The Representation of Female's Ideal Body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland*

THESIS

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
JEMBER UNIVERSITY
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Submitted to English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for degree Sarjana Sastra in English Studies.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family for their sincere prayers and support
throughout my life.

MOTTO

"Everybody is different, and every body is different."

(Beverly Diehl)

DECLARATION

The undersigned below:

  Name : Alifia Suci Rahma

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hereby declare that this thesis entitled "**The Representation of Female's Ideal Body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland***" is an original piece of writing. I proclaim that the discussions and results in this thesis were never conducted or submitted for any degree or publication. I guarantee that the reference sources used as data in conducting this research have all been recognized.

           Jember, 21 October 2022

             The Writer

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SUMMARY

The **Representation of Female Ideal Body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland***: Alifia Suci Rahma, 180110101032, 2022: 55 pages: the English Department, the Faculty of Humanities Jember University.

This research analyzes the representation of a woman's ideal body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland*. In this novel the main character Plum is obsessed with getting the ideal skinny body. This is because Plum lives in a society based on the male gaze perspective. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is the ideal body standard that occurs because of the male gaze perspective. So, there are two problems that will be discussed in this research. The first is how the representation of the ideal female body in *Dietland*. The second is the position of the author in representing the discourse of the ideal body in the novel.

This research uses the theory of representation by Stuart Hall and then supported by the theory of male gaze by Laura Mulvey. In addition, the discussion will continue using the theory of encoding decoding by Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding to analyze the position of the main character in consuming a media text. This thesis is a qualitative research that uses a close reading method to collect data both from primary data in the form of quotes in novels, and secondary data in the form of information on the internet.

The results of this analysis indicate that the discourse of female's ideal bodies in *Dietland* is represented through the male gazes. Women in novel are gazed using male gaze value so that women inevitably have to follow these standards to satisfy men's views. In this novel the body that is considered attractive is a thin body. So that some women in the novel want to be thin and avoid being fat.

However, there is a change of the values experienced by the main character, Plum. At first, she followed the ideal body standard that was considered attractive by men. However, in the end, Plum negotiated in interpreting the concept of a female's ideal body. This negotiating position refers to one of the hypothetical positions in Hall's concept of decoding-encoding. The fact that Plum in negotiating

position also shows the position of the author in representing the discourse of the ideal body in the novel.

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I hope this thesis will contribute and help those who intend to do further research of representation, especially in the topic of beauty standards.

Jember, October 2022

Alifia Suci Rahma

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains four sub chapters. The first is background of the study which is the description about the topic discussion. The second sub chapter is the problem to discuss. This sub chapter contains research questions that support the goals of this research. The third sub chapter is scope of study. Then the last sub chapter is the goal of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender differences between men and women create gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes in men require men to have masculine traits while women are expected to have feminine traits. Men are expected to be the initiator of aggressive actions and protectors of women and children. Meanwhile, women are expected to be emotional caregivers and givers, willing to subdue their desires to please men and to take care of children (Lorber and Martin, 2013). One consequence of gender stereotypes of female femininity is the concept of beauty standards.

Beauty standards are characteristics that are considered to make women more attractive. The ideal body is one of traits in beauty standard. The ideal body image is the phrase that refers to body size that symbolizes beauty and success in achieving optimal physical determined by certain cultural groups (Martin, 2010). In some societies, large women are considered attractive, while contemporary western society considers that thin is the ideal body for women (Shaw and Lee, 2003). An example of a society that considers fat beautiful is Mauritania. In this western state of Africa, there is a tradition called *Leblouh*, which is the tradition of forcibly feeding girls. Being fat in Mauritania means increasing the chance of getting a male suitor (Ford, 2019). While in the state of Nauru, fat is associated with beauty and fertility (Pollock, 1995).

The difference in ideal body type shows that the ideal body is a cultural production that changes across time and culture. Women's ideal bodies have varied depending on the standards of beauty and desirability in various civilizations throughout history (Parker, 2009). The female's ideal body image in ancient Greece

(500-300 BC) was round and bright skin. Meanwhile, in the Victorian era (1837-1901), women used corsets to create an hourglass-like body image. Whereas in the United States in 1990, women's ideal body was tall and skinny. It shows that different societies in different periods will have different ideal body images.

Females will be satisfied if they match the beauty standards or body ideals that society has set. When they do not reach the body ideal owned by the society, they will receive bad treatment, such as body shaming and discrimination, feel marginalized, and experience body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction in women can decrease self-esteem and cause symptoms of depression and the possibility of an eating disorder (Uchôa et al., 2019). Problems about the female's ideal body still exist nowadays. Many females suffer from not being able to achieve the ideal body. Representation of female bodies through the media plays a role in influencing the body image that female has.

Novels are one of the media that can represent the female's body, so research on a novel about the ideal body is essential to discuss. One novel that shows the concept of female's ideal body is *Dietland*. It is the debut novel by Sarai Walker, a fat-positive activist living in the United States. She is part of the fat acceptance movement. It is a social movement to remove the bad stigma against obese people. This novel was published in 2015 and became one of the best ten books of Weekly Entertainment's in 2015. In 2018, *Dietland* adapted into television series that premiered on AMC.

Dietland tells the story of Plum, 300 pounds woman obsessed with being thin. Plum's obsession at first is because people mocked and humiliated her for having a fat body. Then the environment where she works, the TV shows, and magazines always represent women with thin bodies. It influences her in interpreting her body image. Plum's obsession occurs because Plum's body image is a thin body, like the advertising model for a diet community called The Baptist Program. Plum, who is unsatisfied with her body, tries various ways to achieve a thin body. She followed several diet communities even when she was a teenager. In addition, Plum also takes antidepressants and has been about to do suicide. Because the diet did not work, she was finally scheduled to do lost weight surgery. Plum experiences body

shaming, depression, and low self-esteem because she does not match the ideal body standards. Plum also thinks that no man will date and marry her if she is fat. In addition, Plum's journey from a negative body image to a positive one is influenced by the media, the environment, and the people around her.

Based on the explanation above, this research assumes that the ideal body is not naturally formed but is socially constructed by society. The construction of the ideal body is represented in *Dietland*. In the novel, the media also have a big role in promoting thinness for females. It became interesting to know how the discourse of the female's ideal body is formed and represented in *Dietland*, which make female in the novel obsessed with being thin.

To prove my assumption, Stuart Hall's theory of representation and the male gaze by Laura Mulvey is used. Representation is a process of production and exchange of meanings through language. In addition, the concept of encoding decoding will be used to find how the concept of the ideal body is shown in media consumed by the main character.

1.2 The Problem to Discuss

The main point that will be discussed in this research is how the representation of ideal body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland*. To find the answer of this problem two questions are formulated:

1. In what ways is the discourse of the ideal body represented in the novel?
2. What is the ideological position of the author?

1.3 Scope of the Study

To make this research more focused, a scope of study is needed. This will limit the discussion in this research which also avoids complicated discussion. The focus of this research is analyzing the representation of female ideal body and what ideology is contained in that representation. So, this research uses the theory of representation (1997) and the concept of encoding and decoding by Stuart Hall (2005).

1.4 The Goal of the Study

There are two goals of this research. The goals of this research are as follows:

1. Give an idea of how female's ideal body is represented in the novel.

2. Find and explain what the ideological position of the author is in representing the ideal body.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains two discussions. The first sub chapter contains previous research related to and contributed to my research. Then the second sub chapter is the theoretical framework which contains an explanation of the main theories that I use in my research. It will discuss the theory of representation, the concept of decoding and encoding by Stuart Hall and the concept of male gaze by Laura Mulvey.

2.1 Previous Research

This chapter will contain previous research related to and contributed to this research. It is a reference to this research to show that the topic is still relevant to discuss and avoid the same analysis. I chose some previous research with the same object, theory analysis, or topic as mine.

Balcetis et al., (2013) conducted a study to see if awareness of ideal body standards predicts lower self-esteem in women. This study was conducted on fifty-five undergraduate women with two approaches. In the first approach, the researcher uses a general self-report measure of awareness of the thin social ideal where the women are aware that thin is society's ideal body. The second method uses eye tracking, a behavioral indicator of attentiveness, to see how participants provide visual attention to information that describes the ideal standard. This research proves that awareness of ideal standards can adversely affect self-esteem among women, regardless of their actual body weight and shape. This research is relevant to my research because both have the same topic: the ideal body. The difference between this research and mine is the object of the research. The object of this research is humans, while the object of my research is a novel that represents the ideal body of a woman. Although the object of this research is different, this research helps me to understand that problems with the ideal body cause a person to experience low self-esteem.

The second previous research is a study on reactions to ideal body shape by Prnjak, et al., (2020). This study uses the Kessler psychological distress scale (K10),

with the object of research being 200 respondents (74 male and female). The 126 participating women aimed to see their reactions to the ideal-thin and ideal-muscle image and to examine how exposure to the ideal image affects their preferred body shape and the time spent discussing the female's ideal body. This study shows that after viewing thinspiration (thin inspiration) photos, women choose a slimmer figure as their ideal body. Women also spend longer than men contemplating their preferred body size. However, men and women also pay attention to physical appearance (Prnjak et al., 2019). This research reveals that the ideal body in the media can influence women's dissatisfaction with their bodies and encourage them to be thin.

This research is classified as new research that discusses the ideal body. This shows that research on the topic of a woman's ideal body can still be discussed because it is still relevant today. The ideal body of women is still a problem in society. In addition, this research is important for my research because this research proves that the media influences a person in determining the ideal body image.

Another research on the effect of media on determining the ideal body was carried out by Ogden et al., (2020). This research was conducted on 106 female participants. Women aged between 16-30 years participated in evaluating the impact of body image diversity. All participants filled out a questionnaire to measure body satisfaction, facial satisfaction, body affection, and positive and negative attitudes toward the ideal thin media image. Then they will be grouped through three interventions. They are body control, body diversity, and thin-ideal.

The results showed that participants exposed to images of body diversity showed increased bodily affection associated with bodily goodness, facial satisfaction, and body satisfaction. In addition, the results reveal that participants exposed to body diversity images reported more negative attitudes toward thin-ideal images (Ogden et al., 2020). This research helped me to understand that representation of the body through various media increases women's satisfaction with their bodies. In addition, this research also supports the assumption of my research that the representation of a woman's body in the media plays a role in determining and influencing someone in seeing their ideal body image.

The fourth previous research is a thesis by Handayani (2018). This research discusses the main character's obsession with society's beauty standards. Using the theory of Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf (1990) and a feminist approach, this research reveals that the main character in *Dietland*, undergoes an attempt to meet beauty standards that makes her obsessed with being thin (Handayani, 2018). In addition, this research also found that women must follow beauty standards, showing the superiority of men where men are superior while women are inferior. Handayani's thesis has the same object as my research object, which is the *Dietland* by Sarai Walker. This research helps me understand the issues of beauty standards. However, because it only focuses on the main character's obsession, the construction of the ideal body discourse is not clearly explained.

Another research about beauty standard is a thesis by Sari (2015). In her thesis, Sari uses Stuart Hall's theory of representation and decoding and encoding concepts to find out the representation of beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eyes*. Sari's thesis found that the discourse of beauty oppressed Afro-American women. It is because black is considered ugly, and white is considered beautiful. Afro-American women who do not match beauty standards are rejected and oppressed by both white and black people because of the representation of beauty discourse by media text. Beauty discourse causes the oppression of black women who do not match the standard beauty characteristics, such as white skin, blonde and straight hair, and blue eyes (Sari, 2015). I chose this thesis as the previous research because Sari's thesis uses the same theory as the theory I use. So that it helps me to understand representation theory. However, the novel and the topic used in Sari's research are different from mine.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Representation Theory by Stuart Hall

This research uses Stuart Hall's theory of representation. Hall in his book entitled *Representation: Cultural representation and Signifying Practices* explains that Representation is an important part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning between members of a culture which involves the use of language, signs,

and images to represent something (Hall, 1997:15). Through language as a representation system, meanings are produced and exchanged by members of society. Meaning is not attached to the object. The object is meaningful if the meaning is often exchanged between members of society through language. Meaning is also not influenced by speakers because meaning is produced, exchanged and constructed in the community.

Representation as a system has two processes. The first is the mental representation and the second is language. Hall (1997) reports that:

> "There is the 'system' by which all sort of objects, people and event are correlated with a set of concept or *mental representations* which we carry around in our heads. Without them, we could not interpret the world meaningfully at all. We must also be able to represent or exchange meanings and concept, and we can only do that when we also have access to a shared language. Language is therefore the second system or representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning. Our shared conceptual map must be translated into a common language"
>
> (Hall, 1997:17-18).

The quotation above explains that mental representation is a concept we have in our minds that we use to interpret something. The meaning will be formed through a system of concept images or symbols in our mind which then represent the thing. After a concept is formed in our heads, to interpret and share the concepts in our heads with others, we need language. The language needed is a common language that both parties understand. Language is used to exchange meanings, concepts, and thoughts so that the community has the same concept of meaning about something. Then the meaning will be understood if we have a concept about something in our head and share it with others.

Based on the explanation above, I use this theory because in creating the concept of an ideal body, members of society in *Dietland* exchange the meaning of the ideal body through language.

2.2.2 Constructionist Approach

According to Hall (1997), there are three types of approaches. The first is the reflective approach. In the reflective approach, language functions like a mirror, where meaning is attached to an object so that language reflects the same meaning that already exists in the real world. The second approach is intentional. In this approach, the meaning depends on the authors. It means that the authors express their unique idea and meaning through language. Thus, language expresses what the authors want to say in their way. The third approach is the constructionist approach. According to this approach, meaning is formed through a representation system consisting of concepts and signs (Hall, 1997:24-25).

From the three approaches, I choose the last approach. As Hall (1997) states that the material world does not convey meaning but rather a system of language or whatever system we use to represent our concepts. Social actors play a role in using conceptual and linguistic systems and other representational systems that come from their culture to make meaning, make the world meaningful and communicate meaningfully to other members of cultures (Hall, 1997:25).

Constructionist approach sees text and context not as imitations like the reflective approach. Language is not personal like an intentional approach. Objects according to this approach are meaningless, and the meaning of these objects will be constructed through language. Based on the explanation of those approaches, the constructionist approach is suitable in analyzing literary work as it closely connects to the condition of society.

The constructionist approach is divided into two major variants or models. The first is the semiotic model and discursive model. The semiotic model takes the theory of Roland Barthes, influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, who considers that language is a system of signification. The second discursive model proposed by French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault (Hall, 1997:15).

This research uses the discursive model to find how discourse is formed, and also how knowledge in discourse production is related to it. Hall states that Foucault uses the term representation as the production of knowledge through what he calls discourse (1997:23). Foucault's analysis focuses on how human self-understanding

in culture and how knowledge and meaning about social, individual embodied are generated in different periods. As Hall explains that discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. Knowledge is produced through language, and all social practice has a discursive aspect because social practice generates meaning and influences what we do and our behavior (Hall, 1997).

In the discursive approach, there are three main ideas. They are the concept of discourse, the issue of power and knowledge, and the question of the subject. Foucault argues that something is meaningful and considered true only within a specific historical content. This means that the discourse is closely related to the historical context. Each period produces different events and phenomena, giving rise to different discourses.

2.2.3 Encoding and Decoding

To make this research more complete, Hall's encoding and decoding concept is used to see how a concept of the ideal body is consumed by the characters in the novel and that influences their life. Hall revealed that there had been a conceptualization of the mass media communication process in the form of a circuit or circle of circulation. However, this model, according to Hall, has been criticized for its linearity (sender/message/receiver), focusing on the level of message exchange only and the absence of a structured conception of different moments as a complex relationship structure (Hall, 2005: 117). In the process of receiving messages, Hall offers three stages of meaning distribution as described in the following diagram.

STUART HALL

programme as 'meaningful' discourse

encoding
meaning
structures 1

decoding
meaning
structures 2

frameworks
of knowledge
....
relations
of production
....
technical
infrastructure

frameworks
of knowledge
....
relations
of production
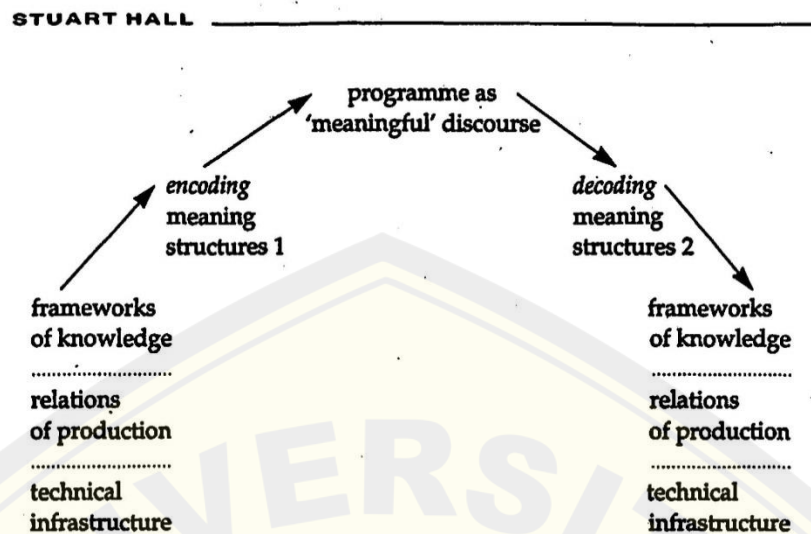.........................
technical
infrastructure

Diagram 1: (Hall, 2005:120)

The diagram above shows how meaning is produced (meaning structure 1) and how that meaning is received (meaning structure 2). The stage at which meaning is produced is called encoding and when meaning is received or consumed, it is called decoding. Hall revealed that meaning structures 1 and 2 may not be the same (Hall, 2015:119). The encoding between the encoder and decoder is not symmetrical. It means that the understanding of the message when it is produced and when it is received is not the same. Hall revealed three hypothetical positions of decoding by audience/viewer/reader to find out the relationship between encoder and decoder. They are the dominant hegemonic position, negotiated position, and oppositional position.

The first hypothetical position is the dominant hegemonic position. Hall explains that the viewer operates within the dominant when the viewer takes the meaning from, for example, a television news broadcast or a recent program that connotes, completely and directly. In addition, they translate the message in a coded frame of reference that has been encoded (Hall, 2005: 125). It happens when the viewers/readers connotate the meaning of particular text. The message produced (encoded) by the encoder is the same as that received (decoded) by the

viewers/readers. It means the decoder interprets the message connotatively. This is ideal communication because the message is encoded directly to the dominant codes.

The second position is negotiated position. Hall argues that in this version of the negotiation there is a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements. This negotiated version of the dominant ideology is thus met with contradictions, although this is only on occasion brought into full visibility. Negotiated codes operate through certain logic or situational logic. This logic is underpinned by a different and unequal relationship with discourse and the logic of power (Hall, 2005:127). This position happens when the viewers are in between accepting and rejecting the dominant code. The encoded message does not fully accept by the viewers/readers. They understand the message conveyed, but they make their own interpretation in interpreting the message.

The third position is the oppositional position. Hall explains that oppositional positions operate when viewers understand perfectly the literal and connotative inflections given by discourse, but they decode the message in ways that are globally opposed to the encoded (Hall, 2005: 127). In the oppositional position, the viewers understand the meaning of the text both denotatively and connotatively. However, they denote the message differently and make up their own meaning. In this position, the viewer rejects the meaning conveyed. They received the message. They understood but did not share the text code.

This decoding-encoding theory is essential to find the main character's position in responding to an ideal body discourse, and to check the main character's position, whether considered as the dominant hegemonic, negotiating position, or opposition. By finding the main character's position, the discussion will lead to the author's ideological position, which is the second goal of this research.

2.2.4 Male Gaze

Besides using representation theory as a tool to analyze the novel, I also use a supporting theory to assist in the analysis. The theory used is the Male Gaze by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey, in her essay entitled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*

in 1975, reveals the phenomenon of female characters in Hollywood films. Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Mulvey explains the phenomenon of the male gaze. It is a condition where women in the media are seen through a heterosexual male perspective and represented as passive objects. Mulvey argues that in the word order by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking is divided into the active male and the passive female (Mulvey, 1975).

Mulvey alludes to the term scopophilia, which is the pleasure obtained by making other people the object of sexual fantasies through the gaze. She argues that to avoid male castration, men try to fight it by making women as passive objects as a form of fulfilling their desires (Mulvey, 1975). It is manifested in several Hollywood films where shooting through camera movement only focuses on the sensual sides of women.

Mulvey argues that with the male gaze, women, besides being the erotic object of the film's character, also becomes an erotic object for the spectator in the auditorium. In other words, women do not have agency over themselves, so they become passive characters who are given meaning while men are active characters who create meaning.

In addition, Mulvey also uses the theory of the *mirror stage* by Jacques Lacan to analyze the spectator. Mulvey likens the audience to a boy going through a mirror phase. It means that the child's self-identification mistakenly assumes that the reflected self is himself, even though it is his shadow. These values make up his ideal ego. In the case of the audience as a peeping tom, they try to overcome his shortcomings with images in the film.

Male spectators will be eager to see women as objects to satisfy their desires. In the case of the female spectator, Mulvey argues that they must learn to identify themselves with the male protagonist to have his perspective, which is the male gaze perspective. Eventually, women desire to be seen by men by forming an ideal woman in themselves.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the methods used in conducting this research. There are three parts to this chapter. The first is the type of research which explains the type of research. The second is data collection, which contains how to obtain data; the last is the data processing and analysis.

3.1 Data Collection

Because this research is qualitative, the data used is qualitative data. Denscombe (2010) states that qualitative data is data in the form of spoken and written words and visual images, which are observed and produced. In collecting data, I use the close reading method. I read the data more than once to get a deep understanding. After the data is collected, I divide the data into two types. The first is primary data. It is taken from the conversation, narration, and event in *Dietland*, which discusses the ideal body. The secondary data are the supporting data, which are all information or facts about the ideal body in the United States around 21th century. This data is taken from articles, books, journals, and the internet.

3.2 Data Processing and Data Analysis

After the data are collected, the next stage is data processing. In this step, the collected data will be analyzed. The data about the ideal body in the novel are connected to the theory of representation by Stuart Hall and the male gaze by Laura Mulvey. This data will be analyzed to answer the first research question on how the discourse on the ideal body size is represented. In analyzing the data, I use Hall's theory of Representation, particularly the Constructionist Approach. This approach has two models, I choose the discursive model by Michel Foucault to reveal the construction of ideal body discourse in the novel. It aims to find the discursive formation of the ideal body in the novel. The analysis is carried out through the characters and events that occur in the novel.

Then to answer the second research question, these steps will be taken. After finding the ideal body discourse, I analyze how the main character consumes the ideal body text. I use Stuart Hall's encoding decoding concept to find out the main

character's position in consuming the ideal body shown through media. The data relating to the ideal body are analyzed to determine whether the main character's position is dominant hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional. The analysis results will then lead to the author's ideological position.

The ideological position is how the author, Sarai Walker, positions herself in response to a discourse of the female's ideal body. Whether she is supporting, rejecting, or in between supporting and rejecting the idea of the ideal body. Walker's ideological position will be found after connecting the discourse of the ideal body in the novel with the discourse of the ideal body outside the novel. The contextual background in this research is the United States in 21st century, where America is the setting of the story and where Walker lives. So, in creating *Dietland*, Walker was influenced by the United States culture. In finding the author's ideological position, supporting data, which is information about the ideal body in the 21th century, will be used for analysis. After connecting the discourse of the ideal body in *Dietland* with the discourse of the ideal body in the United States culture, it will be found the ideological position of Sarai Walker, who is part of the United States society that produces the discourse of the female's ideal body.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

As the main discussion of this thesis, this chapter presents four sub-chapters. Before answering how to represent a woman's ideal body in the novel, it is necessary to discuss the contextual background to provide an overview of the issues discussed. Therefore, the first subchapter discusses the United States contextual background of the woman's ideal body. The second subchapter reveals the representation of the ideal body in *Dietland.* The third sub-chapter deals with the media construction of the female's body. Then the discussion of the author's ideological position becomes the closing sub-chapter of this discussion.

4.1 Female's Ideal Body in the United States from 1910s to 2010s

The ideal body image is the phrase that refers to body size that symbolizes beauty and success in achieving optimal physical determined by specific cultural groups. The concept of the ideal body in each region, culture, or country can vary depending on the society's culture. For example, the idea of the ideal body of an American woman is an hourglass with a small waist-to-hip ratio. While in Mauritania, a woman's ideal body is a fat girl, so in this country, there is a force-feeding tradition (Ford, 2019).

Even in one country, if it is at a different time, it will have a different concept of the ideal body. Women's ideal bodies have varied depending on the standards of beauty and desirability in various civilizations throughout history (Parker, 2009). The United States has an ideal body image that is never permanent. The concept of the ideal body of women in the United States changes depending on time.

In the 1910s, the symbol of the female's ideal body in the United States was called the Gipson girl. This term is from a fictitious character drawn by an illustrator named Charles Dana Gibson for *Life* magazine (Mazur, 1986). The ideal body was slender and tall, with a voluptuous bust and wide hip. The skinny figure was obtained from corseting, which pinched the torso and waist.

The following picture is an illustration of Gibson girl body.
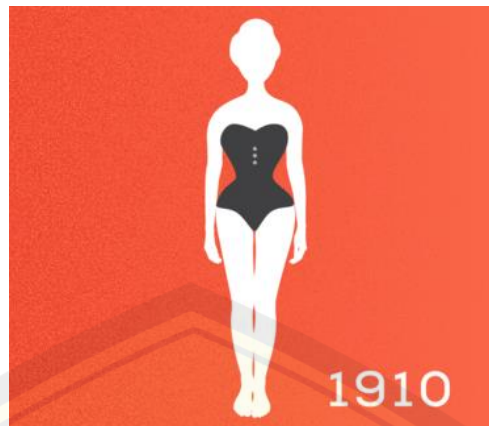
Picture 4. 1 The Gison Girl Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

In the 1920s was the flapper type of body. Flapper fashion was introduced during World War I. Women's ideal body is like a boy's flat-chested body to show off a straight, low-waisted dress (Grogan, 2017). Women would use breast straps known as bras and bandeaux to make their chest flat. In addition, women went on diet and exercised to achieve this thinness (Portillo, 2015). However, this ideal body model did not last long because the mass often displays a sensual woman. In contrast the flapper contained fewer sexual characteristics (Mazur, 1986).

The following picture is an ilustration of the flapper body.
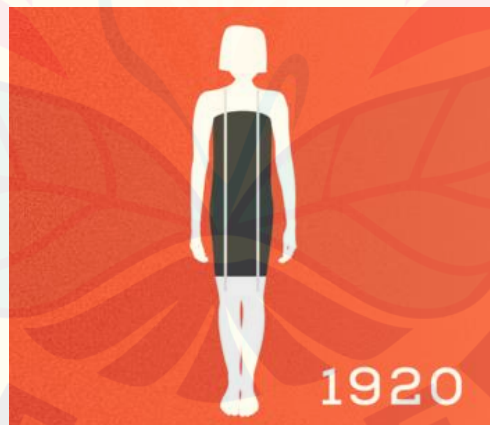
Picture 4. 2 The Flapper Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

In 1930, the ideal body for women called soft siren. It was slim, tall, and feminine curves body. According to Portillo, 2015 due to the Great Depression, the ideal body of women returned to the traditional style. Dolores del Rio is a figure of the 1930s look, being warmly curved and having a roundly turned figure (Portillo, 2015).

The picture below is and illustration of soft siren body.
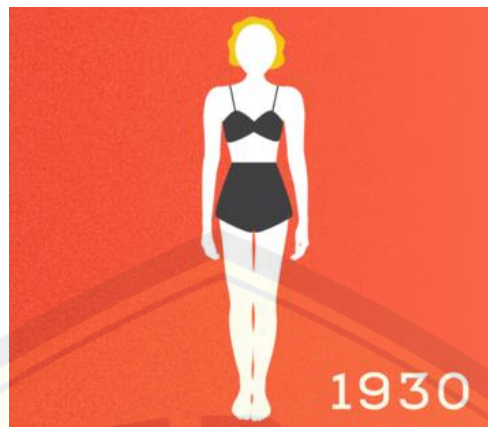
Picture 4. 3 The Soft Siren Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

Meanwhile, in 1940 the effects brought on by the existence of World War II introduced the military shoulder. So, the clothes start emphasizing certain parts rather than making them look soft. Women's bodies in this century were called star-spangled, which was imaged with a long-limbed, taller, and squarer silhouette and still showing off their natural waist (Portillo, 2015). Lauren Bacall and Katharine Hepburn are the beauty icons of the century.

The picture below is an illustration of a star-spangled body.
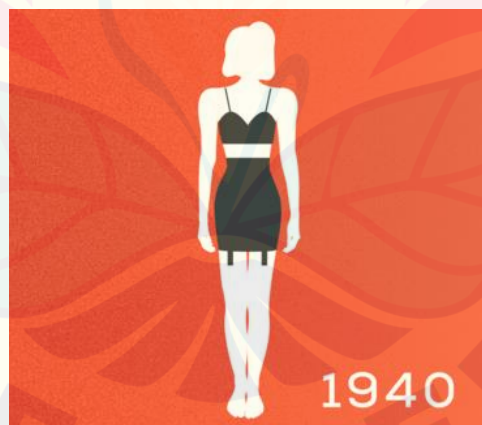
Picture 4. 4 The Star-Spangled Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

The 1950s ideal body was the hourglass body. The Hollywood film and fashion industry promote large breasts, a small waist and slender legs (Grogan, 2017). *Playboy* magazine popularized and glorified large-breasted women (Weyr, 1978 in Mazur, 1986). The body at this time was big breasts, a tiny waist, and big hips, represented by Marilyn Monroe. Women can use hip pads to equate the body with

this ideal body. While flat-chested girls could manipulate this look with breast enhancement cream (Portillo, 2015).

The picture below is an illustration of the hourglass body.
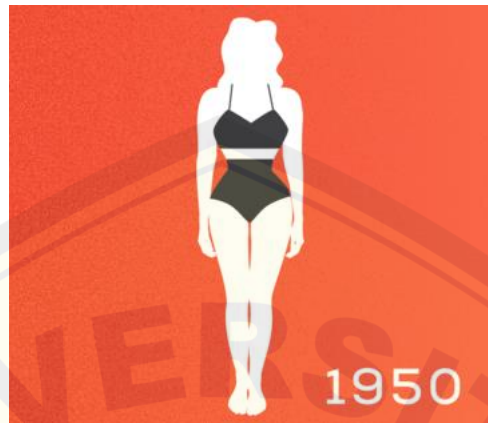
Picture 4. 5 The Horglass Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

In the 1960s, there was a historical shift from a preference for round bodies from the previous decade to thinness. It is known as twiggy. The ideal body was narrow hips, delicate features, thin legs, small breasts, and a desirable doll face. Women who want to resemble this thin figure would follow a new diet called Weight Watcher (Portillo, 2015). The picture below is an illustration of the Twiggy body.
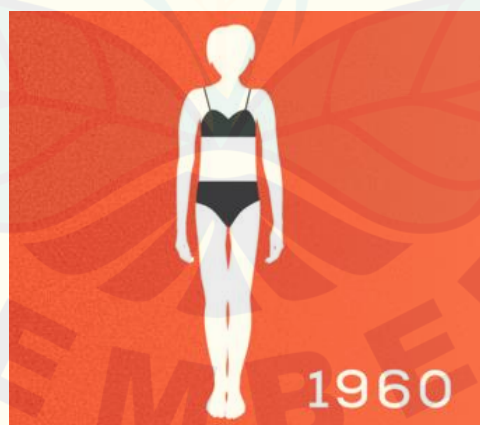
Picture 4. 6 The Twiggy (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

The disco diva was the name for the ideal body in the 1970s. In this decade, there had been a shift in the ideal body considered balanced: not too thin and too fat. Women wanted to be naturally beautiful by having small curves, flat stomachs,

slim hips, and lean legs (Portillo, 2015). Because of their popularity, Farrah Fawcett, Jaclyn Smith, and Kate Jackson become the symbol of this type of body (Sipes, 2022).

The picture below is an illustration of the disco diva body.

Picture 4. 7 The Disco Diva Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

The 1980s ideal body was called the supermodel. Women wanted to be tall with some muscle tone. To get this ideal body type, women did fitness, and this decade marked the popularity of aerobics. The diet pill was popular as the pressure to have this ideal body (Portillo, 2015). Ella MacPherson, known as 'The Body' in *Time* magazine, became the icon of the ideal female body of this decade.

The picture below is the illustration of the supermodel body.
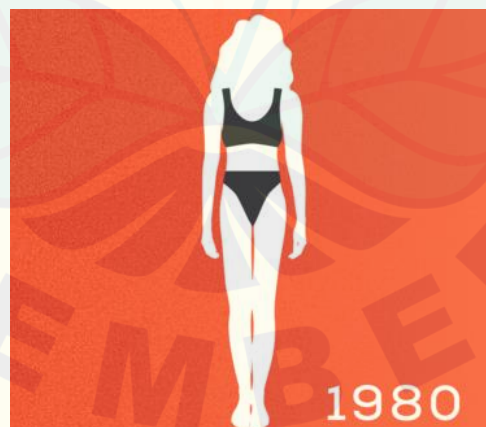
Picture 4. 8 The Supermodel Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

In the 1990s, the ideal body was the waif. The body's shape was tall and slim, with minimal or no curves. A thin and bony look represents it. To achieve this look, women go on extreme diets. Some women even used drugs to achieve the bony

look, that why this body was also called the Heroin Chic look. Kate Moss is the ideal body figure that fits this decade (Portillo, 2015).

The picture below is an illustration of the waif body.

Picture 4. 9 The Waif Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

In the 2000s, the athletic body type was the ideal. It was called the buff beauty. Women wanted a toned body, which included toned abs, thighs, and arms. Gisele Bundchen was a figure who had a 90's body. Yoga classes, diets, gyms, and personal trainers were popular to eliminate the pesky fat that prevented women from having a toned look. In addition, spray tans were also very popular (Portillo, 2015).

The picture below is the illustration of the buff beauty body.
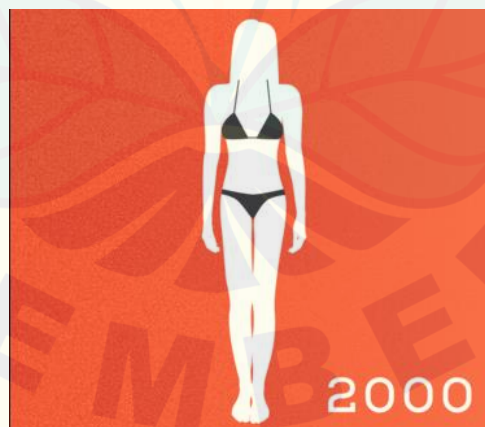
Picture 4. 10 The Buff Beauty Body (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

The 2010s was the year when social media Instagram became popular. The trend of the ideal body was growing faster and more diverse through social media. The famous ideal body type in this decade was called the booty babe. Because this

year, the ideal body type for women emphasized big bottoms and curvy frames. Queen B, Beyonce, helped make this body type popular (Sipes, 2022). The curve of the previous generation is back, this time with an emphasis on hips and boots. Besides Beyonce, Nicki Minaj, J.Lo, and Kim Kardashian represent this body image. In this decade, to get the ideal body, women went on diets and even plastic surgery done (Portillo, 2015).

The picture below is an illustration of the booty babe body.

Picture 4. 11 The Booty Babe (Source: The Greatist.com, 2015)

An article from harperbazaar.com contains an interview with Dr. Stephen J. Gerbeerg. As the plastic surgeon, he revealed that women want big breasts but a more natural look, bigger butts, rounder hips, and slimmer thighs. Statistical data from the American Society of Plastic surgery shows that breast augmentation and tummy tuck became the top five cosmetic surgical procedures in 2010.

Women's body in the 21st century is starting to vary. The development of the internet makes the concept of the ideal body not stop at one type. The popularity of the body positivity movement has also influenced women's body image. Body positivity is a social movement that accepts all body forms regardless of shape, size, skin color, gender, and physical ability.

One example of this movement is the media's representation of women with plus-size bodies. For example, in 2015, the first plus-size model named Robyn Lawley, appeared as a model for the Sports Illustrated swimwear edition. In addition, at the 2016 New York Fashion Week, a fashion designer named Christian Siriano featured five plus-size models to showcase his designs (Howard, 2018).

Body diversity movements are also manifested in Mattel's Barbie female toys. At the same time, the industry sector, the Aerie brand, has created a campaign called Aeriereal is committed not to editing their models as a form of body acceptance.

4.2 The Representation of the Female Ideal Body in Sarai Walker's *Dietland*

Dietland is a story about women's struggle to have a body shape or size that is under society's standards. The standard of the ideal body changes according to the trending center that is admired by the public. Every era has the characteristics of beauty popularized by actresses, models, and other famous figures. In the spread of popularity, the media becomes the central element. It is because the media constantly show beautiful qualifications according to trends.

In *Dietland*, Plum tries various ways to be skinny because the standard of beauty is thin women, as the media consistently portrays. Being skinny is necessary to attract the attention of men. In patriarchal culture, women are more emphasized on physical appearance, while men are more on physical strength. It is gender roles that form the basis of stereotypes about the personal attributes of women and men (Mckay, 2013).

Western society idealizes a man to have a muscular body and a strong physique because men are expected to be the initiator of aggressive actions and protectors of children and women. Meanwhile, women are supposed to be emotional caregivers and givers, willing to subdue their desires to take care of children and please men. Therefore, women's bodies are required to be submissive when they are young and sexually and maternally attractive when they are older (Lorber and Martin, 2013). Women give more attention to their appearance and body because society requires them to do that. Physical appearance affects women's social opportunities more than men's. So, women are under more pressure to conform to beauty standards or beauty ideals (Mazur, 1986). Eventually, women are often judged not by their quality but by their appearance. The consequence of this evaluation is that women become the objects of the male gaze.

Mulvey contends that women in the media are the object to be looked at while men are the ones that look (Mulvey, 1975). Through media, representation, and

experience, women learn to take a perspective of the male gaze. When people consume media that contains the perspective of a male gaze, they unconsciously believe that the idea is accurate. As women get the gaze of a man, they internalize this value. Eventually, they objectify themself. In addition to objectifying themselves, women subconsciously project the objectification gaze into other women. So, they see other women using a male perspective.

This phenomenon occurs in the main character in *Dietland*, Alicia Kettle (Plum). Therefore, to analyze how the male gaze phenomenon and the construction of the ideal body discourse in the novel, this thesis uses Mulvey's theory of Visual Pleasure or the male gaze as a supporting theory. So, it will be found how the construction of the ideal body discourse is represented in the novel. This discussion will be divided into several sub-chapters.

4.2.1 Men Gaze Women

According to Mulvey, women are continuously transformed into displays, objects to be seen, viewed, and gazed at by men (Mulvey, 1975). The male gaze theory or Visual Pleasure is a theory that Mulvey introduced to analyze the phenomenon of cinema that perpetuates patriarchal culture through the male gaze. However, with the development of the times, this theory is also applied to analyze literary works.

One example of research on literary works analyzed using visual pleasure theory was carried out by Sari & Udasmoro (2020). Their analysis is conducted on a Japanese novella titled *House of Sleeping Beauty*. The research shows that virgin women are represented as objects of male desire. Eguci, the main character in this novel, experiences a fetishistic scopophilia that later turns into narcissism by looking at girls naked bodies. This phenomenon suggests that by using visual pleasure, the male seeks to maintain complete power over the female. So, simultaneously the patriarchal culture is further strengthened. It also shows that Kawabata, the author, was unable to break free from the shackles of Japanese patriarchal culture (Sari & Udasmoro, 2020).

By placing women as objects, the assessment of women is only made of appearance and ignore their abilities. In contrast, men are valued through their abilities, while women are through their appearance. Girls tend to see their bodies as "objects" and how they look to others is a significant factor in their overall worth. Boys tend to view their bodies as a "process" and strength and functionality are more important (Franzoi, 1995).

This incident is a simple form of gender inequality for women. Because when a woman's appearance does not fit into the beautiful category, then the woman will be insulted. Women will do everything they can to match the ideal body standards made by society. It can be by dieting, taking body care pills, following programs to lose weight, and doing weight loss surgery. Women do these things to meet beauty standards even though it can be harmful.

In *Dietland*, Plum has decided to have surgery, but Verena offers her $20.000 on the condition that she joins Verena programs. These programs aim to persuade Plum to cancel the surgery. One of the Verena programs is confrontation. Plum, who usually avoids the people who do bad things to her, has to confront them.

> I looked at the man who'd made the comment and said, "I'm too much woman for you. From the looks of you, you probably like to diddle little boys." The two guys next to him, the friends, his white-guy posse, laughed. They shouldn't have laughed.
> The fist of the man who'd made the comment came flying at me
> (Walker, 2015:136).

The quotation above shows that Plum often gets contemptuous because she gets such stares so often. Plum is used to responding to the uncomfortable feelings she gets with silence. She never returns that insulting gaze, but Verena's program becomes a tool that evokes Plum to return the insulting gaze. The men's insulting gaze occurred because Plum's body is not like the acceptable body for females. So, they judge Plum's body, even committing violence when Plum tries to confront them.

As (Lorber and Martin, 2013) state that members of a social group influence and push one another to create socially acceptable—and similar-looking—bodies by criticizing, rewarding, and punishing people of various body proportions,

shapes, weights, and musculature. The men's insulting and violent stares at Plum are a form of making the acceptable body standards in society. It indicates that by men's standards, the ideal body type of a woman is not a fat woman.

In social life, obese people often target insulting humor from friends, co-workers, family members, and strangers in public. In addition, they get less respect from others (Lumpton, 2013). This is also experienced by Plum, in addition to being the target of insulting gaze from strangers, she is also judged by a man just by her appearance.

This event happens to Plum while doing Verena's program, the blind dates. Plum names the thin version of herself Alicia, which is her real name. Plum does not accept her existence fully. She thinks that she will only exist if she is thin. Through the blind date task, Verena wants Plum to experience being Alicia. During the blind date, the men immediately reject Plum when they discover that Plum is fat instead of judging Plum's quality.

> It took a few moments for me to overcome my reluctance to open the door. Once I opened it, I saw standing before me Preston, a generic white guy with brown hair, around thirty years old. And there it was: *the stare.* "Hello. You're...uh. Is Plum at home?"
> "I'm Plum," I said, hating the sound of my name.
> "No you're not." Preston laughed.
>
> (Walker, 2015:147).

The first man who goes on a blind date with Plum is Preston. Plum predicts Preston's negative response when he sees her body. Then it turned out to be true that Preston looked at Plum condescendingly as soon as he saw Plum's figure. Because the ideal woman's body standard is thin, people always expect women to be thin, as well as Preston. Plum, who gets Preston's gaze, feels small and helpless. This helplessness is marked by Plum's refusal to say her name.

In the male gaze concept, Mulvey says that pleasure in looking is divided into two. They are the active male and the passive female (Mulvey, 1975). It means that the active agent or the one who sees is male while the one who is seen is female. The result of the gaze is that women become helpless because of the gaze of men. The spectator, in this case, is Preston as an active male or a staring male. This means

that Preston makes Plum the object of his gaze. Plum is an object to be looked at and judged by Preston to live up to his expectation that beautiful women are thin women. Preston's pleasure will be achieved if the woman he gazes matches the expectations he has. This means that the active gazer is Preston, who controls and desires Plum.

Plum also gets violence from men through speech. This violence is also known as verbal violence. It happens when Plum meets her second date, Jake, the guy who insults Plum using harsh words to demean her.

> "No offense or anything, but you're not really my type. I'm attracted to a different sort of woman. It's nothing against you personally or anything. I don't like redheads either, not that you're a redhead, but you know what I mean."
> "Let's forget dinner. Go home," I said. Then I added, "You're not my type either. You look like a girl."
> "Fat bitch," he called after me.
>
> (Walker, 2015:149).

The scene above is the second male rejection Plum receives during a blind date. Jack examined Plum's body and is surprised by Plum's fat body. So, he asks Plum to confirm Plum's job. Jack assumes that people who work in fashion magazines are skinny. Jack rejects Plum saying Plum is not his type even before he knows Plum's personality.

Jack stigmatizes that fat women will not work in media companies. He also does weight-based teasing toward Plum. Weight stigma is a common experience among the United States adults. This experience is most common in women and people with a high body index mass or obesity. 40% of them reported experiences of unfair treatment, discrimination, and weight-based teasing (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). After failing to go on a blind date with Jack, the next man to be Plum's date is Alexander.

> "Does your body look, uh, normal?"
> "With clothes on, yes. Naked it's another matter. I have scars all over my body. I've been reconstructed, you see. Imagine Frankenstein."
> "It's not a pretty sight, Alexander, but what does it matter to you?"

> "The thought of it is unappealing, I must admit, but I appreciate your honesty, Alice."
> "Alicia," I said. I am Alicia. I am Alicia. I repeated it to myself, but that didn't make it true.
>
> (Walker, 2015:151-152).

Alexander is a blind man, so he cannot see Plum's physique. Due to this, Plum pretends that she is Alicia, a thin woman who has undergone weight loss surgery. By pretending to be Alicia, Plum is realizing her wish to become a thin woman. Plum wants to predict what will happen when she does a weight loss surgery later. She estimates what other people think of her thin body, the body that has gone through surgery.

By asking what Alexander thinks about her body which has many surgical scars, Plum tries to see what might happen if she becomes thin by surgery. Alexander's response, which says the word 'unappealing', reminds Plum that although she has achieved her dream of being thin, she is not fully accepted. If Alexander, in this case man, does not accept her fully, then neither does society.

A cross-sectional national survey was obtained from the general population of the United States. It shows that women of white ethnicity tend to be the most likely patients to undergo weight loss surgery. Additionally, it was discovered that the majority of the United States had unfavorable attitudes toward weight loss surgery. This unfavorable attitude has the potential to create a social atmosphere that is challenging for those who are having weight loss surgery. (Dolan et al., 2019).

After her third blind date, Plum begins to doubt her decision to do weight loss surgery. It leads Plum to negotiate the possibility of not having weight loss surgery. She begins to think again about her desire to become Alicia. After realizing that all men judge women by their appearance, Plum is reluctant to continue on her last blind date.

Plum's encounters with the men who mistreat her become Plum's awakening. This incident leads Plum to self-awareness. Assisted by the program Verena had planned, Plum managed to get through the self-negotiation phase.

> "Because I'm fat, I know how horrible everyone is. If I looked like a normal woman, if I looked like *you,* then I'd never know how cruel

and shallow people are. I see a different side of humanity. Those guys I went on the blind dates with treated me like I was subhuman. If I were thin and pretty, they would have shown me a different side, a fake one, but since I look like this, I know what they're truly like."

(Walker, 2015:181).

Plum's negotiating phase occurs when she positions herself if she stays fat. Previously Plum had calculated what people would think if she was thin. This time she calculates what would happen if she remains fat. This means Plum imagines herself to be herself. Previously, she only feels existed when she became Alicia. Through this negotiation process, Plum accepted her existence regardless of her body size.

From the results of this negotiation, Plum finds a positive side if she sticks with her fat body. The positive side is that Plum can know the true nature of a man. It is the thing she cannot get if she is thin. After all, men will fake their true nature because men want to look good in front of beautiful women. Eventually, Plum makes peace with her body, choosing to be herself without being influenced by the ideal body standards that are attractive to men.

4.2.2 Women Gaze Themselves

Fredrickson and Robert in objectification theory reveal that women who live in cultures that objectify women are typically socialized to internalize the viewpoint of the observer as the primary perception of their physical selves (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Because of the male gaze that women often get, both through the media and everyday experiences, this perspective is finally internalized. Consequently, it is considered true that the acceptable female's body is thin.

In *Dietland*, women are considered attractive if they have thin bodies. So, Plum tries every way to get the thin ideal body. Plum, who begins to focus on appearance, subconsciously objectifies herself. Girls' self-objectification typically is resulted from two main factors. The first is internalizing media representations of traditional beauty standards and the second is sexual objectification they may encounter in their daily lives (Mckay, 2013). The first thing Plum tries to meet the ideal body

standard is to follow a diet program. Plum watches media that show traditional beauty standards of women, which is in the form of diet program advertisements.

> An old photograph of Eulayla Baptist filled the screen. She was enormous in a pair of faded jeans, trying to shield her face from the camera. In a voiceover, she said: "That was me, Eulayla Baptist. Back then I was so fat, I couldn't even play with my daughter." Sad violins swelled in the background, reaching a crescendo as thin Eulayla burst through the photograph, ripping it to shreds. She stood in a tada! pose, her arms extended toward the heavens.
> (Walker, 2015:35-36).

The advertisement Plum watched offers a thin body as the ideal body for women. It was conveyed through the figure of Eulayla, the owner and model of the diet program. When the ad shows a fat photo of fat Eulayla, the image shows a sad mood and a narrative showing helplessness. In contrast, when a woman turns thin, the show's mod and Eulayla's figure become happier. It is symbolized by the hands reaching up to the sky, showing the pose of a person when she gets what she wants. It means that the desired body is thin.

The media explicitly demonstrates how to achieve slender figures through dieting, exercise, and body-contouring surgery, promoting the idea among female customers that they can and should be skinny (Yamamiya et al., 2005). Through the diet program advertisements, Plum learned that her fat body was not ideal. The ideal body is thin. That is why Plum joined the diet program called the Baptist Plan.

> "You're not coming to visit me because of a *diet?*"
> "I can't, Daddy. You'll be proud of me when this is finished, I promise." I was his only child. He had married again, but his new wife couldn't have children, so I was his only hope for grandkids. If I was fat, no one would want to marry me.
> (Walker, 2015:45).

Plum, who goes on a diet, does not visit her father, who is in Boise. She could not bring all the frozen food she got from the Baptist Plan program. From the scene above, it can also be seen that Plum feels she cannot marry if she is not thin. It means that Plum wants to be skinny to attract the attention of men. If she can attract men, there will be a man who wants to marry her. It shows that women are inferior

figures, and men are superior figures. Women are the bearer of meaning, not the maker of meaning (Mulvey, 1975). Because to be considered attractive by men, women must follow the standards set by men regarding their opinion of how women should look. The fact that Plum thinks dieting will change her future indicates that Plum feels helpless. She will feel empowered if she has a thin body, the desired body according to men.

Bartky argues that having a feminine body, which is a body that is socially constructed through appropriate practices, is important to a woman's sense of herself as a woman. Women think that it is crucial to feel themselves as subjects who wanted and are sexually desired. Therefore, women want a feminine body because of the threat of desexualization (Bartky, 1990).

In order to attract men to marry her, Plum must adjust herself to beauty standards that are considered attractive by men. This adjustment is in the form of a diet. It indicates that Plum looks at herself the same way men look at her. This is in line with Mulvey's theory which reveals that in the case of film, in getting the pleasure, women not only watch the cinema from a secondary perspective. They also see themselves from a man's perspective. As a result of this male gaze perspective, women experience self-objectification and low self-esteem (Calogero, 2012).

The obvious risk confronted by girls and women who live in a culture that objectifies women is an eating disorder (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Women are under pressure to meet body standards that are considered proper. An eating disorder is characterized by unusual eating behavior that negatively impacts a person's physical or mental health. Plum also has an eating disorder while on her diet. Plum's eating disorder is a binge eating disorder. It is an eating disorder in which sufferers often eat large amounts of food and find it difficult to resist the urge to eat.

> At dinner, I microwaved my designated meal, then peeled back the silver plastic to reveal beef stew, its chunks of meat and peas floating in a lukewarm bath of brown gravy, or a turkey meatball, like a crusty planet surrounded by red rings of pasta. The meals were small, merely a scoop or two of food, and they seemed to lack a connection

> to actual foodstuffs; I thought it was possible the "food" was constructed of other elements, like paper and Styrofoam, but I didn't care, as long as eating it led to thinness.
>
> (Walker, 2015:42).

The food from Baptist Plan is made from styrofoam and paper, wich has no callories. Plum's eating disorder is because the food that she eats is not real food. She eats food that her body cannot absorb. It makes her body suffer. She still eats it so that her body does not receive calories. No calories mean that she would not gain weight. Plum tortures her body. She continues to do so that she can get the ideal body. She ignores her suffering body. The way she is more concerned with how she looks proves that she posits herself as an object to be gazed.

Constantly Plum assesses her body and continues to observe her body. She also does various things even though it hurts her body. It is not easy for women to differentiate; they diet for the sake of good health or it is required to obey femininity (Bartky, 1990). Eventually, Plum loses authority over her own body because her body is shaped to satisfy the gaze of men. The fact that women objectify themselves is the form of being defined from a male gaze perspective (Mckay, 2013).

As a result of the male gaze that women always get, she finally gazes at herself too. It means that women evaluate themselves. This phenomenon is related to Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary power. Foucault uses the term Panopticon which is prison architecture, to explain the concept of disciplinary power. The circular prison and the warder in the middle make the warder easy to keep watch over the prisoners at all times.

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising his surveillance over and against himself
>
> (Foucault, 1980).

Through the quotation above, Foucault argues that without requiring physical violence. It only requires stares; an inspection gazes to make individuals feel

monitored until the individual unconsciously monitors himself. The convict takes over polices duties knowing that they can be observed from the tower at any time.

Specifically, on disciplining women's bodies, Bartky argues that women also watch over themselves because they know that men are watching them with their invisible eyes. For example, a woman checks her make-up, a woman feels she is fat, a woman monitors her body, and a woman monitors what she eats. This supervision, according to Bartky, is a form of obedience to patriarchy. Women are aware of supervision so that whatever she is, she is a body designed to please and excite men (Bartky, 1990).

Women will always feel watched in the shadow of a body representation that is considered normal or ideal, which is a thin body. Bartky argues that in the institutionalized regime of heterosexuality, women must make themselves objects and prey for men. It explains that in contemporary patriarchal culture, the panoptic view of men is present in women's consciousness. Women are constantly in the eyes of men and under the judgment of men (Bartky, 1990).

The diet program that Plum has followed since she was a teenager turned out to be unsuccessful because the clinic is closed by Verena. Verena is the daughter of the owner of the Baptist Plan diet clinic. Realizing that diet programs are not effective for weight loss, Plum, now in her late twenties, decided to undergo weight loss surgery.

> The surgery would make my stomach the size of a walnut; afterward, I'd only be able to eat spoonfuls of food each day for the rest of my life. That was the horrible part, but the miraculous part was that I would lose between ten and twenty pounds a month. In one year it would be possible to lose more than two hundred pounds, but I wouldn't go that far. I wanted to weigh 125 pounds.
>
> (Walker, 2015:6).

Plum realizes that having fat loss surgery has a downside, but she is more attracted to this weight loss technique. This technique makes her lose weight drastically and instantly. Plum's ideal body weight is 125 pounds or about 55 kg. In 2016 the ideal size for an American woman 20 years and older is less than 5 feet 4 inches (about 63.7 inches) with an average weight of 170,6 pounds (Marcin, 2020).

Plum's ideal body is lower than the average American woman's weight. Based on research by MacNeill & Best, (2015), women who suffer from eating disorders think that the ideal body image is a body that is categorized as underweight.

From dieting and planning surgery, Plum's efforts keep going to achieve a thin body. Plum believes that many things make her unable to do because of her body. Plum as a fat woman, loses the power to do something she wants, without thinking about how people see her. She loses power over it, while she will gain power if she has a thin body. This incident can be seen from the quote below.

> "What else can Alicia do that you can't?"
> "Everything!" "She won't be alone all the time, she won't spend all of her time in this apartment, she'll dress in pretty clothes, she'll travel, she'll have a job that she likes, she'll host dinner parties."
> "What else?"
> "Alicia will be loved," I said, at last.
>
> (Walker, 2015:96).

Verena asks what Plum cannot do if she does not get thin. Plum feels she has no power when she is fat. Because she has a fat body, she loses access to live like an ordinary woman. For example, it is difficult for Plum to get clothes. As a fat woman, Plum often wears black and avoids colored clothes. Besides that, it is hard for her to travel. Plum has an experience where she has to travel by plane and suffer humiliation. Plum also struggled to get the job she wanted. Plum worked as a ghostwriter for a skinny editor named Kitty. The unfair experiences make Plum understand that she will gain privilege and find ease in life if she is thin.

Plum eventually escapes seeing herself as a complete human being, a complete woman, not as an object to be arranged and observed. This event happens when Plum is about to perform the surgery. She sees her uterus via ultrasound. This incident awakens her to realize that her body is completely female, just like any other woman's. It can be seen through this quotation.

> On the screen I was like them, the sum of my parts. Underneath my bulky exterior I was like every other woman, even if I had never been allowed to feel that way. After my appointment, I walked home in a daze. I had never liked to call myself a woman. I knew I was one, but the word never sounded right when applied to me.
>
> (Walker, 2015:153).

Plum is surprised to know that she has a womb. Her surprise occurred because she had been separating herself from the female category. She hated herself because she was fat. Plum has embedded the value that society's standard regarding a woman's ideal body is thin. She felt that she was not a woman if she were not thin. However, when she sees her womb, she realizes she is also a woman. Because she was too focused on wanting to change herself to be thin, Plum doubted herself and tried to be someone else. Plum ignores that she is a woman with authority over her own body. In the end, she realized that she had seen her body as an object that was only used to make men like her and women jealous of her body.

> *Foxy, hot, fuckable.* Whatever it was called, that's what I'd wanted—to be hot, to elicit desire in men and envy in women. But I realized I didn't want that anymore. That required living in Dietland, which meant control, constriction—paralysis, even—but above all it meant obedience. I was tired of being obedient.
>
> (Walker, 2015:185).

The phrase 'to elicit desire in men and envy in women' proves that Plum has been objectifying herself all along. She positions herself as an object that can be gazed at and evaluated by both men and women. Ultimately, Plum realizes she does not want to be an object anymore. Being an object means being controlled by the subject. In this case, it is the man who becomes the subject who has the power. Because the value of how women should look is a form of gender inequality, women are emphasized on appearance to satisfy men. Plum realizes that she becomes an obedient object through normalization. An example of normalization is the extreme diet to get an ideal body.

4.2.3 Women Gaze Other Women

This subchapter explains how Plum gazes at other women in *Dietland*, which proves that Plum internalizes the value of the male gaze and projects it onto other women. So that she sees other women the same way men see her. Women know and internalize the look so that they survey themselves and other women by men's standards (Berger, 1972).

Beauvoir (1967) argues that women find the meaning of the words beautiful and ugly through praise and reprimand. Through pictures and words, they understand that to be acceptable means to be beautiful. The way women experience their bodies is a consequence of the process of internalizing the value of views under the gaze of others. Women are more likely to project an internalized view of objectification of other women. In short, women who experience self-objectification are more likely to objectify others, especially other women (Strelan and Hargreaves, 2005).

From the views she got from other people, Plum understood what kind of a woman she looked like in order to be called pretty. Eventually, she projects the value of the beautiful woman onto other women. Plum judges someone by their appearance and ignores her quality. When she sees a fat woman, she who internalizes the value male gaze ends up treating another fat woman negatively.

> I wished she hadn't sat down next to me, since we looked like two Humpty Dumptys seated together. During the part of the meeting where we were supposed to chat with our neighbor, Janine spoke as if the two of us were the same. She even invited me out for coffee after the meeting, but I said I was busy. I had never had a fat friend and I didn't want one.
>
> (Walker, 2015:41).

In this quotation, it can be seen that Plum avoids interacting with fat women. Plum's rejection of Janine proves that Plum projects her knowledge that women must be thin. Thus, upon seeing Janine, Plum immediately judged her body which was like Plum's body. Janine, who tries to befriend Plum, does not get a good response because Plum does not want to be friends with fat women. Just as Plum hates herself, Plum dislikes Janine because of her body appearance.

Besides Plum's meeting with fat women, evidence that Plum also judges women based on their appearance can also be seen in her meeting with Verena Baptist. She is the daughter of a woman who became a symbol of the ideal body for Plum, Eulayla Baptist.

> When she reached for my hand, I could feel the bones in her fingers, as fragile as matchsticks. I had expected some resemblance to Eulayla

> Baptist, who'd had that plasticine, middle-American look of the
> beauty queen, but no one would have guessed they were mother and
> daughter.
>
> <div align="right">(Walker, 2015:74).</div>

The first time Plum sees Verena, Plum's comment is Verena's physique. Verena is tall and thin. Apart from that, Plum also commented on how skinny Verena is. Plum states that Verena is not what she expected is because Plum compares Verena to Eulayla. Plum unconsciously states that Verena does not fit the standard of a woman's ideal body because she is not look like her mother.

Like how men differentiate between fat and thin women, Plum, who internalizes the male gaze values, also evaluates fat and thin women differently. It can be seen from Plum's meeting with Kitty. Kitty is the senior editor of Austen Media and works for a magazine called *Daisy Chain*. Plum works as her ghostwriter. She replaces Kitty by replying to thousands of messages from *Daisy Chain* readers.

Kitty mistreats Plum because of Plum's body size. She doesn't allow Plum to work from the Austen media, but to work from home. "Kitty doesn't want me working in her office. I'm the embodiment of everything she hates" (Waker, 2015:91). From this quotation, it can be seen that Plum is not accepted by her co-worker. She gets injustice in work because of her body size.

> She was a mesmerizing presence, probably better viewed from afar.
> With the afternoon sunlight streaming in through the windows,
> casting her mostly in silhouette, the sight of her—Medusa-like red
> curls atop a slender body—made me think I was hallucinating or
> looking at something drawn by Edward Gorey.
>
> <div align="right">(Walker, 2015:23).</div>

The quotation above reveals how Plum views Kitty. Plum describes Kitty's appearance as something attractive and charming. It is because Kitty has an ideal body, a thin one. Because Kitty is so charming, Plum assumes Kitty is like an unrealistic painting from Edward Gorey. Not only Plum, women who work at Austen Media also internalize the value of male gaze. All the women who work in

the Austen media are skinny, including Kitty. They all avoid getting fat. They looked at fat women as a bad thing.

> "If Kitty or any of the women on her staff were given the choice between looking like me and losing an arm or a kidney or even *dying,* they'd probably choose death or dismemberment," I said. "There. Are you satisfied?"
> "This is good. Keep going."
>
> (Walker, 2015:90).

For people who work in media companies, appearance is an important point. Every day, they face pictures of skinny and sexy women on the covers of their magazines. The concept of their ideal body will be following what they often see. Therefore, women who work in Austen media are obsessed with having a thin body. They also hate being fat like Plum. Plum considers that all women should have thin bodies. That is why she had the preconceived notion that all of Austen Media's staff would choose death over having a body like her. Based on research conducted by Balcetis et al., (2013) it is proven that awareness about the concept of ideal body shape adversely affects self-esteem among women, regardless of their actual body weight and shape. It means that since a woman understands the concept of the ideal body, she will continue to observe herself and observe other women.

How Plum and Austen's workers judges other women's appearance is the male gaze values. That is from everyday life experiences, from the media they see every day, that constantly drills our embroidery with the image of a thin female body. Girls and women learn that their appearance is essential in social life, so they begin to have the perspective of a male gazer (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Consequently, all women think that a beautiful woman is a woman who has a thin body.

Women who have fat body are women who are not liked. They are considered to have failed to meet the demands of feminine traits of patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture gives power to men to acknowledge the femininity of women. So, to fulfill the feminine concept, they do various ways to change or modify their appearance to look beautiful according to men's standards.

> "The Austen Tower is there ascending into the sky, filled with magazines and TV shows that tell women how they can avoid looking like me. I'm every American woman's worst nightmare. It's what they spend their lives fighting against, it's why they diet and exercise and have plastic surgery—*because they don't want to look like me.*"
>
> (Walker, 2015:91).

This quotation proves that Austen Media is media that spread the concept of a woman's ideal body through the image of how women should look represented on the magazine cover. In addition, through content that shows how not to look fat. For example, the content of the interview with Kitty is explained through this quotation, "Earlier, I showed you how to pose for photographs so that your hips will appear slimmer," she said (Walker, 2015). It is the spread of knowledge of the concept that the ideal body is a body like on the cover of a magazine, and women should not have fat body. Plum, who has understood these values, tends to follow the beauty standard; a thin woman.

However, after joining Verena's program, Plum begins to realize that she did not meet the beauty standards. Plum's meeting with the women in the Calliope house, the house of feminist women, awakened Plum's awareness. It makes her realizes that being different from beauty standards is okay. She learns to see other women through their qualities instead of their appearance. This can be seen in Plum's encounter with Sana.

> "You and I can never look the way women are supposed to look." "Do you think we're the same?"
> "In the ways that matter, yes. We're different in a way that everyone can see. We can't hide it or fake it. We'll never fit society's idea for how women should look and behave, but why is that a tragedy? We're free to live how we want. It's liberating, if you choose to see it that way."
>
> (Walker, 2015:184).

Previously, Plum has always seen herself as isolated. It is because she not fit with the social idea of the female body that should be. Sana was in the same case as Plum. She is not meeting the beauty standards. The difference is that Plum struggles with her body, while Sana with her face. Sana has burns on her face.

Through Sana, Plum realizes that do not meeting society's standards of how women should look is liberating. It depends on how Plum sees this problem.

If she accepts her body as it is then she will see this as something positive. "I tried to decide if I liked the clothes without thinking about what other people would see when they looked at me. Alicia wanted their approval, but Plum didn't (Walker, 2015:205)." Through this quotation, it can be seen that Plum has changed her perception of her body. After the process of negotiation and meeting people who have a positive perspective on women's ideal body, Plum begins to ignore what people think about her body. In the end, Plum does not need someone's validation of her body.

4.3 Media Construction of Ideal Body

This sub-chapter discusses the construction of a woman's ideal body in the media and how Plum receives the knowledge presented by the media. The theory of encoding and decoding by Stuart Hall will be used to carry out this analysis. In Hall's theory, the audience not only receives what is conveyed by the sender of the message. They can also reproduce the message conveyed. It means that message delivery circulation is not only in a sender-message-receiver relation. The audience of the message can reproduce the message conveyed so that the sequence becomes production-circulation-distribution-consumption-reproduction. In receiving a message conveyed by the media, Hall reveals three audience positions

In *Dietland*, the media plays an essential role in consuming a woman's ideal body. The construction of a woman's ideal body through the media has a significant influence on women's ideal body image. Through models, actresses, and pop stars, the media contributes to the ideal of beauty by giving examples of women considered attractive, which young women use as a reference norm (Anschutz et al., 2009). A study found that exposure to the ideal of beauty in the media can lead to big motivation to be thin for those who are depressed, and also can raise the body's unsatisfaction which drive them to be thin (Prnjak et al., 2019). In the novel, the concept ideal body is constructed through commercial advertisements and magazines photos

4.3.1 Commercial add

Commercial advertising is one of the media that is very influential on the formation of women's body image. To market products pervasively, television and magazine advertisements use attractiveness standards. These standards are difficult for pre-teen and adolescent women (Martin and Gentry, 2013).

In *Dietland*, Plum is fascinated by a diet program advertisement she sees on television. She saw the ad named Baptist Plan when she was seventeen. This ad offers a program by arranging food for its customers. Baptist Plan arranges the consumer's diet with food made specifically to regulate calorie consumption. The Baptist Plan diet system is similar to the diet system carried out by a diet company in the United States called Weight Watcher, where food comes from a diet center.

Weight Watcher has a system where dieters are guided to live a healthy life by choosing low-energy points based on points. The calorie points are calculated for each meal (Thom and Lean, 2017). The diet system of calculating calories in the food in the novel is similar to the diet program followed by Plum after failing the Baptist Plan. This diet is called Waist Watcher.

> There was Rosa, age twenty-three: "If I had to look fat in my wedding dress, then I'd rather die an old maid." Sad violins, then Burst! Rosa was thin. Marcy, age fifty-seven: "My husband wanted to take a cruise, but I said 'No way, buster! These thighs aren't getting into a pair of shorts.'" Sad violins, then Burst! Marcy was thin. Cynthia, age forty-one: "After my husband was killed on American Airlines Flight 191, I ate at least ten thousand calories a day. If Rodney were still alive, he would have been so ashamed of me." Sad violins, then Burst! Cynthia was thin
>
> (Walker, 2015:36).

The quotation above shows that fat women in commercial advertisements are likened to not having power because of their bodies. It is conveyed through the ad narration in which Rossa does not want to marry if she is fat, Mercy cannot get on a cruise because she is fat, and Rosa feels her husband would be embarrassed if she was fat. So that Rossa, Mercy, and Cynthia want, can do what she wants, the Baptist Plan ad offers a diet program. A thin body is a solution to these problems. In this

case, the Baptist Plan commercials promote a thin body because a thin body will allow all women to do what they want.

Media representation of women's bodies is very essential in influence women perception about their body, for example, a study conducted by Balcetis et al, (2013). This research used two beauty product advertisements: Nivea used a skinny model, and Dove used a less skinny model. It was shown that women exposed to advertisements using a skinny model felt sadder and ate less than women exposed to advertisements using a thin model. It is because dove ads explicitly refer to the ideal beauty by using a marketing strategy using a model that has a more realistic body (Anschutz et al., 2009). Body representation which emphasizes the model's beauty instead of the product, can affect the ideal body image in women. The Baptist Plan add affects Plum's body image. Through this quotation, it can bee seen that Plum imagines that she will have a thin body like in the ad.

> For hours I watched TV, waiting for the ads, mesmerized. I dug out my yearbook from tenth grade, looking at a snapshot of me on page 42. The caption read: "Alicia Kettle works on her science project in the library." I imagined seeing that photo on TV, me in my ever-present black dress, the roll of fat under my chin. Burst! I'd obliterate that hideous girl.
>
> (Walker, 2015:36).

Plum, who watches the Baptist Plan diet program advertisement, is fascinated. Through this advertisement, Plum learns that her fat body can become thin through diet programs. Plum understands that thin is the body that women desire. Plum also craves a thin body. It can be seen through how Plum imagines herself after following the diet program. She imagines herself as one of the testers who appears on TV with her thin body. The influence of the media plays an important role in creating images of women's bodies through spectacle. Besides that, the role of beauty experts and public figures is also a discipline that produces body shapes that are considered normal for women (Bartky, 1990).

4.3.2 Magazine

The concept of a woman's ideal body is also displayed in magazines. In *Dietland*, the magazine sensually presents women. Showing women sensually indicates that women become sexual objects to satisfy male readers.

> There were also myriad lads' magazines, as they were called. The lads' magazines weren't on the top shelf, but were at eye-level for everyone to see. The graphic covers featured naked women, often in pairs or even in triplicate, rubbing their barely concealed nipples together, putting their tongues in each other's mouths.
>
> (Walker, 2015:84).

The quotation above shows that myriad lads' magazines objectify women by showing naked women on the magazine's cover. The magazine is called "lad's" which means male property. It shows that this magazine was created to satisfy male desires. The placement of the magazine at eye level allows anyone to see this magazine and it is forced to view the naked woman's image using the male gaze's perspective. The media that objectifies women influences a person's self-perception.

The fact that women objectify themselves after seeing women in magazines means that women have internalized the values conveyed through the media. This phenomenon can also be seen through the message conveyed by the girl who reads *Daisy Chain* magazine, the women's magazine where Plum works, which always features thin women.

> Why are all the models in your magazine so skinny girls are so lucky I'll never be anything but fat ass bitch he said to me after class but I still like him and I know that is crazy cuz he is so mean to me and my friend want to get rid of these gross red bumps on our arms can you help me please cuz my legs look so fat in a swimsuit
>
> (Walker, 2015:13).

Through this quotation, it can be seen that *Daisy Chain* always uses slim models. The representation of women in this magazine affects the readers. The *Daisy Chain* reader has internalized what the magazine shows about how women should look. So, she is unsatisfied with her fat body, which is not the same as the female body she saw in magazines. The lack of representation of the average female

body and many representations of the ideal skinny body makes media connoisseurs try to achieve an ideal thin body because they have internalized this value as the norm (Swiatkowski, 2016).

4.3.3 Encoding-decoding

After knowing the media construction of the ideal body through television ads and magazines, the next step is to analyze the position of the main Plum. This chapter will analyze Plum's position in consuming the ideal body discourse. In receiving a message conveyed by the media, Hall reveals three audience positions. First is the dominant hegemonic position. The second is the negotiated position, and the last is the oppositional position.

Plum decided to join the program right after seeing an advertisement for the Baptist Plan. It can be seen through the quotation below.

> The Baptist lifestyle consumed me again. I hid in my bedroom, accepted feeling sick, avoided my friend, and in my head repeated the phrase the pink trays, the pink trays, like a mantra, reminding myself that if I only ate what was in the pink trays and nothing more, I would become thin and I wouldn't die before age forty
>
> (Walker, 2015:49).

This quotation shows that Plum agrees and accepts the concept of a woman's ideal body being a thin body. That is why she tortured herself by eating only food from the Baptist Plan Program. Plum has followed this diet program is proof of the hegemony of the idea that women must be thin. Hence based on the evidence, Plum, in responding to knowledge conveyed by the media, is in the first position, the dominant hegemonic position.

Hall argues that when the viewer takes the meaning of a current program or television news broadcast completely and directly translates the message with the same code, the viewer is in the dominant hegemonic position (Hall, 2005). Plum, without a doubt, immediately accepted the message conveyed by the media and believed the message. Plum accepted the dominant code conveyed through the Baptist Plan advertisement that women had to be thin to gain power. So, she followed the thin ideal body standard by joining the Baptist Plan diet program.

In the end of the novel, it is described that Plum does not preserve her desire to be thin. Plum did not follow society's standards of how women should look. It is because she had followed the Verena Program, the new Baptist Plan. Through this program, Plum has gone through a process where she negotiates the possibility of her staying with her actual body—A fat body. This negotiation is carried out by Plum's assumption that having a fat body gives her an advantage, which is being able to see how someone is. In addition, she also feels free regardless of what people think about her body. It can be seen through the quote below:

> There was a phantom woman in my mind that I was comparing myself to, and I had to force her from the dressing room. When she was gone, I looked at my body, the body that had kept me alive for nearly thirty years, without any serious health problems, the body that had taken me where I needed to go and protected me. I had never appreciated or loved the body that had done so much for me.
>
> (Walker, 2015:204).

Plum was always in the shadow of the thin version of herself, Alicia. Alicia is a manifestation of her wanting to follow the standards set by the United States society. Because Plum was shackled by the figure she wanted to achieve, she hated her body. Plum wanted to do whatever to change her body. However, after she tries to let go of the figure of Alicia in her mind, she starts to love her body and accepts it as it is.

Plum also loves her body because her body can keep her healthy even though it is not a thin body. It means that Plum begins to let go of the concept of a thin ideal body and replaces it with the idea of self-acceptance. She accepts her body without being influenced by the media and society's expectations. Plum's acceptance of her body makes her appreciate and love her body more.

At this stage, Plum is in a negotiating position. With her negotiations, she takes the concept of the ideal body the media conveys. Plum understood the concept and accepted it. Nevertheless, Plum is in a negotiating position because she is negotiating the concept of an ideal body with her current situation. As Hall states, the negotiated position was confronted with a contradiction, although only on certain occasions brought into complete visibility. This code operates through a

certain logic or situational logic, where this situation is based on the inequality or difference between discourse and the logic of power (Hall, 2005). The ideal body ideology of a thin woman contrasts with Plum's logical situation, who is fat. Therefore, Plum builds a new ideology about body acceptance.

4.4 Ideological Position of Sarai Walker

This sub-chapter is chapter four's last part, which will answer research question two. This thesis uses the background of Walker's life to find out her ideological position. It will be related to the discourse on the ideal female body in *Dietland*, analyzed in the previous section.

All social practices that use the medium of language contain meaning, which will become knowledge. Language constructs the production of meaning through discourse. Discourse produces knowledge. However, according to Foucault, knowledge is considered true and meaningful only within a specific historical context. This means that each period will have a different discourse and different knowledge production.

Walker produced *Dietland* in the United States society in the 21st century, so that this novel will contain the production of knowledge about the ideal body of women, representing the discourse of the United States's ideal body in the 21st century. Walker's ideological position will be found by connecting the discourse on the ideal body analyzed in the previous chapter with some of Walker's interviews that describe her views on the ideal female body.

The main character is an agent of the writer to convey her knowledge. Then the character is influenced by the author's background. The main character's view will be closely related to the author's. In the previous analysis, it was found that the main character's position in interpreting the discourse of the ideal body is negotiating. Then the analysis will relate to Walker's position in representing the discourse of the ideal body in her novel.

Sarai Walker is a writer who made her debut with *Dietland*. Walker grew up in California and Utah. She grew up in the United States environment that idealizes a thin body. It affects Walker's concept of body image. In an interview with HuffPost

media, Walker revealed that she was a dieter who thought her life only began when she was thin. The idea to write *Dietland*, Walker revealed, arose in 1999 when she watched the movie Fight Club. Then she poured the idea into her short story while doing her MFA at Bennington in 2002. This short story about a fat woman who worked in a teen magazine was developed into a *Dietland*. This novel was written in 2008 and published in 2015.

In the process of writing her novel, Walker was influenced by the concept of an ideal body that changes from time to time. In the early 1910s, women in the United States idealized a body like the fictional character, the Gibson girl. It is because, at that time, the media displayed the figure of this beautiful symbol. Then the concept of the ideal body changed in the 1920s, in which a woman's body considered attractive was a flat body with no curves. This year was affected by the World War II. Meanwhile, in 1950-1960, Hollywood played a role in spreading the concept of a body that was considered attractive.

On the one hand, in 1960, The ideal body was a curvaceous woman with a tiny waist. On the other hand, this year, a movement called the first wave became the forerunner of the self-acceptance movement. This year, there was a protest against discrimination against fat people in Central Park. This movement continues until there is a second wave. The second was in 1990. The body was prioritized to be healthy by exercising comfortably. While the third wave started in the 2010s, the Instagram application's popularity allows women to show their actual body shape or size.

Walker became one of the people who promoted body positivity. She worked as a writer and editor on a new edition of the feminist health book *Our body Ourselves* in 2005. Her view on women's bodies is reflected in articles internet that have appeared in *The New York Times* in 2016, *The Washington Post*, 2016 and *The Guardian*, 2016.

Besides being active in promoting the fat acceptance movement, Walker is also a feminist who criticizes the objectification of women in the media. It can be seen through Walker's interview on National Public Radio (2015). In this interview, Walker expresses her opinion about the objectification of women.

So, in the case of women, the way we present ourselves is always to this sort of invisible male eye. It just becomes something that's part of how you function in life. And I think in *Dietland* part of what Plum does is try and — or the other women try and help her — step out of that, which really shakes her life to its foundation, in a way. To say: I'm not going to see myself as the sexual object, I'm going to try and see myself as I am

(Walker, 2015).

Walker argues that women have always been the object of the invisible male. It means that women will always be the objects to be seen through the eyes of men. The objectification of women that causes self-objectification is a form of internalizing the male gaze perspective. Walker also revealed that Plum's character is trying to free herself from self-objectification. Plum tries dieting, takes pills, and wants to do weight loss surgery in an attempt to satisfy men's desires. So, Plum is trapped in the position of a sexual object. Women help Plum with a positive body image, such as Verena, a feminist activist, and Sana, who has burns on her face. With their help, Plum finally comes out of her self-objectifying perspective so she can accept her body and love herself.

The internalization of the male gaze value results from the concept of how women should look, which is often shown in the media. Walker also gave her opinion on this issue. It can be seen in the quotation below.

There's a lot of emphasis placed on "You look pretty," "You look cute." ... That's a tremendous amount of your value and your worth as a person, is how you look. And so I think when you get to be the age of the women that I'm writing about in the novel — so, you know, Plum is in her late 20s — it very much is about sexual attractiveness I think. I mean, of course not for everybody. But I think if we just look at our culture — we look at advertisements, we look at magazines, TV shows, movies.

(Walker, 2015).

The text above shows that Walker believes that women are always taught about women's gender roles from a young age. It means that women are expected to care about their appearance. It is a women's value to be beautiful. Women are appreciated when they are beautiful. Walker also reflects on this problem in her novel character, Plum. Plum in their late 20s has a lot to do with sex attractiveness.

Plum wants to get married, have children, and like men. So, she tries various ways to be thin and loved by men. The dictation of how women should be seen continues and is conveyed through the media, which has become a culture in the United States' advertisements, magazines, TV shows, and movies.

Mulvey gives an example of the phenomenon of objectification of women in Hollywood films. In *Only Angels Have Wings* and *To Having and Not Having*, the film opens with the woman as the object of the combined gaze of the audience and all the male protagonists in the film (Mulvey, 1975). It means that the gaze of the male character who is objectifying the women character is translated through camera movement. It makes male spectators also objectify, and possess like the men in the film.

A study report called *Rewrite Her Story* aims to see how women are represented in films and television shows. The research was conducted on television shows from 20 countries including the United States. It found that depictions of women in leadership were depicted as sexual objects or with nudity compared to men (Goulds, et al,. 2019). This shows that the United States shows still has the male gaze perspective. This phenomenon occurs because, in television shows, women are not represented as leaders. Besides that, male directors dominate major Hollywood films, so the representation in the films will use the male gaze perspective instead of the female perspective.

The male gaze phenomenon in media shows influences women's perspective in seeing their bodies. Women who internalize this value will see themselves as men see themselves. Women will lose their body authority because their bodies are modified for the visual pleasure of men. It means that the power which exists is men who see and women who are seen. So, men have more power over women.

The phenomenon of plastic surgery, diets, and all efforts to meet beauty standards is evidence that women are the object. Women's bodies must be disciplined to make a body that gives pleasure to men. According to Michel Foucault, it is a disciplinary power, a technology of power that is carried out to discipline the body and make it an obedient and useful body. For example, through

dieting. Diet disciplines the body's hunger, such as appetite, which must be regulated continuously and targeted to pursue a specific body size (Bartky, 1990).

Walker alluded to the politics of fat bodies in her interview, it can be seen in the quotation below:

> I live in a fat body myself and you know, people assume all sorts of things about me. People look at you and think: Oh, well, she must eat all day or never exercise; she must have an eating disorder. All of these things are projected onto fat people all day long. So you can never just kind of go about your day as a regular person. So I don't mean political in terms of a political party; I mean structures of power — certain people having power and privilege.
>
> (Walker, 2015).

Walker argues that a fat body is a politicized body. Through the stigma about fat women, a power relationship will be formed from the stigma. It presents a power structure where fat women are in the second position and become the subject of being controlled. However, because of the normalization of female traits of femininity, women do not realize that they are disciplined to form a body standard.

Bartky argues that because discipline is non-egalitarian and asymmetric, all elements can play a role in disciplining women's bodies. For example, some parents and teachers discipline women's bodies through advice for girls to be graceful, polite, and other feminine traits. The media also builds women's body image through spectacle. In addition, the role of public figures that are symbols of beauty also helps to discipline women's bodies. The discipline of the female body is ubiquitous and not tied to one kind of authority obtained through disciplinary institutions, as Foucault explains. Thus, the absence of a formal institutional structure and authority to carry out institutional directives makes the production of femininity completely voluntary or natural (Bartky, 1990).

To free themself from the control of the ideal body discourse that sometimes hurts women, Walker, through the character of Plum, creates a narrative in which Plum realizes the meaning of her own body without being influenced by the media and society. Walker conveys her ideology through Plum's awareness at the end of

the novel when Plum chooses to see her body positively. It can be seen through quotation below.

> As I walked I steady myself, raising my chin confidently, daring someone to say something. People had always insulted me by calling me fat, but they couldn't hurt me that way, not anymore. I was fat, and if I no longer saw it as a bad thing, then the weapon they had used against me lost its power.
>
> (Walker, 2015:205).

The text above shows that when Plum has seen her body positively, there is no power relation that occurs. It because she is a subject who has her own authority over her body. By loving her body, Plum will not modify her body to meet society's expectations of the ideal female body.

As a writer, Walker projects her life experiences onto the character Plum. So, what happened to Plum in the novel will show Walker's ideological position. Plum's view of body negotiations shows Walker's position that she is also in negotiations about the discourse of the ideal body in the United States. Instead of fully accepting the concept of the ideal body by trying to get the ideal body, Walker makes a new concept, which is the concept of body acceptance.   Walker's view can be seen through this quotation.

> I think it's great to focus on healthy eating and exercise, but to say, as people in the health at every size movement do, you can be healthy at any size. You know, exercise, eat healthy; whatever size you are, that's what you are, because body shaming just doesn't work. And those kind of anti-obesity programs I think are really harming children because it's stigmatizing them.
>
> (Walker, 2015).

Walker argues that getting the ideal body with healthy food and exercise is a good thing. But it would be great if everyone could eat healthily and exercise regardless of their size. This means that Walker rejects the stigmatization of fat people which will lead to body shaming Walker argues that getting the ideal body with healthy food and exercise is good. However, it would be great if everyone could eat healthily and exercise regardless of size. It means that Walker rejects the

stigmatization of fat people, leading to body shaming. In Western societies in the twenty-first century, slenderness is typically connected with pleasure, prosperity, youth, and social acceptance. While being overweight is associated with being unmotivated, lazy, and out of control (Grogan, 2017). According to Walker, this stigmatization will not help them live healthier. In fact, it will make them obsessed with being thin, which then causes psychological diseases such as eating disorders to depression.

Walker's position can be seen through Walker's attitude, which does not entirely reject the concept of the ideal female body that the United States society adores. However, she believes that all body shapes and sizes can be healthy and that avoiding stigmatization will increase body satisfaction.

In an interview with Ravishly Media, Walker revealed that it is difficult to change the perspective of women who have been internalized by a culture, where having an ideal body means being desired and loved. It also happens to the Plum figure, it is difficult to change the perspective of Plum just by using advice, so in *Dietland*, Plum goes through the process of self-awareness, which leads to acceptance of her body.

> It's about understanding why certain bodies are valued in our culture and others aren't, and develop a feminist consciousness. This is why it's so important to change the culture, to write books and make movies and television shows about women of all sizes who are fully human. We need diversity in media representation.
>
> (Walker, 2015).

Through the quotation above, it can be seen that Walker argues that it is important to change a culture in society. Media such as books, films, and television shows, representing more body diversity, will help individuals change. It means that displaying a diverse body changes the perception of someone who consumes the media about body image to be more positive. So that individuals more easily accept their bodies of any size. That is why Walker writes *Dietland*. She wants to give a representation of a diverse body by making Plum, who is a fat woman, the main character. A study on the impact of body diversity image represented by the

media on female body image showed that participants exposed to body diversity images reported increased total body affection, the body affection subscale associated with bodily kindness, and body and facial satisfaction (Ogden et al., 2020).

Walker's enthusiasm for spreading the concept of a diverse body to create acceptance of all sizes of the female body is in line with the fat acceptance movement in the United States in 2015, the year the novel was released. This year, plus-size fashion ceased to be minimized and pushed for more appearances in the media. This year also, the fashion industry for plus-size women is growing. For example, Melissa McCarthy, a designer who supports all sizes of women's bodies, makes Melissa McCarthy Seven7 clothes. In addition, in the modeling field, Ashley Graham, a plus-size model, has become a model for various underwear in the United States (Clinton, 2015).

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis using representation theory and supported by the male gaze theory, it is found that in *Dietland*, Sarai Walker shows the production of meaning of a female's ideal body. The production of meaning is shown through the representation of the ideal body in the novel. The concept of the ideal body in the novel is represented through the male gaze. There are three events described in this analysis. They are how men gaze at women, how women gaze at themselves, and women gaze at other women. This analysis finds that the male gaze contains objectification. It means that men only see women as objects without agency. Because women are only seen as objects to satisfy men's desires, appearance is important for women.

As a consequence of this view, women will judge themselves using the way men judge women. It means that women will internalize the views they get from men on themselves. In the end, women will objectify themselves. This form of self-objectification is self-assessment and observation. Then if women do not satisfy with their bodies, they will do various ways to fulfill the body satisfaction. In the novel, Plum goes on a diet and plans weight loss surgery to achieve the ideal body.

This objectivity does not stop at the level of self-objectification but continues on how women judge other women. Women who internalize the male gaze values will project the values to other women. It means that they will gaze at other women from men's point of view. It also happens to Plum, who judges women by their appearances.

The media in *Dietland* also spread the concept of a female's ideal body in the novel. This ideal body image is constructed through commercial ads and magazine covers. Advertisements promote a thin ideal body, while magazines continuously display erotic images of women to satisfy men's views. Through these two media, the concept of the ideal body is spread and consumed by Plum, which then affects the ideal body image she builds.

Plum's efforts to meet the standards of the United States ideal body turns out to be meaningless in the end because she has decided to love her body. Plum has

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negotiated the concept of a woman's ideal body with the condition of her body. The negotiations are carried out in two ways. The first supposition is that Plum does the weight loss surgery, and the second supposition is that Plum accepts her body as it. Based on three hypothetical positions in decoding and encoding theory, Plum is in the negotiating position. It means that Plum understands female's ideal body in the United States is a thin woman, but she interprets the concept differently. Plum chooses to accept and love her body as it is.

Plum's position in negotiating the ideal body concept shows Walker's position as the author. Walker, who grew up in the United States, shows the ideal female body phenomenon through her novel. The fact that Walker is a feminist and fat-positive activist shows that Walker is trying to spread the concept of body acceptance by creating and using Plum. In the end, Plum, who is initially hegemonized by the concept of an ideal body expected by society and promoted by the media, changes her view to body acceptance.

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