Foucault, "Self-surveillance is usually understood as the attention one pays to one's behavior when facing the actuality or virtuality of an immediate or mediated observation by others whose opinion he or she deems as relevant" (2003:273). This indicated that self-surveillance is not just about being watched by others but also about how individuals observe and alter their own behavior according to the perceived or imagined judgment of those around them.

2.8. Silencing of Interiority

As developed by Jing, building on Foucault "Conscience is turned from an inner judge into an inner guard, which exercises self-gazing and self-examination to conform our conduct to certain codes" (2023-2024:5). It refers makes it clear that interiority is silenced not by force but by internalization of the gaze of power people police their inner world without realizing that such self-policing is a result of power relations.

2.9. Limited Focalization

Gérard Genette's (1983) concept of focalization separates *who sees* from *who speaks*, the narrative filter from the narrative voice. Internal focalization explains how narrative is mediated through a character's consciousness. Like this story, which provides limited access to the side character's thoughts but strong access to the other characters' perceptions of the side character, it positions the side character as an object of perception rather than a subject experiencing perception.

2.10. Projection of Meaning

Freud (1894) defined psychological projection as the process of attributing unfavorable personality features to someone else, allowing people to ignore their own weaknesses and issues. This provides a way for a person to separate himself from the guilt or anxiety that comes from his own aggressive or sexual desires. Freud posited that it is easier to project these feelings outside of ourselves, blaming others for the bad feelings, rather than accepting them inside ourselves.

2.11. Suppression of Emotions

James Gross stated that emotion regulation refers to how individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them (1998:970). There are multiple levels at which emotional regulation occurs: humans can change the emotion that is obtained in a situation, when it is caused in connection to events, and how strongly or for how long it is felt and expressed. Equally important is Gross's contention that these processes cross the conscious-unconscious range. There are intentional regulatory actions, such as a shift of a threat as a challenge or the concealment of apparent distress in a professional setting. Some work beyond awareness includes early learned, persistent emotional avoidance. Together, these processes regulate the content, timing, volume, and social visibility of emotion. The control of emotions is a basic aspect of psychological functioning, interpersonal behavior, and even identity.

2.12. Subjection to Male-Dominated Power Relations

As Judith Butler says, 'subjection is a twin process: authority constitutes the subject and subjugates the subject' (1997:2). Power is not imposed from outside; the subject is produced by its attachment and internalization of the very norms and patterns of domination that confine it. This means, in particular, that women are not only passive subjects of patriarchal institutions as external forces inside male-dominated power relations, but are mental subjects produced by them and grow to demand recognition within the boundaries set by such systems.

2.13. Mental Pressure to Uphold the Ideal of Femininity

Judith Butler suggests that the psyche is not only a recipient of force from without but a power in itself that forms the psyche and hence fabricates the psyche itself, working through conscience and the obsessive internalization of standards (1997:6-7). The feminine gender is the product of the denial of the possibilities of love and attachment. The loss is retained and re-inscribed by the increasing femininity, which Butler calls sad gender. The pressure to maintain the ideal of femininity is thus not experienced as an external force but as an internal, mental necessity: the subject acts against herself, regulates her own desires, appearance, and conduct in line with normative gender standards.