# Sexual Objectification of Girls in Anime Series: Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract.** The "sex sells" marketing strategy is still used by anime, a form of entertainment that is becoming more and more popular worldwide, and one of them is Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu anime series. Due to the main character's vulgarity against girls, this anime series sparked debate among anime viewers. For a number of reasons, such as the freedom to work for artists and the fact that sexual objectification done through animation does not damage real girls, objections to this topic are frequently refuted. The goal of this study is to identify the various ways that girls are sexually objectified in anime, which could affect viewers' attitudes and actions.

A qualitative approach is used through critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills. Discourse is utilized methodologically to dismantle forms of sexual objectification of women in anime series. It is revealed how women are portrayed as sexual objects in anime fan service through the male gaze through discourse analysis of characters, focalization, fragmentation, and cinema schemata. Findings from this study indicate that there existed instances of sexual objectification of women in the anime series Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu, particularly in relation to the love interest of the main male character. This study critically makes us aware that the growth of digital media, which can provide a wide range of content and depict a variety of male and female characters, nevertheless reinforces patriarchal value. Even in the digital age, animation—a creative form of entertainment—continues to treat girls as just objects of desire for men. This serves as a reminder that the conventional entertainment industry, which frequently makes fun of sexual harassment of women, still exists in the internet sphere. In light of this anime series, women participation in the digital sphere ought to be promoted in order to change people's perceptions of women. It has been proven that the freedom that many advocate in the digital age yet imposes restrictions on the presence of girls as a subject.

**Keywords**: anime; digital; girls; objectification; male gaze;

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## INTRODUCTION

Japanese animation, known as anime, popularity is becoming more and more popular worldwide (Anime News Network, 2021; Variety, 2022; Ollie Barder, 2022). Schuster (as cited in Reysen et al., 2021) contends that combination of demographics, genre, and themes that bring diverse topics together is the foundation for anime's global significance. Isekai (otherworld), or simply a story set in a world that is not the "real" world or the world we live in every day, is one of the topics that has been increasingly popular in anime (Paul, 2021). Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu anime series is adaptations of the most well-known isekai light novel with the same title, which had a significant impact as a genre-defining work. (Morrissy, Mushoku Tensei Is Not the Pioneer of Isekai Web Novels, But..., 2021).

Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu anime series is a story about 34-years old NEET man who was killed after being stuck by a truck and gets reincarnated to the otherworld as a baby while maintaining his mentality from his previous life. This anime series' main theme is a second chance to take life more seriously and overcome past trauma. Nevertheless, while having a pleasant message, this anime series sparked a debate on the Chinese video sharing website Bilibili (Davis, 2021; Yuqiao, 2021; Wang, 2021; Morrissy, 2021). The responses of Mushoku Tensei anime series viewers who posted reviews on the world's most active anime and manga community site, MyAnimeList, were largely divided into three categories (MyAnimeList, 2023). The main subject of the 135 negative reviews for this anime series (not recommended) was the main male character's obscenity. 398 reviewers, or the majority, give this anime series high rating (recommended), praising the overall plot, the music and sound design, and the stunning animation. 82 reviewers, however, expressed conflicting opinions, stating that while the anime series' potential was not fully realized due to the main male character's obscenity, the adaptation of this anime series was done well.

Pervert male character is a cliché in anime with male audience demography (seinen and shonen anime) (Brenner, 2007). This cliché often related with fan service in seinen and shonen anime. Fan service can simply be defined as anything made specifically to appease the fans (as a type of service). This "whatever" is provided by the production to foster positive ties with fans, or it could be viewed as a way of showing gratitude for the previous efforts made by fans (Wittenfelt, 2020). However, the term fan service in the anime fandom and anime production circles especially refers to the sexualization of female characters.

According to Thomas Lamarre (2009) the phrase fan service explicitly refers to women who are featured in anime primarily as eye candy for male viewers and are typically sensually provocative or explicit. In other words, fan service subtly targets males. Clements & McCarthy (2006) defines fan service as the temporary suspension of interest in the current narrative in order to fascinate or pleasure the audience—typically through visuals or scenes showing female characters removing their clothes or posing provocatively. Fan service, which frequently takes the form of objectifying women, is believed to be a particular gift from the animator or creator to devoted followers. Currently, the majority of fans identify fan service as sequences that objectify women, but in reality, the term does not always apply to scenes that are sensually suggestive, and the characters used as objects of sex are not always women, despite how little men are sexually objectified in anime. For instance, accentuating the animation of robots and machinery in mecha anime (anime with a theme of machines and mechanical goods) is a sort of fan service (Clements & McCarthy, 2006; Brenner, 2007).

Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) explained that sexual objectification is a form of gender oppression that can lead to other forms of oppression against women, such as sexual violence, employment discrimination, and the trivialization of women's contributions and accomplishments. The feeling of being treated as a body (or collection of bodily parts) that is

valued largely based on its usefulness to others or for other people's consumption is the trait that can be found in all forms of sexual objectification. "Public agreement that all men have the right to sexualize all women, regardless of their age and status," according to Karen Horney (in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), is one indication of heterosexuality's cultural dominance. This sexualization takes many different forms, ranging from sexual evaluation to sexual aggression. According to Kaschak (cited in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), gazing at or inspecting the body might activate sexual evaluation in the most subtly subtle and easily refutable manners.

Objectification of girls as a fan service in anime is seen as normal by the production team and by male viewers. It is as if being objectified for the pleasure of male characters and male viewers is one of the purpose of girls in cinema. Male Gaze theory by Laura Mulvey explained that in mainstream cinema, the role of female and male are divided, whereas male has an active role while female has passive role. In other words, males are the subjects, and they are categorized into active groups because they have the potential to influence both the narrative and the point of view that is visually presented in the movie. In the meantime, women join passive groups and are gazed upon by male characters. The camera deliberately displays the male character's point of view, which forces female spectators to adopt it as well. The male gaze is a cinematic structure that combines threefold views; the camera, the male characters, and also the audience. Women's bodies are "cut" into close-ups through framing and editing to encourage viewing pleasure. The male gaze in cinema works as a form of voyeurism that objectifies the female body and turns it into a passive spectacle; as Mulvey says, to "to-be-look-at-ness". The threefold views of male gaze can be found in Mushoku Tensei anime's fan service, where girls' body is highlighted using the main character's eyes, for the pleasure of men viewers. Mulvey explained that movies, in this case TV shows anime series, serve as viewers' mirrors. Additionally, primary identification is also done with the camera and projector as cinematic equipment, which helps the audience perceive their ideal selves through secondary identification with the main character depicted in the movie. The audience narcissistically identifies with strong, handsome main characters in films, who behave as ideal reflections for them in the world of cinema. Feminist theorists believe that cinema that serves as an audience mirror of identification is problematic because it unfairly portrays women. While the passive female image provides little visual enjoyment for the female audience, the energetic male main character delivers a perfect image for identification. As a structure, voyeurism (the desire to have the other) and narcissism (the desire to be the other) work for the pleasure of the male viewer. The female viewer has no other choice and must identify herself using the male gaze or, adopt a marginal or masochistic viewing position.

If fan service is so prevalent, why is the Mushoku Tensei anime series the subject of heated disagreement among anime fans? This is due to the fact that in the Mushoku Tensei anime series, the girls who are made into sexual objects as fan service are two very young girls and a girl who, by design, have the body and face of teenagers. Rudeus Greyrat, this series main male characther, has three love interest. Roxy Migurdiaa 40-years old woman, who according to Rudeus looks like a child who has not yet reached puberty. Sylphiette, 5 to 7-years old girls. Eris Boreas Greyrat, a 9 to 10-years old girls. While women who are sexualized in anime for the purpose of fan service typically have adult-sized bodies with enormous breasts and buttocks (Brenner, 2007). Aside from that, the fan service in the Mushoku Tensei anime series differs from the stereotype of anime fan service in general. Rudeus frequently uses vulgarity in fan service scenes with his three love interests. For instance, prying into and snatching Roxy's underwear, taking off Sylphiette's clothing, and molesting Eris while she was asleep. Many anime fans believe Rudeus is a pedophile since he abused Eris because Rudeus is depicted as an adult man in his middle years trapped in the body of a child. However, more

viewers in the community believe that Rudeus' obscenity is not a significant concern for a variety of reasons, including the fact that Rudeus' body is a child's body, the fact that Rudeus' character was developed as a pervert, and remarks that suggest other viewers who are offended by Rudeus' obscenity should focusing more on a real child pornography rather than on anime series.

It's important to point out the comments made about child pornography because in Japan, where the anime series Mushoku Tensei originated, the implementation of a policy banning child pornography, especially in the form of animation, met with tremendous opposition from a number of parties. Montgomery (2021) explains why Japan cannot ban sexual depictions of children in manga. Those who reject this policy consider this to be a form of restriction on freedom of expression. Shinichiro Harata (Montgomery, 2021) emphasized that because they are not just for teenagers, anime and manga media in Japan are more sexually explicit, violent, and expressive. Additionally, he thinks that using the label "manga" could diminish the diversity of the work and lead to the banning of other comics. In addition, authors frequently use the absence of conclusive data linking violence against children in manga to an actual rise in child abuse as an excuse. Similarly, unlike pornography that uses real individuals, no actual children are injured in the creation of manga or anime because they are only animations.

A regulation banning depictions of child sexual abuse in manga is supported by those who believe that such depictions normalize or increase the likelihood of child sexual abuse by individuals seeking to live out their desires. As an example, consider the "Otaku-Killer" case, in which an anime enthusiast murdered and rapes four young girls within a year. Sociologists believe that Otaku-Killer was inspired to act out his fantasies by the countless child abuse movies and anime that were discovered in his home as evidence in this horrific case. After a heated discussion on the policy banning child pornography, the phrase "depicts of child sexual violence" was substituted for "child pornography" in the policy petition.

Why the majority of anime fan communities do not pay much attention to denouncing displays of sexualization or molestation of girls in anime may be understood by the justification given above regarding how difficult it is to establish a law forbidding sexual portrayals of children in Japan. An often-made defense is that artists have the right to freedom of expression without having to worry about real girls suffering during the creation of anime shows like Mushoku Tensei. Even though no children are harmed or sacrificed in its creation, there is still some disagreement about whether or not viewing child porn results in actual crimes committed against children. According to Savage (2015) research have shown that people who desire and consume child pornography typically go for more graphic material to satiate their sexual desires. At this point, watching alone is insufficient, thus acting in public becomes an alternative.

The prevalence and accessibility of anime porn starring girls can serve as an example of how easily sexual objectification of girls occurs in anime. Shibata (2008) claims that the structural construction of the audience's sexual arousal, which is efficiently established by sexually objectifying media, is what leads to the image of women as "alluring flesh," devoid of any intrinsic human dignity. Sexual objectification permeates the entire structure of visual space discursively and serves as a social norm without the subject being aware of it.

Although popular culture like anime is typically consumed for entertainment, this does not mean that it is devoid of particular beliefs and discourses. For their own purposes and to maintain their dominance in society, those with power and influence use the media. across order for ideologies that benefit from and maintain their power to be accepted by society as something that is "legitimate" and "that is how it should be," the powerful and dominating

group uses discourse to promote its ideology across society. The discourse that girls are to be researched in this research is the discourse that views them as sexual objects. The idea that girls are merely sexual objects for men is dehumanizing, and because of this idea, girls are viewed as having a lower status in society than men.

In the pursuit of social justice, critical discourse analysis analyzes and investigates specific discourse practices that oppose or subvert injustice and inequality. The discourse practices in question are ones that can be found in a variety of political, social, and historical contexts and which are used to establish and maintain power relations, inequality, injustice, and dominance.

Because this study intends to deconstruct the discourse of sexual objectification of girls in the text of the anime series Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu, Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis of texts is the one that was employed in this study. Because the primary focus of this study is how the text—which is not neutral—displays girls, critical discourse analysis from a feminist perspective is utilized to deconstruct the discourse of sexual objectification in the anime series. The critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills examines how the actors' positions are presented in the text. Starting with who is depicted as the person telling the story, who has the authority to decide the text's narrative, and who is the topic of what is being told. The arrangement of the players in their separate roles will impact the text's structure and how meaning is handled throughout the whole work (Eriyanto, 2001). In addition to the actors' positions, Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis also considers the reader's and writer's positions in the text so that the reader might place themselves in one of the narratives being told. This affects the positioning of these social actors as well as how the text should be perceived. One party will be viewed as valid and correct while the other is not based on the positioning of the actors in the text and how the story is told.

According to Sara Mills' (1995) perspective, discourse is organized into four structures: a) Characters/roles, a group of words or depictions created by readers depending on the understanding they acquire from views circulating within society or society's perception of what men and women are like (based on particular ideals); b) Fragmentation: Because the woman's body is not represented in its entirety in the text, she cannot be focalized from her own point of view and her body may be reduced to parts. This fragmentation is connected to how men perceive women as objects of their gaze (male gaze), therefore their perception of the text's point of view is dependent on men's interpretation; c) Focalization, which involves interpreting the text's point of view based on dialogue. In terms of focalization, there are two categories: exterior and internal; d) Schemata, large-scale frameworks that are utilized to assess texts holistically and generate various views for men and women. In order to determine what ideology is present in the text under study, Schemata examines the full text in addition to the three earlier analyses.

Following the explanation, the research separated the text of the Mushoku Tensei anime series into four main categories: character, fragmentation, focalization, and schemata. In order to study the text, which is broken up into four structures, it is important to pay close attention to how the relationship and positions of the players are depicted in the text as well as how the audience is positioned, particularly when the text includes girls.

Studies of discourses that are both empowering and marginalizing have been done in the media of books, music, television shows, and movies. However, live action television series are typically used for research on television series. Research on animated movies or television shows is still quite little, and research on anime is even less. Therefore, it is crucial to complete this work in order to advance our understanding of critical discourse analysis of anime, particularly analysis of discourse that marginalizes girls in anime. Sara Mills' critical discourse

analysis is used in this study to reveal how texts from anime series sexually objectified girls. The aim of Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis is to examine how women are portrayed in the text from a feminist perspective. Because prior studies that employed Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis to see sexual objectification were mostly conducted on non-animated film texts, the topic of sexual objectification of girls in anime series texts is intriguing.

Using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis technique, Pasaribu & Irawanto (2020) investigated how the bodies of sex workers were sexually objectified in the movie Pengakuan Seorang Pelacur. The story of sex workers is told in the movie Pengakuan Seorang Pelacur, which has a female main character. According to the study's findings, women's bodies are nonetheless objectified and utilized as a spectacle to appease the male gaze, even if this movie portrays the perspective of sex workers.

Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis method was employed in Mubarok's (2013) study on the movie The Handmaiden and the male gaze in the movie. 22 sequences from the movie The Handmaiden that deal with the bodies, sexuality, and character development of lesbian women are examined in Mubarok's study. The male gaze was found in this movie, which follows the lives of members of sexual minority groups, although it did not overpower the narrative. The film's primary ideology is homonormative in how it portrays lesbian women's bodies, sexuality, and personal growth.

Research by Anwar & Noviani (2020), which applied the film feminist psychoanalysis method developed by Laura Mulvey and Kaja Silverman, was another previous study that looked at sexuality in anime. The anime movie under study is one called Kimi no Na Wa that came out in 2016. The purpose of this study is to examine how sexual and gender subjectivity are produced in the anime movie Kimi no Na Wa. The findings of this study revealed that male bias continues to shape the narrative structure of anime films, which shapes the development of gender subjectivity where women are used as the object of gaze while males are the viewing subjects.

Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis is used in studies by Pasaribu & Irwanto and Mubarok to identify sexual objectification of women in movies. Both movies are live-action productions starring actual female actors. In addition, both movies have female lead actors and focus on the lives of women. Unlike this study, which will look at animated television series with animated characters. In addition, the ladies in the Mushoku Tensei anime series who are objectified are not the women whose stories are the focus of the show. In the Mushoku Tensei anime series, the women are love interest characters, while the main male character is the focus of their storylines. While studies of female main characters are frequently conducted, those of female heroines or love interests—particularly in animated films or television programs—rarely receive the same attention. Anime film Kimi no Na Wa was the center of a study by Anwar & Noviani that looked at anime films. The study focused on the sexual and gender subjectivity of the anime.

Communication research on gender issues in animation, particularly Japanese anime, are still very rare. Meanwhile, anime's popularity is growing both in Indonesia and around the world as more paid and free internet platforms make it simple to access anime. The long-standing acceptance of sexual objectification of girls or young women in anime needs to be addressed, as well as the objectification of women in general.

The intended purpose of this research is to contribute to feminist studies on communication phenomena in the media that are linked to the objectification of women. This phenomenon tends to evolve in tandem with popular culture, particularly in the anime medium. In addition, it is anticipated that this research will further the application of critical studies,

particularly of the media, in comprehending injustice-related phenomena that arise in the media sector and their effects on society. It is further expected that this research would raise awareness of the content of anime among viewers or parents of anime watchers. In a practical sense, the findings of this study can also motivate educators or activists to develop content that challenge the objectification of women in media as a cultural commodity.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a film analysis with a qualitative approach and critical paradigm. The study methodology employed is critical discourse analysis from a feminist perspective developed by Sara Mills. The 25 data sequences that deal with girls' bodies as well as the personalities and actions of the main character and the three love interest are this study's primary data. The 25 data sequences were selected from 11 episodes of the anime series Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu first season cour 1. Videos from the anime series Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu were obtained from the Muse Asia YouTube channel, for videos with English subtitles and from the Muse YouTube channel Indonesia for videos with Indonesian subtitles. The 25 selected sequences were viewed as texts that were examined at the discourse level in Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis method, which was used to analyze the data. The text is divided into four structural categories for analysis at the discourse level: character, fragmentation, focalization, and schemata.

**Table 1**
**Table of data sequence from Mushoku Tensei that contain the Objectification notion**

| Episode & time stamp | Scene related to characters' characteristic and/or objectification | Objectification notion |
|---|---|---|
| 00:01:57—00:02:24; (Episode 1) | Data 1: Rudeus commenting on Zenith's breast | Instrumentality, Reduction to body |
| 00:03:36—00:03:43 (Episode 1) | Data 2: Rudeus commenting on Lilia's breast | Instrumentality, Reduction to body |
| 00:07:46—00:07:53 (Episode 1) | Data 3: Rudeus learn to read | - |
| 00:15:51—00:16:23 (Episode 1) | Data 4: Rudeus evaluating Roxy's body and appearance | Reduction to body, reduction to appearance |
| 00:18:02—00:18:29 (Episode 1) | Data 5: Roxy fixing the tree that she breaks | - |
| (Episode 1) | Data 6: Rudeus comforting Roxy with eroge's quotes | - |
| 00:00:15—00:00:22 (Episode 2) | Data 7: NEET man masturbating while watching some videos | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 00:02:53—00:03:06 (Episode 2) | Data 8: Rudeus trying to see Roxy's underwear | Instrumentality, denial of subjectivity, reduction to body |
| 00:17:29—00:17:34 (Episode 2) | Data 9: Roxy healing Paul's horses that injured by lightning | - |
| 00:03:55—00:07:04 (Episode 3) | Data 10: Rudeus become friends with Sylphiette after saving her from the bullies | Instrumentality |
| 00:08:59—00:10:56 (Episode 3) | Data 11: Rudeus arguing and defending himself from Paul | - |
| 00:13:50—00:14:12 (Episode 3) | Data 12: Sylphiette learn how to do magic without chanting | - |
| 00:15:38—00:17:22 (Episode 3) | Data 13: Sylphiette naked in front of Rudeus | Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, denial of subjectivity, reduction to body |
| 00:11:20—00:12:44 (Episode 4) | Data 14: Paul and Rudeus talking about school and girls | Instrumentality |
| 00:14:00—00:14:07 (Episode 4) | Data 15: Sylphiette crying while asking Rudeus to not go | - |
| 00:14:48—00:16:00 (Episode 4) | Data 16: Roxy is sexually assaulted by Shirone Kingdom's Prince | Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, denial of subjectivity, reduction to body |
| 00:16:44—00:17:59 (Episode 4) | Data 17: Rudeus asking Paul a favor | - |
| (Episode 5) | Data 18: Eris assaulting Rudeus | - |
| (Episode 5) | Data 19: Eris break her promise with Rudeus | - |
| 00:07:15—00:08:08 (Episode 5) | Data 20: Rudeus sexually assaulting Eris while she's sleeping | Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, denial of subjectivity, reduction to body |
| 00:03:55—00:04:10 (Episode 7) | Data 21: Philip introducing his library to Rudeus | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 00:20:43 (Episode 7) | Data 22: Rudeus want to assault Eris | Instrumentality |
| 00:10:15 (Episode 8) | Data 23: Philip offer Eris to Rudeus in exchange of Rudeus cooperation for politics | Fungibility, denial of subjectivity |
| 00:11:28— 00:13:33 (Episode 8) | Data 24: Eris allowing for Rudeus to touch her body | Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, reduction to body |
| 00:17:00— 00:20:12 (Episode 9) | Data 25: Rudeus promise to help Ruijerd | - |

*Source: Research Result (2023)*

In terms of character structure, the text is dissected to see the depiction of the four characters studied, namely Rudeus (main character), Roxy (first love interest), Sylphiette (second love interest), and Eris (third love interest). The features and behaviors that the four characters possess and exhibit in the text can be used to determine how the creator portrayed the four characters. Through the anime characters Mushoku Tensei, we can understand how sexual objectification of girls occurs in the text. The text is examined in the fragmentation structure to determine how girls' bodies are presented and objectified to become objects of gaze for the amusement of male audiences. In order to analyze the fragmentation structure, it was important to pay attention to the Mushoku Tensei anime series' cinematography, specifically the camera perspective that emphasizes the feminine figure.

To determine how sexual objectification of girls occurs through focalization in the Mushoku Tensei anime series, study of the four characters' levels of consciousness, conversation, and textual monologues was done. The focalization structure will reveal the gender and point of view of the text being analyzed. The text's schematic structure is broken down to examine how the beliefs and ideologies it contains compare to those that are prevalent in society. Through the schemata of the Mushoku Tensei anime series, we can understand how sexual objectification of girls occurs. Following a discourse study of the text utilizing Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, the discourse of girls as objects of sex for males was also observed in the male gaze and fan service of the Mushoku Tensei anime series.

**RESULT**

The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a discourse on the sexual objectification of girls in the text of the Mushoku Tensei anime series, as evidenced by the sexual objectification of girls in characters, fragmentation, focalization, schemata, and fan service. Based on Nussbaum and Langton's definition of objectification, six forms of objectification were discovered using 25 data that were chosen from 11 episodes of the Mushoku Tensei anime series. The Mushoku Tensei anime series exhibits the following forms of objectification: instrumentality, denial of autonomy, fungibility, denial of subjectivity, reduction to body, and reduction to appearance.

The main character Rudeus's obscenity led to the sexual objectification of girls, according to the examination of the character structure. Data 3, 10, 11, 21, and 25 demonstrate Rudeus' attitude and conduct, which includes his desire to learn, his constant curiosity, his willingness to assist others in need, and his talkative nature. Rudeus's vulgar behavior against girls is depicted in Data 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 20, 22, and 24.

Due to Rudeus' skills and his generosity in aiding them, the three love interest girls, Roxy, Sylphiette, and Eris form a strong bond with him. Rudeus is portrayed as helpful and able to put up with the flaws of the ladies in his life, including Roxy's awkwardness, Sylphiette's shyness, timidity, and whininess, and Eris' frequent rudeness and violence. Rudeus has a solid foundation for his relationship with his love interests, which gives him opportunity to harass and even molesting them. Rudeus appears to be a trustworthy individual due to his skills and friendliness. Rudeus, meantime, makes use of the three girls' trust to be in their presence. Rudeus engages in indecent behavior whenever he spots a chance where the girls are careless. Additionally, Rudeus' age and physical attributes make his vulgar behavior acceptable, especially in Roxy's eyes. Roxy doesn't take Rudeus seriously when he tries to peek at her panty because she dismisses his indecent conduct as the activities of a little child who "likes girls." While this is going on, Eris, who is depicted as usually hitting Rudeus whenever she catches him acting in an obscene manner, also treats Rudeus the same way as before and does not act in a way that would indicate she dislikes or wants to avoid him because he molested her. Therefore, it can be concluded that Rudeus' shortcomings as a male pervert can be covered by his reliability, intelligence, and kindness in helping others. Rudeus can also carry out his lewd acts by using the opportunities he gets from the trust that girls have in him.

Seven data points were discovered during the study of the fragmentation structure that demonstrated the sexually-emphasized areas of the girl body. Because the text being researched is a film text, cinematographic theory, specifically camera angle, is employed to analyze fragmentation. The portrayal and look of the female body is therefore evaluated through how the camera lens records images of portions of the girl body. The choice of camera angle is not only related to aesthetics, but also related to what messages the producer want to convey to the audience.

Data 1, 2, 8, 13, 16, 20, and 24 highlight the sensual aspects of the female body. In contrast to data 16, the other 6 data share a subjective camera angle that assumes the viewpoint of Rudeus, the main male character, when showcasing the female body. Zenith and her breasts are the subject of the spotlight in data 1, whereas Lilia's breasts are the subject of the close-up in data 2. In data 8, Roxy's crotch and underwear, thighs, and knees are the subject of the close-up. Data 13 shows Sylphiette's naked body and the space between her thighs. When Eris was abused by Rudeus, her calves and waist were highlighted in data 20. Eris's body is once more accentuated in data 24, particularly her thighs, shoulders, and face when Rudeus touches her sensually. The focus of data 16 is the Prince of the Shirone Kingdom squeezing Roxy's breasts. This scenario doesn't use a subjective camera angle to highlight Roxy's breast.

A low angle is likewise employed in data 1 and 2 for the shooting angle. The removal of undesired foreground and backdrop is one of the purposes of a low angle camera, according to Mascelli (1965). The audience will concentrate more on the object being emphasized, in this example Zenith's and Lilia's breasts, as foreground and backdrop presence will no longer draw attention to either. Additionally, low angles are used to enhance the dramatic impact of the emphasized objects. Since Lilia's breasts are the only thing being highlighted in close-up shots, the audience is forced to concentrate solely on them. Mascelli (1965) argues that close-up shots are used to immerse the audience in the scenario by removing anything that is unnecessary and highlighting any noteworthy events that should be highlighted in the narrative. Mascelli added that in order to have the proper visual impact on the viewer, close-ups should only be used during crucial plot points.

In data 24, Eris's sensual facial features are specifically aimed at satisfying the sexual desires of men who like small children. Japan has lax regulations on sexually explicit images

of young children. Only violent, sensual portrayals of young children are subject to regulation in Japan. Even more permissive rules apply to the sexualization of young children in animated media. According to Savage (2015), when using animation as a medium, Japanese society is more accepting of sensual representations of young children. This acceptance is justified by the fact that no actual kids were harmed in the making of these representations.

The seven data above which show a woman's sensual body being the focus of the camera's spotlight are a form of sexual objectification. The woman's body is seen as an instrument for men's sexual needs (instrumentality). Not only that, these sequences also bring the audience to enjoy the body of a girls who is being abused by showing up close the details of the sexual violence being experienced by the girls' body. Apart from showing girls as instruments for men's sexual satisfaction (instrumentality), data 8, 10, and 13 also show that men treat girls as objects by rejecting girls' subjectivity (denial of subjectivity). Girls are treated without regard for their feelings as complete human beings. Girl's feelings as a human who ought to have control over their own bodies are disregarded, allowing men to handle girl's bodies carelessly as though they were dead objects. Additionally, girls' bodies that are exploited as objects for male pleasure are shown and made visible to the audience so that they are implicitly present when the woman's body is being violated. Bartky (cited in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) claimed that sexual objectification happens when a woman's physical parts are isolated from her entire person and lowers her position to that of a mere tool. Like female characters Zenith and Lilia, they are seen as little more than bodies, existing solely for the sake of Rudeus and the male audience. One indication of heterosexual dominance in culture, according to Karen Horney (cited in Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), is "public agreement that all men have the right to sexualize all women, regardless of their age and status." The production directs the audience to adopt Rudeus' perspective by using the camera's look, and girls are once more sexualized as objects of male viewers' gaze.

In the focalization structure, sexual objectification of girls is found in the Mushoku Tensei anime series through the internal monologue of the main character, Rudeus, who is the narrator in this series, and also through the conversations of other male characters. Data 1, 2, 4, 20, and 22, Rudeus objectifies girls through his internal monologue. As a character who is also the narrator of the Mushoku Tensei anime series, he comments on Zenith, Lilia, and Roxy's breasts when the three of them are first introduced in this series. In this case, it can be seen that Rudeus views girls' breasts could represent girls as a whole and reducing girls only to their bodies (reduction to body).

In addition, Rudeus twice joked to the sleeping Eris during his internal monologue, "I will attack you." Given that Rudeus is seen finally molesting Eris on two separate occasions— once when she was awake and once while she was unconscious—the word "attack" in both instances refers to the act of committing sexual violence. The statement made by Rudeus that he observed girl "in a state of unconsciousness" demonstrates his view of girls as objects of sexual enjoyment (instrumentality) and as something that is denied agency over its own body. Aside from that, Rudeus's tone when he considers "attacking" a woman comes across as mocking or joking, which ends up wrapping up the scenario as a joke and does not convey the horror of what he is about to do, which is molestation of a sleeping person.

Sexual objectification of girls occurs through the focalization of dialogue between male characters in the Mushoku Tensei anime series in data 14 and 23, namely through conversations between Rudeus and Paul, and conversations between Rudeus and Philip. Men's conversations in both instances reveal how much they value girls' bodies. Paul makes physical endurance during intercourse the basis for his judgments of girls. Meanwhile, Philip assesses

girls' bodies based on their usefulness for politics. Philip offers to give Eris to Rudeus if Rudeus wants to use it for Philip's political interests. Philip even said he would tie Eris' hands and put Eris on Rudeus' bed if Rudeus wanted. In both scenes, girls are seen as tools for men's interests. Paul sees girls as tools to satisfy his sexual needs, while Philip sees Eris as a tool for his political interests, and assesses Eris as a sexual object that is useful for Rudeus and can be exchanged for Rudeus' willingness to be used as his political pawn.

In the schemata structure, the views contained in the text are discussed and how they relate to the views that exist in society in general (Mills, 1995). Although most anime is fiction, the storylines still include references to everyday reality or events that happen in people's lives. As a kind of entertainment, anime may likewise convey messages from specific ideologies through the stories that are delivered. The history of anime even demonstrates that during World War II, the Japanese government employed animation for political purposes.

## DISCUSSION

The Mushoku Tensei anime series is an adaptation of a popular web light novel in Japan. This anime series follows the life of a middle-aged man who is reincarnated and vows to live seriously in his second life. This man have begun to face the things he avoided and regretted in his previous life. His journey in conquering these things is packaged lightly and is usually followed by comedy. The reincarnated middle-aged man's life changes drastically. This is due in part to the fact that he inhabits a different reality, but it's also because he works to get over his anxieties and his prior trauma in order to take advantage of possibilities that he previously missed out on. This man has the chance to develop strong relationships with girls who could wind up being his girlfriend as part of his second life.

The Mushoku Tensei anime series has a very uplifting premise that centers on the idea of giving someone with a lot of life regrets a second opportunity. Additionally, this anime series shows how life may improve when a person is willing to strive to overcome their anxieties, get over their past trauma, and start changing their attitudes and forming positive relationships with the people around them. Even though it has a positive theme, it is very unfortunate that this man is said to have chosen to maintain his lewd nature and even took action against his nature, namely molesting the girls around him.

The author of the Mushoku Tensei series responded to criticism of this man's obscene attitude and conduct by claiming that Rudeus, the series' protagonist, do not quit being a pervert after being reborn because being a pervert was not a regret in Rudeus' previous life.

"*There are a lot of people who can't accept how in Mushoku Tensei, the protagonist remains a pervert even after he reincarnates. It's the same in the original work. But it's not as if he has loads of regrets about being a pervert in his previous life. That's why in the isekai he doesn't necessarily think, 'I'm going to live life seriously! That also means stop being a perv!' Tentatively speaking, in the original work, he's 100% a perv and 0% serious at the point when he is born. When he decides to 'live life seriously,' it settles down to 20% perv and 80% serious, but since the anime doesn't include that moment of change, the perv ratio feels bigger compared to the original work…*" (Anime News Network, 2021).

The main male character in the Mushoku Tensei series was designed to be someone who does not regret having lived as a pervert, but regrets how he did not live seriously in his former life, according to the series' writer. The Mushoku Tensei series' creators further explained that because the anime adaptation does not depict the moment when the man's

obscenity changes from 100% to 20%, the man appears to be more obscene in the anime version than it did in the web light novel.

Certain clichés can be found in the Mushoku Tensei anime series since the creator chose to make the main character look to have a boyish body but a middle-aged man's mentality. Not only is this a source of humor in the Mushoku Tensei series, but it also serves as the foundation for the plot in which enable the plot where the protagonist can harass and molestate girls while being left unpunished for his acts. His obscenity was based on his history as a obscene adult man in a past life, but his boyish appearance made his obscenity appear less severe than they actually were.

Not only it normalizes sexual abuse, the comedic aspect of the Mushoku Tensei anime series further trivializes sexual abuse against girls. All obscenity by the male main character is shown as comedy and from his perspective as the perpetrator. Halffield (2017) claims that the comedy in the movie deflects attention from inappropriate sexual behavior. Films continue to propagate false messages about the standards of sexual violence due to their entertainment value, which permits the ideology they convey to be perpetuated. Films allow serious subjects to be clothed in humor so that both violence and its perpetrators can be forgiven more easily. The violence that the perpetrator faces as punishment for being caught molesting is shown in several scenes throughout this series, so it is clear how different violence that is part of the action aspect is presented in a serious way and how it is made to look absurd (comical) when it occurs in other scenes. The lack, or even absence, of serious consequences for abuse by the perpetrator may increase the acceptance of problematic sexual behavior This makes films complicit in the discursive framework by presenting violence in the way they do (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002).

The depiction of obscenity sequences in the Mushoku Tensei anime series is another example of the rape myth. Burt (cited in Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002) defined rape culture as untrue assumptions about rape, rape victims, and rapists. At the time, it was widely accepted that rape solely affected wicked women and was committed by unidentified strangers. In truth, anyone can become a victim of rape, and anyone's family or friends could commit rape. Furthermore, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (dalam Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002) explain that various researchers debate how rape myths may function to deny and trivialize rape in order to protect wider society's belief in a just world and to control women.

Men domination over girls is displayed in various forms in the Mushoku Tensei anime series. Gilrs are presented as victims of the male main character's problematic sexual behavior. Starting from peeking at the teacher's underwear, stealing the teacher's underwear, making sexual comments and evaluations of girls' bodies, and committing sexual abuse. Everything is a form of male domination over women Shrock (cited in Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002) said that Current information about rape stresses that this act is about power, a man's capacity to coerce another person into engaging in sexual behavior by intimidation or violence. According to this perspective, men's desire to control women leads to sexual aggression, and power is a sign of masculinity. In this anime series, the main male character is seen utilizing cunning to gratify his sexual urges without regard for the consent of the victim, a woman. In addition to doing the deed covertly while the victim slept, the perpetrator was also seen coercing the woman who had become his victim into granting him permission to touch her body.

The Mushoku Tensei anime series has a positive message in it, but it also carries messages and ideologies that perpetuate male domination over girls. Through the main male

character who has the authority to narrate this anime series, the audience is positioned as being predominantly male. The audience is set up to view and treat girls through their eyes as obscene men. The positioning of the audience to see and treat girls as lewd men certainly does not immediately turn the audience into lewd men like the main character. The audience certainly has a choice that they can make from this narrative schemata, whether they will accept it as part of knowledge and even take it for granted or react against it. Mills (1995) said that the choices the audience makes depend on the interests they have and also how familiar they are with other views on the issue.

The sexual objectification of girls in the Mushoku Tensei anime series, apart from being part of the plot with obscene main character, is a form of fan service that is commonly found in anime series with a male audience demographic. In actuality, scenes that sexualize or even objectify girls are not always included in the definition of fan service. Fan service in anime can be distinguished from the anime's genre. Fan service, for instance, frequently takes the shape of animations of the intricate body parts of robots or other machines in mecha anime. The form of fan service in shojo anime featuring magical heroines, such as Sailor Moon, takes the form of intricate animation when the character transforms and details on the magical girl's attire. In seinen anime like Mushoku Tensei, fan service usually takes the form of objectification of girls.

Usually, sexual objectification fan service involves disclosing the outfits that female characters wear. In addition to having slender arms and waists, girls are frequently depicted as having enormous breasts and buttocks. Additionally, there is fan service that draws attention to certain breast motions made by female characters. This is an illustration of characters with mature body designs being sexually objectified. However, the Mushoku Tensei anime series contains sexual objectification of characters with body types like teenagers or kids.

Even though Roxy Migurdia is 44 years old, adult characters like her have child-like-looking character designs. This character's infantilization is brought on by her lack of volume in the body, as well as by the way she speaks and clothes, as well as by the way her face and voice are made to look very young. The creation of Roxy Migurdia's character was undoubtedly done with Lolita fandom in mind. According to Savage (2015) explanation, Roxy is a legal lolita, meaning that she is portrayed as young as possible yet her eroticization is acceptable because she is at least 18 years old. Additionally, the other two love interest characters are also young youngsters who have just entered their teenage years.

Sexual objectification of girls in the Mushoku Tensei anime series fan service is carried out through the male gaze. The concept of film making and normalization of behavior is a form of cinematic code, where the cinematic code creates a view (gaze), a world, and an object, thus creating an illusory part of the size of desire (Mulvey, 1989). The role of girls in films is shaped and socialized, and cinematic codes such as the male gaze shape how audiences interact with films to please the ideal audience, namely men (Halffield, 2017). The Mushoku Tensei anime series is targeted toward a male audience, and it undoubtedly presents a particular viewpoint to appeal to that population. Through the eyes of the main character, accentuated by the play, and relished by the male audience, girls are sexually objectified. According to Mulvey (1989), women are objectified three times or on three different levels in this circumstance.

Lilia and Zenith are adult female characters with voluminous body designs to match their age. Meanwhile, the three love interest girls have body designs like children or teenagers, because two of them are still children and teenagers while the other is an adult whose character design is infantilized. In Japan, these sexualized feminine characters are referred to as lolicon.

Roxy is a lolicon, the main male character also says in his inner monologue. Japan's Lolicon subculture takes its name from the Lolita complex. For ladies who engage in lolicon culture, it stands for innocence (purity), modesty (modesty), and cuteness (cuteness). To shield themselves from other people's sexual needs, Loli girls suppress their own sexual urges (Savage, 2015). However, in anime, such as the Mushoku Tensei anime series, loli girls are still exploited as objects of sex.

The love interest characters in the Mushoku Tensei anime series have quite modest clothes. Roxy wears a short skirt and this is used to display it as fan service in two scenes, where because of her short skirt her panties can be peeked at by the male main character and become a sight for the male audience. In contrast, the modestly attired Sylphiette character is still given fan service in a scene in which the main character strips her down naked. The posture of her arms barely conceals her crotch and breasts. This moment serves as a plot point as the main character discovers Sylphiette is a woman after thought she was a man for so long. Eris, the character wearing the most restrictive clothing, is repeatedly assaulted.

All the scenes that show the love interest characters sensually above are a form of fan service aimed at male audiences. Girls are represented as objects of gaze for the main male character and also of course for the male audience. These girls are not stereotyped as figures who only have the opportunity to work in the domestic sphere. In terms of abilities, they are not inferior to the main male characters. Eris is a far more skilled swordswoman than the male main character, Sylphiette can do magic without the need of spells like the male main character, and Roxy is a dependable magic teacher. Girls are depicted to be powerless to break free of their status as objects of sex for men's gaze, despite all of their talents. The Mushoku Tensei anime series uses scenarios in which girls are used as sexual objects to serve its male viewers, but it also promotes the idea that girls cannot hold the same position as males, namely that of subjects. It is implied that girls are still seen as mere object. Ultimately, the study conducted leads to the conclusion that, in the eyes of men, the girl characters in this animated series perpetuate patriarchal values. To distinguish digital entertainment from traditional entertainment sphere, the inclusion of women in animated series must continue to be critiqued.

**CONCLUSION**

The representation of girls in entertainment media such as films, television series, music, novels, comics in the last decades has shown an increase, but there are still many bad depictions of girls and can be found easily in various entertainment media Anime as an entertainment medium that continues to experience increasing popularity globally is one media that still displays girls as subordinate to men or even as objects, especially in anime with a male audience demographic. Fan service in anime fuels the discourse that portrays girls as objects of sex fulfillment for men. Using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, this study attempted to deconstruct the discourse of sexual objectification of girls found in the anime series Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu. Based on the findings of the research, it was determined that the Mushoku Tensei anime series' characters, fragmentation, focalization, and schemata all contribute to the discourse of sexual objectification of girls.

Although the anime series Mushoku Tensei contains positive messages, it also promotes ideas and concepts that support male dominance over females. Through the main male character, who has the ability to narrate this anime series, the audience is positioned as male. The audience is set up to view and interact with women as obsene men. Certainly, the audience does not instantly become lewd men like the main character just because they are positioned to view and treat women as lewd men. The audience is undoubtedly given an option

in how they respond to these narrative schemata: they can either embrace it as true knowledge and even take it for granted, or they can reject it. According to Mills (1995), the audience's decisions are influenced by their interests and level of familiarity with opposing viewpoints. The research reveals hidden practices in anime series where girls are sexually objectified through anime fan service, which contributes to the fight against discourses that marginalize girls and women in popular culture.

The discourse of sexual objectification of girls through characters in the Mushoku Tensei anime series is contained in the obscenity of the main character, Rudeus. The obscene Rudeus makes the girls around him, especially his three love interests, the object of his sensual gaze or what is known as the male gaze. Scenes that emphasize girls' bodies by emphasizing sensual components incorporate the discourse of sexual objectification through fragmentation. Emphasizing a girls' sensual features distinguishes them from themselves as people who are not limited to just being physical. This means that girls are represented by visualizations of their body parts displayed sensually. Highlighting girls' body parts is a form of sexual objectification because it reduces girls to a sensual physical appearance, which is in line with the male gaze. This fragmentation which displays the female body sensually contains the sexual objectification of girls using the main male character's gaze. The sexual objectification of girls is depicted in this fragmentation, which sensually presents the girls' body. The internal narrative of the lead male character and the intercharacter communication between men both contribute to the discourse of sexual objectification of girls in the Mushoku Tensei anime series. In the series, the main male character is seen making sexually charged judgments on and assessments of girls' bodies in his inner monologue. Based on his ideas that sexually objectify girls, this causes the audience to accept his viewpoints and pay attention to what he has to say about them. The discourse between the main male character and other male characters reveals external narrative as a type of focalization. Their conversation includes a discussion of the worth of girls as sexual objects for men. The discourse of sexual objectification of girls through schemata in the anime series Mushoku Tensei is expressed in the view that the presence of girls is to become sexual objects for men. Through its schemata, this anime series represents an effort to normalize sexual abuse by showing obscene scenes in a comedic way. This study bring awareness by critically highlights the ways in which the proliferation of digital media, despite its capacity to offer a diverse array of content and portray a diversity of men and women characters, perpetuates patriarchal values. Animation, as a creative entertainment, still treats girls like objects of desire for men, even in the digital age. This reminds us that the conventional entertainment sector that routinely makes fun of sexual harassment of women, also existed on the internet sphere. Following this anime series, it is important to encourage women's representation in the digital domain as an effort to change people's perception of women. Since it has been demonstrated that, despite widespread support for freedom in the digital era, there are still restrictions on the presence of girls as subjects.

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