

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST LISBETH SALANDER IN STIEG LARSSON'S THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO**

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### **Abstract**

This research analysed the violence against Lisbeth Salander in Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. It used the feminist literary approach by Tyson Lois and the theory of violence by Nancy Crowel and Ann Burgess. The objectives of this research were to find the forms of violence happened to Lisbeth Salander, the effects of violence on her life, and how Lisbeth Salander resisted the violence that she experienced. The result of this research indicated that there were four forms of violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander. They were physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, and economic violence. There were also effects from the violence she experienced that affected her physical and her psychological condition. Even though the violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander gave negative impacts on her life more, it also gave positive impact. Her experiences with violence gave her motivation to survive. It can be seen through her resistance against the violence that happened to her. Finally, she became an independent woman.

**Keywords:** violence, effect, resistance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Literature is a work that is very close to human beings and their life. It reflects human life because it is a medium for this reflection. It is in accordance with what Wellek and Warren in Theory of Literature state that "literature represents life, and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner world of the subjective world have also been objects of literary imitation"(94).

Among the genres of literature, novel also plays role in picturing human life. Wellek & Warren in Theory of Literature state that "novel is a picture of real-life and manners, and of the time in which it is written" (223). One of the topics revealed in novels is violence. Violence is a topic that is relevant to the real world. This is because violence occurs in society despite the existence of laws on violence. World Health Organization in World Report on Violence and Health stated that "Each year, over 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence .... For every person who dies as a result of violence, many more are injured and suffer from a range of physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health problems" (3). This world organization defines violence as: the intentional



use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (4). Thus, violence is an act that uses physical or verbal forces that causes harm to other people.

One of many novels that raise the topic of violence is Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. This novel was first published in Sweden in 2005, with the title Man Som Hatar Kvinnor and then it was translated into English by Reg Keeland. Keeland in The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo translated novel said that, this novel was the first edition of the trilogy called The Millennium Trilogy. This trilogy had successfully sold more than 12 million copies sold worldwide. This novel also won the winner crime thriller of the year 2009 award at the British Book Award (Keelandi). John M. Cunningham in "Stieg Larsson Swedish Writer and Activist" says that Stieg Larsson's original name was Karl Stig-Erland Larsson. He was born on August 15, 1954, in Skelleftehamn, Sweden. Larsson was a Swedish writer and an activist. He was the editor in chief of the magazine Expo from 1999. In 2004, he died suddenly after he gave the manuscript for three crime novels to his Swedish publisher. These novels eventually became "The Millennium Trilogy", and managed to sell 3 million copies in Sweden. Unfortunately, Larsson could not enjoy the popularity of his work (1).

The novel is set in Hedeby Island, near Stockholm, Sweden in 2002, with the crime genre, thriller. It tells about two main characters, Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander. Mikael was a journalist and publisher at Millennium Magazine. As the publisher, he focused on economics and social problems. In the novel, Mikael Blomkvist was known as a trusted journalist. Mikael Blomkvist was very good in terms of tracking facts. Meanwhile, Lisbeth Salander was a researcher with highly hacking skills from Milton Security Agency. In the novel, Mikael Blomkvist got a big case to reveal the truth behind the disappearance of Harriet Vanger, granddaughter of Henrik Venger, a retired CEO of Vanger Corporation. Harriet had been missing for 40 years and nobody knew the truth behind her disappearance. In his research to reveal the truth behind the disappearance of Harriet Vanger, Mikael Blomkvist was assisted by Lisbeth Salander. In their investigation, Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander received a clue, which was Harriet's diary. In this diary, there were five names and numbers referring to bible verses. They represented the five murder cases; for example, the murder of Rebecka Jacobsoon, in which she was raped and killed by having her head placed on smouldering coals. Harriet mentioned the murder of Rebecka with R.J. - 30112. The numbers 30112 referred to bible verse describing how man or priest should prepare their animal sacrifice to God by cutting it into pieces, and laying them in order on the wood that was on the fire upon the altar.

They finally discovered that Martin Vanger and Gottfried Vanger, the brother of Harriet and the father of Harriet Vanger respectively, had murdered and raped women for years. Harriet also revealed the secret that she was one of his father's victims. Martin Vanger died in an accident in his effort of running away

from being captured. In the end, Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander found out that Harriet was still alive. With Salander's hacking skill they managed to know Harriet was still alive and lived in Australia. They were able to persuade Harriet to return to Sweden and finally happily reunited with her grandfather, Henrik Vanger.

This research discusses the violence against women because they are always the targets and the victims of violence. Interestingly, the perpetrators of the violence against women in the novel are men. It seems that women's existence is not important as they are not well protected by law. Consequently, they become easy target of violence committed by men.

In The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, almost all woman characters experience violence, including Lisbeth Salander. She experienced many forms of violence which made her find difficulties in her life. However, interestingly she showed resistance against violence she experienced as she realized that she had to fight the violence and survived. Thus, this research focuses on Lisbeth Salander.

Stieg Larsson portrays Lisbeth Salander uniquely. Having black hair, several piercings on the face and having a tattoo, she is described as an independent woman. Since childhood, Salander had been close to violence. As a child, she was a victim of bullying. There was a time when she was beaten by her bully. Knowing that she could not beat the bully with her empty hand, she picked up a baseball bat and beat the bully. At thirteen, she was declared dangerous by the court and was sent for treatment in St. Stefan's Psychiatric Clinic for Children in Uppsala, Sweden. Because of her childhood background, she grew as an introverted person, who refused to talk with anybody, including psychologists, and social workers. Advocate Holger Palmgren was the one she used to talk to. The advocate was the one who helped her until she was declared not dangerous anymore and was released from the clinic. At eighteen, Lisbeth Salander was again declared uncooperative, and dangerous. With the help of Palmgren, the court decided that she should be put under guardianship. Holger Palmgren was her first guardian. He was very nice to her. Their relationship grew and Palmgren became one of important figures in her life. Things became complicated when Palmgren had a stroke and could not continue his duties. Salander then got a new guardian. His name was Nils Bjurman. He wanted to control Salander. He did not let her control her own finances. One day, Salander's laptop was broken. She then went to him to ask for her money. However, he used the chance and forced her to perform oral sex. Bjurman also raped her in his apartment, but he did not know that she successfully recorded his behaviour with a hidden camera in her bag. The next day, she came back to his apartment, and then she electrocuted him using an electric stun gun and tied him on the floor. She demanded him to do whatever she wanted, including access to her own money and a good report about her behaviour. After Bjurman agreed, she then tattooed his chest "I AM A SADISTIC PIG, A PERVERT, AND A RAPIST PIG."

Violence, as shown by the male characters in the novel, is commonly used as a tool for men to control their dominance over women. This is supported by the patriarchal culture that prioritizes power. Consuelo Corradi in Theories of Femicide and Their Significance for Social Research said “the fundamental tenet of patriarchy is power; where power is distributed unequally between men and women; violence is the tool men use to keep women under their control” (979). Meanwhile, the resistance against discrimination by women, as exemplified by Salander, is one of the goals that espouse in feminism. Feminism is originally born as a movement that aims to equalize opportunities in the fields of politics, economics, and also social equality between men and women. Feminism also aims to decrease the violence that is experienced by women. The explanation above is the main reason to conduct the research.

There are several previous researches about this book. The first research is a thesis written by Dwi Mei Suhartanti from Universitas Airlangga in 2016. The title of this thesis is The Impact of Traumatic Childhood Experience on Martin Vanger's Sadistic Personality in Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo: Psychoanalytic Criticism. Using Sigmund Freud's theory of Psychoanalytic Criticism, the researcher of this thesis focuses on Martin Vanger's childhood experiences that turn him into a sadistic man. The second research is also a thesis written by Fortunata Monica Darsono from the University of Sanata Dharma in 2018. The title is A Study on Lisbeth Salander's Fear of Intimacy in Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. This thesis discusses about Lisbeth Salander's fear of intimacy in the novel. This research applied psychological approach and used the theory of five themes of intimacy by Mc Adams. The next research is a thesis entitled Sexual Sadism Experienced by Lisbeth Salander in Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. This thesis is written by Dea Anisa Rahmat in 2014 from Surabaya State University. This research applied Sigmund Freud's theory of Psychology and Personality and used theory of sexual sadism.

The difference between those previous researches and this research is that this research focuses on Lisbeth Salander as the character who experiences violence and investigates the forms of violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander, the effects of the violence and how she resists against violence in Stieg Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.

## **METHOD**

This research also applies feminist literary criticism as an approach and theory of violence against women as the theory of this research. Library research to collect the data and the descriptive analysis were employed.

## **Feminism**

Feminism was known in the early 20th century and was pioneered by Virginia Woolf in her book entitled A Room of One's Own. Feminism focuses on the equality of women and men. The equality that is meant by feminist was an equal

opportunity in politics, social, and economics to women and men. Psynso. Wellbeing, Happiness and Help states that “feminism is a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women” (1). Although it focuses on the issue faced by women, feminism also does not blame men as the main actors of oppression experienced by women. Bell Hook in her Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics stated “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. It clearly states that the movement is not about being anti-male, but the problem is sexism which female and male have been socialized from birth to accept” (2). Furthermore, Rajiva Ranjan in “Understanding Feminism” said that there are five waves of movement in feminism. The first was from the 19th-early 20th century. In this period feminism was promoting the right to vote for women. The second wave was from the 1960s to the early 1980s and it brought forward issues like inequality of laws, cultural inequalities, and the role of women in society. The Third Wave of the feminist movement started in 1991 when Rebecca Walker an American feminist published an article ‘Becoming the Third Wave’, following the establishment of ‘Riot Grrrl Movement’ in Washington. In this period, feminism was promoting the independence of women. The fourth-wave feminism is a resurgence of interest in feminism which started in 2012 and is associated with the use of social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr, and blogs. It focuses on ‘justice for women, opposition to sexual harassment and violence against women’ (120-121).

### **Feminist Literary Criticism**

In literature, feminist literary criticism was used as an approach to analyse literature to understand the meaning of literature through the feminist lens. As an approach in the literature, feminist criticism was only formalized in the late 1960s. Abrams in A Glossary of Literary Terms, Seventh Edition, said that Virginia Wolf became one of the most important pioneers of feminist criticism after her work entitled A Room of One's Own in 1929, and her other works on women's struggles. Her works argued that it was the patriarchal system adopted in society that prevented women from developing their abilities. Then, Simone de Beauvoir in 1949 launched her famous book The Second Sex. In this book, she introduced women as the “other” in literature. In this book she identified women in literature as the “other” character to man. Meanwhile, the man in literature is the dominant character in literature that represents humanity in general (88). Based on this statement, it could be seen that one of the causes of women oppression by men was that women were never considered equal to men. Women as “the others” were a symbol that they were not whole individuals, but part of men or men's other. This means that their existence was only to support men. Meanwhile, men were the main character playing the main role; thus, they could control everything including women.

Feminist criticism also concerned about how women were described in literary works. Abrams in A Glossary of Literary Terms, Seventh Edition, said that



“Mary Ellman with her *Thinking about Women* in 1968, concerned about the derogatory stereotypes of women in literature written by men” (88). Mary Ellman with her book criticized how male writers described female characters in their writings as their female fictional fantasies and downgrade women as a sexual object. Feminist literary criticism realised that the stereotypes and the assumption of women in literature existed because of the patriarchal system that was adopted in society. This also affected how women were described in the literature. This was why feminist criticism also tried to reveal how literary work embodied the inequality that happened to women. Tyson in *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* said that “feminist criticism examines how literature (and other cultural productions) reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women” (83). It is clear that how women were depicted in literature was part of men domination over women.

The domination of men towards women in patriarchy could be seen in how the system worked. In patriarchy, it was men who had more power than women. Any social, political, or economic fields were controlled by men. This condition made a man keep women under their control. In addition, to maintain their domination over women, men used violence. Consuelo Corradi in *Theories of Femicide and Their Significance for Social Research* said “The fundamental tenet of patriarchy is power; where power is distributed unequally between men and women; violence is the tool men use to keep women under their control” (979). According to McMillan and Nancy Lombard in *Violence against Women: Current Theory and Practice in Domestic Abuse* “Violence against women is not the result of a random, individual act, but rather deeply rooted in the structural relationship of inequality between men and women” (9). This means that violence that experienced by women exists because of the patriarchal system that distributes more power to men which creates inequality between men and women. This inequality makes men more dominant over women. To show their dominance, men use violence.

### **Violence against Women**

Violence itself is also a form of injustice that is often experienced by people in society. Violence is certainly very detrimental to both perpetrators and victims. The victims of the violence can be children to adults. This research focuses the discussion on violence that happens to women.

Referring to Nancy A. Crowell and Ann W. Burgess statement that “there is still consensus in defining violence against women, but major contention concerns to strictly define violence against women is broad as aggressive behaviours that adversely and disproportionately affect women” (9), it can be inferred that any act of behaviour that aims to hurt women can be considered as violence against women and it can cause fatal consequences. They further state that “violence against women also has been used to describe a wide range of acts, including murder, rape, and sexual assault, physical assault, emotional abuse, battering, stalking, prostitution, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, and

pornography” (9). Thus, it can be seen that violence against women is a definition that is used in society because a woman is often being the target of violence by others. This can be seen from the violence mentioned above where most of the victims are women.

### **Forms of Violence against Women**

Violence against women can take many different forms. This research uses Nancy A. Crowell and Ann W. Burgess' Understanding Violence against Women about the manifestation of violence against women.

#### ***Physical Violence***

Any action that causes physical harm is essentially physical violence. Physical violence can result in minor and serious injuries or death to the victim. Women's Health website says that physical violence can include shaking, burning, choking, hair-pulling, hitting, slapping, kicking, and any type of harm with a weapon like a knife or a gun. They also added that physical violence towards women can occur inside and outside the family or with a partner. Physical violence that happens in the family is called domestic violence (1).

#### ***Sexual Violence***

Sexual violence is a type of violence that often occurs against women. Many pieces of evidence show women often get sexually harassed by men. Any action with the aim of forcing another person to have sexual intercourse either directly or not is considered sexual violence. World Health Organization on World Report on Violence and Health defined sexual violence as “any sexual act that attempts to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (149). World Health Organization also adds that “sexual violence can include other forms of assault involving a sexual organ, including coerced contact between the mouth and penis, vulva or anus” (149). Thus, there are many forms of sexual violence. Sexual violence can also be perpetrated by anyone. It includes family or even partner as long as it is against the willingness of the victim. National Sexual Violence Resource on “What is Sexual Violence” add that “forms of sexual violence are rape or sexual assault, child sexual assault and incest, intimate partner sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact/touching, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, showing one's genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent, masturbating in public, watching someone in a private act, without their knowledge or permission” (1).

#### ***Emotional Abuse***

Emotional abuse is violence that affects the personality of the victim. Emotional abuse usually attacks the emotions of the victim so that it can manipulate the victim to think or act according to what the perpetrator wants. The perpetrators of this violence usually threaten and intimidate their victims through insulting, harassing, or using their power so that the victims feel they have no control over



themselves. Emotional abuse results in the victim's feeling of fear, worthlessness, hurt, and anger. Paul Moglia in *Psychology and Behavioral Health* says that "emotional abuse is often longer-lasting than physical abuse because it is a gradual destruction of victims" (649). This makes emotional abuse very costly to the victim. He also adds that "victims may be fearful to talk to anyone about the abuse because they have been convinced by their abuser that no one will believe them or they are threatened with severe consequences if they do" (650). Therefore, emotional abuse destroys the victim from the inside as it makes the victim feel powerless.

### ***Economic Violence***

Economic violence happens when the victim's economic resource is taken by the perpetrator. Francesca Bettio and Elisa Ticci in "Violence against Women and Economic Independence" state that "economic abuse involves behaviours that control a woman's ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources, thus threatening her economic security and potential for self-sufficiency" (18). The form of economic violence can be restricting access to financial resources, and property damage.

### ***Effects of Violence against Women***

The violence that is always experienced by women in their daily lives certainly affects their lives in the short or long-term. The following is the elaboration of the effects of violence against women by Ann W. Burgess and Nancy A. Crowell in *Understanding Violence Against Women*.

### ***Physical Effects***

Physical effects from violence against women can result in minor and serious injuries. According to Burgess and Crowell in *Understanding Violence Against Women*, "review of emergency room medical records in one urban hospital revealed that 50% of all injuries to women seen in the emergency room and 21% of the injuries that required emergency surgery could be attributed to battering" (78). This shows that violence against women can result in physical injuries that are very dangerous and fatal to the lives of the victims. The examples of physical injuries are bruises, scratches, and cuts to burns, broken bones, concussions, miscarriages, and stab wounds, and gunshot wounds to permanent damage to vision or hearing, joints, or internal organs to death. Burgess and Crowell also add that "bruises and lacerations to the head, face, neck, breasts, and abdomen are typical injuries" (77).

### ***Psychological Effects***

Violence against women can damage the psychological condition of the victim. One of the psychological symptoms that usually results from violence is trauma. Women who experienced violence also have been found to disproportionately suffer from depression, having thoughts of suicide, and attempting suicide. According to Burgess and Crowell in *Understanding Violence against Women* "even when evaluated many years after they were sexually assaulted,

survivors were more likely to receive several psychiatric diagnoses, including major depression, alcohol abuse, and dependence, drug abuse and dependence, PTSD” (80).

Depression is one of the medical situations which affects the psychological condition. According to the National Institute of Mental Health in “Depression Basics” “depression is a mood disorder that causes distressing symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working” (1). Anyone who is depressed will face some difficulties in her daily life because the symptoms themselves affect most of her daily activities.

Some factors cause someone to be depressed. According to American Psychiatric Association in “What Is Depression?” “Several factors can play a role in depression, like biochemistry, genetics, personality and environmental factors, like continuous exposure to violence, neglect, abuse or poverty” (1). It can be seen that violence is one of the factors causing depression.

There are symptoms of depression. National Institute of Mental Health says in “Depression Basics” that sadness is only a small part of the depression, even some people with depression do not feel sad. Different people also have different symptoms. Some symptoms of depression include: persistent sadness, anxiety, or “empty” mood, pessimism, feelings of guilt, worthlessness, having no control over life, loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities, decreased energy, having difficulties on concentrating, remembering, or making decisions, and sleeping, anger, thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts, restlessness or irritability, aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment. (3) Based on the explanation, it is clear that there are a lot of symptoms of depression. All the symptoms of depression will affect the lives of the depressed people. It proves that depression is a serious issue. However, not all the symptoms can be seen in a depressed person. The person who is depressed may show only one symptom of depression.

Another physiological consequence of violence against women is post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a medical situation that happens to someone that witnesses or experiences traumatic events like violence or disaster. According to the National Institutes of Health in “PostTraumatic Stress Disorder” there are four forms of symptoms of PTSD. The first form is reexperiencing symptoms. In this symptom, the victim shows some symptoms, including a flashback of the traumatic. The second form is avoidance symptoms. In these symptoms, the victim stayed away or avoiding all the things that related to traumatic events. The third form is arousal and reactivity symptoms. In this symptom, the victim shows some symptoms including being easily startled, feeling tense, and having difficulty concentrating. The last form is cognition and mood symptoms. In this symptom, the victim showed some



symptoms including negative thoughts about others or the world, distorted thoughts about the event that cause feelings of blame, on-going negative emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, or shame, feelings of social isolation, and having difficulties on feeling positive emotions, such as happiness or satisfaction (3). Based on the quotation, it is clear that people who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder show different forms of symptoms. All forms of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder also affect the lives of the people who suffer from the post-traumatic stress disorder. However, a person who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder may not show all the symptoms.

## **DISCUSSION**

This section analyses kinds of violence that are experienced by Lisbeth Salander, the effects of the violence, and her resistance against the violence that she experienced in The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.

Stieg Larsson in his The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo reveals violence that happens to women. In the novel, most of the victims of the violence are dead. Lisbeth Salander is a survivor of the violence against women. Her survival is due to her resistance against the violence that happens to her. However, all forms of violence she experienced affect her life.

### **Forms of Violence Experienced by Lisbeth Salander**

Lisbeth Salander always experiences violence in her life. It begins when she was in elementary school, and from then on, she often experiences violence done by others even when she has already grown up and has had a job at Milton Security. There are several forms of violence that she experiences. They are physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse, and economic abuse.

#### ***Physical Violence***

Stieg Larsson describes that since childhood, Lisbeth Salander has experienced physical violence. When she was in elementary school, she experienced physical violence perpetrated by David Gustavsson, her classmate. He did physical violence to Lisbeth by teasing and throwing things at her. Salander (Larson 205). Throwing things at someone is one of the examples of physical violence.

When Lisbeth Salander was in middle school, she also experienced physical violence perpetrated by one of her classmates. It can be seen in the novel “Salander once found herself in a fight with a much bigger and stronger boy. She was no match to him physically. At first, he amused himself by shoving her to the ground several times, and then he slapped her. Finally, the boy punched her in the face” (Larsson 205). Here, Salander receives some acts of physical violence—being shoved to the ground, slapped, and punched in the face.

Another example of physical violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander is when she was walking to her office. This violence was perpetrated by a

policeman. This happens when she was walking past Gotgatan on her way to Milton Security. At that time, there was a riot near Gotgatan, and Salander, who was just passing by, was accused by a policeman as part of the riot and he struck her with a baton (Larsson 203). Thus, she receives physical violence from the policeman, which is, a strike on her shoulder using a baton.

Lisbeth Salander also experiences physical violence perpetrated by her guardian, Nils Bjurman. He was appointed as her guardian by the government. A guardian or guardianship is to help people with mental illness in conjunction with heavy abuse of alcohol or drugs. Thus, a guardian can control the client's money or make some decisions to help the client. There are a lot of individuals that are under guardianship, and Salander is one of them. Salander had to report her condition or her expenses to Nils Bjurman once a month. Therefore, he made a schedule of their meeting in relation to this report.

Nils Bjurman physically abused Salander in his apartment. This happened when Lisbeth had postponed their scheduled meeting because of her work, so he took his chance and told her that their meeting would be in his apartment. In his apartment, Salander said that she needed money for food. However, Bjurman wanted her to perform oral sex for him first. Because she refused it, he became angry and slapped her. He also grabbed her and threw her to the bed. When she tried to turn over, he pressed her down and straddled her (Larsson 224). It is clear that Salander receives physical violence, namely, slap, grab by force, and a throw.

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is also frequently experienced by Lisbeth Salander. She experiences sexual violence for the first time when she was eighteen. It was on her birthday. She was charged with an assault and battery. This was because she just defended herself as the man she attacked groped her (Larsson 142). Unwanted grope is sexual violence.

Lisbeth Salander is also sexually abused by her guardian Nils Bjurman. He sexually abused her twice. The first abuse is in his office when she went to his office because her laptop was broken. She did not have enough money to buy the new one, so she went to her guardian for her unexpected expenses. Bjurman, on the other hand, used this situation to abuse her. He started with massaging her neck, and then his right hand slowly touched her right breast and squeezed it (Larsson 197). He then forced her to touch his genitals and to perform oral sex (Larsson 199). This is obviously sexual violence.

The second time Nils Bjurman sexually abuses Lisbeth Salander she went to his apartment as she wanted to get her money for food. Instead of giving her the money, Bjurman raped her forcefully doing anal sex to Salander (Larsson 224). Apparently, he has done sexual abuse.

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Lisbeth Salander also experiences emotional abuse in the forms of threats, intimidation, and also insults from Nils Bjurman. In their meeting, Nils Bjurman asked personal questions to Salander. This time he asked Salander about her sex life, which she had no intention of discussing with anyone. She realized that he was not going to give up, so she mentioned Magnus. Magnus was a fictional name she made up as she went along, but Bjurman took her account as the pretext for meticulously mapping out her sex life. The questions on how often she had sex, whether she used condoms and enjoy oral sex, her favourite position in doing sex (Larsson 180) really annoyed her as they are too personal. Her answer "No, it's not particularly nice to be fucked in the arse but what the hell business is it of yours?" indicates that his questions has crossed the line and it insults her. Thus, it is an emotional abuse.

Nils Bjurman also threatened and intimidated Salander to be able to control her. Before forcing her to have oral sex, he threatened her that if she complied with what he wanted, he would be nice to her. However, if she made trouble, he could "put you away in an institution for the rest of her life" (Larsson 199). as he has power as her guardian. Forcing Lisbeth to do something she does not want to do and threatening her are emotional abuses.

In addition, Bjurman intimidated Lisbeth not to tell about what he did to her to anyone. He warned her that no one, including the police, would believe her story when she reported his act of sexually abusing her because her documents stated that she was a non-compos mentis. He made her believe that no one would trust her as they would believe him more (Larsson 200). In this case, he tries to control her and her life, so he could do whatever he wants to her. Trying to control others, to intimidate, and to make others believe that they are not trusted by others are emotional abuses.

### ***Economic Violence***

As a person who is under a guardianship Salander has to report all the things related to her life including financial condition, health condition, and contribution to society to her guardian. Even so, a guardian cannot prohibit someone from accessing her money. However, Nils Bjurman prevents Salander from accessing her own money.

Economic violence that is experienced by Lisbeth Salander can be seen when she wanted to access her money to repair her damaged laptop. Instead of getting the money she needed, she got refusal from Bjurman as he said "I can't hand out money to you whenever you like" he said. "Why do you need such an expensive computer? There are plenty of cheaper models that you can use for playing computer games (Larsson 198). Evidently, Bjurman is trying to block Salander from accessing her own money. Preventing others to access their own money is economic violence. Controlling her money means that Bjurman has

access to control her life. Having control to her means that he can do whatever he wants to her.

### **The Effects of Violence to Lisbeth Salander's Life**

There are effects of violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander; they are physical and psychological ones.

#### ***Physical Effects***

The violence that is experienced by Lisbeth Salander led to some physical effects. Most of them are injuries, such as lips split up, wound, and bleeding. These injuries are caused by harsh treatment from her schoolmates, and her guardian Nils Bjurman. One of the physical effects received by Salander is when she was attacked by her classmate in her middle school. His punch "split her lip over and made her see stars" (La

Other physical injuries received by Lisbeth Salander are pain and bleeding resulted from the rape committed by Nils Bjurman. These injuries are "a pain in her abdomen, bleeding from her rectum and less visible wounds that would take longer to heal" (Larsson 226). They made her rest for one week in her apartment. Bleeding and wounds are physical consequences of violence.

#### ***Psychological Effects***

The violence that is experienced by Lisbeth Salander also affects her psychological condition as she suffers from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

#### ***Depression***

In the novel, Lisbeth Salander shows one symptom of depression, which is, having no control over her life. This is because she always experiences violence. Her experiences with violence ultimately lead her to the situation that she felt that she could not control her life. The sentence "There was a time when Salander had stood at a crossroad and did not have control over her own life when future could have been taken form of other casebook entries about drugs, alcohols, and custody in various institutions" (Larsson 211) shows her depression as she thought she did not have control over her life. Her life is determined by a casebook containing list of her bad behaviour and custody experience reported by her guardian. Having no control over her life leads her to consume alcohol and drugs, which makes her condition is even worse.

#### ***Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder***

In the novel, Lisbeth Salander also shows some symptoms of people who got post-traumatic stress disorder. This is due to the violence she experienced. Some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder shown by Salander are having difficulties to feel positive emotions, such as happiness or satisfaction, negative thoughts about others or the world, and on-going negative emotions, such as feelings of social isolation.



Lisbeth Salander shows difficulties to feel positive emotions when she was working with Mikael Blomkvist. He was her partner in solving the case of Harriet Vanger. Harriet Vanger was the girl that had been missing for forty years. After they solved the case, Salander was about to leave Michael. However, in her way of leaving, she kept thinking about Mikael Blomkvist. She had an ambivalent feeling toward him. This is because Mikael treated her very well. He was different because he did not judge her like other people. Her difficulties in feeling positive emotions can be seen in the novel, "She enjoyed working with him. .... He did not mess with her. He did not try to tell her how to live her life. She was the one who seduced him, not vice versa. And besides, it had been satisfying. So why did she feel as if she wanted to kick him in the face?" (Larsson 453). Here, she admitted that she enjoyed working with him, but her experiences of violence done by her schoolmates, the policeman and her guardian made her have difficulties to feel a positive emotion that was built by Mikael. Thus, instead of feeling happy, Lisbeth wanted to kick him in the face. This is actually a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The next symptom shown by Salander is a negative thought about others. She showed a negative thought to the police. She did not trust the police. She thought that police always treated her badly. This is because she experienced violence committed by the police and it made her distrust the police. Her negative thought about the police is also shown in the novel, "Her faith in the police was generally exiguous. For her police were a hostile force who over the year had put her under arrest or humiliated her" (Larsson 203). The statements show that Salander underwent bad experiences with the police. Her experience with policemen makes her have a negative thought about all the police and she does not want to trust them. Her condition shows a symptom of a post-traumatic stress disorder.

The last symptom shown by Lisbeth is the feeling of social isolation. The violence that was committed by her classmates, her guardian, and even the police, who were supposed to protect her, led her to believe that she had to isolate herself and protect herself from society. This actually comes from her thought that the society was not understanding and the people seemed to do nothing better than disrupting her life (Larsson 353); thus, "she had to protect herself from social authorities, police and guardianship authorities, teachers, etc" (Larsson 353). Clearly, Lisbeth Salander actually did not want to isolate herself from others. However, her experiences make her believe that it was the only way to protect herself. Her condition shows that she suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder.

### **Lisbeth Salander's Resistance against the Violence**

Lisbeth Salander is one of few characters in the novel that experiences violence in the novel. However, the difference between Lisbeth Salander and other victims is that she is still alive and survives from violence, while others are dead. She

learns that to survive from the violence she must protect herself. In the novel, she is described as a woman who knows how to defend herself and fight back against the violence that she experiences. Her resistance against violence is an example of how women try to survive from discrimination in the form of violence that happens towards them.

### ***Resistance against the Violence Perpetrated by Her Friends at School***

In her school, Salander and other women in her class were always the target of the violence by her male friends. However, while others would remain silent with the harassment or the bullies, she would stand up and fight back as it is seen in the novel, "Unlike the other girl in class, Salander would not for a second hesitate to use her fists or any weapon at hand to protect herself" (Larsson 205). It is obvious that she is not afraid of anyone and will do anything to protect herself and stop the violence against her. Her courage to stop the violence that happens to her is also shown in the novel when she beats up David Gustavon, her friend who likes to disturb her (Larsson 205). By decking him with the right jab, she wants to stop Gustavon from disturbing her.

### ***Resistance against the Violence Perpetrated by Nils Bjurman***

In the novel Salander is also a victim of sexual abuse by her guardian, Nils Bjurman. She was forced by Bjurman to perform oral sex and anal sex. This is because Nils Bjurman wanted to show that he had already controlled her. Realizing that Nils Bjurman was her major problem at that time, Salander decided to do something to stop him. After he raped her, she even wanted to kill him, but she finally thought his death would "give her back control of her own life, and there was no guarantee that Bjurman's successor would be an improvement" (Larsson 219). Thus, revenge is not her sole purpose because she realizes that it will not make her life better as she will be a criminal.

Salander comes with her idea that she thinks will change her situation with Nils Bjurman. She went to the Bjurman's apartment with the intention to ask for her money, but what happened there was not like the first time. In his apartment, "She shoved the teaser into his left armpit and fired 75,000 volts. When his legs began to give way she put her shoulder against him and used all her strength to push him down on to the bed" (Larsson 228). She then tied him on his apartment floor and sealed his mouth and she tattooed him on his belly and "The message was written caps over five lines that covered his belly, from his nipples just to above his genitals: IAM A SADISTIC PIG, A PERVERT, AND A RAPIST" (Larsson 235).

In addition, without Nils Bjurman knowing, Salander had recorded the moment he was raping her with the tiny camera she borrowed from her office. She then threatened him to do everything she wanted, including a good report about her every month. Not only that in the end Bjurman could not control her anymore and even the situation became worse to him. Everytime he wanted to erase the tattoo or do something that Lisbeth did not like, she would go to him

and threatened him. Obviously, Salander has already changed the situation. Bjurman is no longer the one who takes control. Instead, she has already taken control of the situation through her resistance. She not only has given him a lesson, but also prevents him from committing violence against other women.

***Resistance against the Violence Perpetrated by Martin Vanger***

Lisbeth Salander also resists violence that happens to other women. It can be seen through her and Blomkvist's effort to catch Martin Vanger as they found out that he was the reason of the disappearance of Harriet Vanger. Martin was a rapist and murderer of women for forty years. Women was his target because they were not well protected by law or society. It made the killing "easy" and it would not cause trouble to him (Larsson 401). When Mikael Blomkvist went to Martin's house to find more evidence about him killing women, unfortunately, Martin caught him, and took him to his secret room, and tortured him. Lisbeth Salander, who came late to the house, then sneaked into the room and beat Martin Vanger with the golf club (Larsson 409).

Martin exited from the secret room and ran away with his car when Salander focused on Mikael Blomkvist who had already been tortured by Martin. Martin crashed into a truck and finally died when Salander went after him using her motorbike. He died in the burning car (Larsson 412).

Salander's courage to fight against Martin Vanger not only makes her able to save Mikael and herself but also prevents Martin to do violence against other women in the future.

Lisbeth Salander's experience in the novel is an example of how men use their power to dominate women. Violence in the novel is the tool used by men to show their dominance and oppress women. Martin's statement that he got the feeling of a god when committing violence to women (Larsson 402) indicates men's desire to exercise their power over women. It is also seen that women who are vulnerable to violence, crime, and discrimination by men also are not regarded as an important issue by law and societies. This ultimately leads men to continue committing violence against women. When Lisbeth Salander received violence from a man, the law and society did not support her. Instead, they made her situation even worse by accusing her as a woman who was dangerous to others. This can be seen in the novel when she was charged with assaults and battery and was ordered to do a psychiatric evaluation. Her defence on the attack that the man had groped her and that there were witnesses of the event was not accepted by the court (Larsson 142).

However, although Martin Vanger, Nils Bjurman, policeman, and others who commit violence against Lisbeth are representatives of society that oppress, discriminate, and dominate women, Lisbeth Salander represents the woman who is able to resist the violence happened to her. Her resistance finally leads her to survive from violence and prevents others to experience the violence.

## CONCLUSION

The novel has portrayed experiences of a woman, Lisbeth Salander, who becomes a victim of violence. She goes through four forms of violence, which are, physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse, and economic abuse. They affect her both physically and psychologically. Physically, she gets pains and injuries, such as bleeding, bruises, lips splitting up. Psychologically, she shows symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

However, the novel has also given a portrayal of a woman who is able to survive from the violence she has undergone since childhood. She turns to be a woman who is not afraid or hesitates to defend herself from others, including men. Successfully fighting her fear, she has the courage to resist all the violence she experiences. Thus, the novel reveals that although the violence experienced by Lisbeth Salander brings negative impacts on her life, it also gives her motivation to survive and become an independent woman.

In feminist perspective, Lisbeth Salander, the female character of the novel, has given example on how women should react to all kinds of discrimination against them, which in this case is in the forms of violence, through her resistance to the violence and rising up from the bad experiences to be an independent individual who later on is able to help others. Her portrayal as a woman who is able to survive in her ordeal created by men and emerges a woman with endurance, strong motivation, courage, intelligence and independence seems to counter the image of women prevailing in literary world—a world that is very much patriarchally male constructed.

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