

**THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN IN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM  
IN LENI ZUMAS' *RED CLOCKS***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM  
MALANG  
2025**



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**THESIS**

Presented to  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra  
(S.S).

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MALANG  
2025**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "*The Exploitation of Women in the Capitalist System in Leni Zumas' Red Clocks*" is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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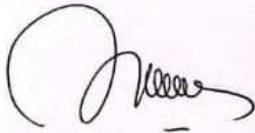


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This to certify that Ahmad Santuso's thesis entitled *The Exploitation of Women in the Capitalist System in Leni Zumas' Red Clocks* has been approved for thesis examination at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S.)*.

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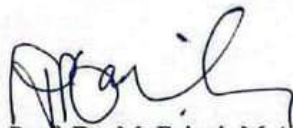
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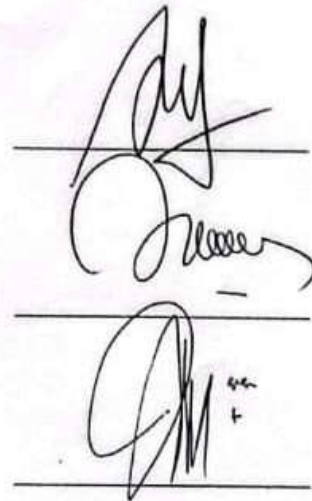
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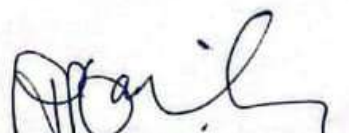
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**MOTTO**

*“Akan ku latih hati ini dengan cinta,  
supaya mampu menampung mawar beserta durinya”  
-Mahmoud Darwish*

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the source of my infinite love, my father, Suri, my mother Sri, and my brother, Muhammad Husnan, who have always been my strength and sanctuary. To all my friends who have never stop supporting and motivating me, and to myself, for proving that I am capable.

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Sholawat and salam were continuously poured out on Prophet Muhammad SAW, and peace and blessings be upon him, along with his family, friends, and followers, until the end of time. The thesis entitled *The Exploitation of Women in the Capitalist System in Leni Zumas' Red Clocks* was made to meet one of the requirements for achieving a degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) in the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Completing the thesis was made possible with the participation of those who have provided endless motivation, counsel, and support. Therefore, with deep gratitude and appreciation, the researcher would like to extend thanks to all who have contributed to the drafting of this thesis:

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7. My religious teacher, for the insightful suggestions, patience, and invaluable guidance through the process of completing this thesis.
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9. All individuals who have directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this thesis.

The researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings that need to be improved in the preparation of this thesis. Therefore, the researcher hopes to receive further input related to the issues or

subject matter of this thesis. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful for researchers, families, teachers, and the wider community.

Malang, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025

The  
Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahmad Santuso', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ahmad Santuso

## ABSTRACT

Santuso, Ahmad (2025) *The Exploitation of Women in the Capitalist System in Leni Zumas' Red Clocks*. Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanity. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.,

*Keyword: Exploitation of Women, Capitalist Patriarchy, Reproductive Labor*

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This research analyze the forms of women exploitation depicted in Leni Zumas *Red Clocks* (2018) by examining women's exploitation and the emergence of resistance within the structures of capitalist patriarchy. Employing feminist literary criticism and Silvia Federici's theory of capitalist patriarchy and reproductive labor as the main analytical framework, this study identifies four dominant forma of exploitation: economic exploitation through unpaid reproductive labor, social exploitation through gender based marginalization, ideological exploitation through the internalization of patriarchal values, and the impoverishment of women caused by restricted access to economic resources. These exploitative practices are represented through women's experinces of motherhood, professional life, marriage, and state control over reproduction. In addition, the novel portrays various forma of feminist resistance, including collective solidarity, personal defiance, and the reclamation of bodily autonomy. This study contributes anlytically by demonstrating how Federici's concept of reproductive labor provides a critical lens to uncover the structural mechanism through capitalism sustain women's exploitation while simultaneously enabling forms of resistance within everyday reproductive practices. Emphasizing feminist resitance as a transformative force against systemic gender oppression.



## ملخص

سانتوسو، أحمد ٢٠٢٥ استغلال المرأة في النظام الرأسمالي في رواية "الساعات الحمراء" للكاتبة لينى زوماس. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية في مالانج. المشرف: د. حجية إستياداه، ماجستير.

### الكلمات المفتاحية: استغلال المرأة، النظام الأبوي الرأسمالي، العمل الإنجابي

تحلل هذه الدراسة أشكال استغلال النساء التي تصورها لينى زوماس في روايتها Red Clocks (2018) من خلال دراسة استغلال النساء وظهور المقاومة داخل هياكل النظام الأبوي الرأسمالي. باستخدام النقد الأدبي النسوي ونظرية سيلفيا فيديريكي عن النظام الأبوي الرأسمالي والعمل الإنجابي كإطار تحليلي رئيسي، تحدد هذه الدراسة أربعة أشكال سائدة للاستغلال: الاستغلال الاقتصادي من خلال العمل الإنجابي غير مدفوع الأجر، والاستغلال الاجتماعي من خلال التهميش القائم على النوع الاجتماعي، والاستغلال الأيديولوجي من خلال استيعاب القيم الأبوية، وإفقار النساء بسبب تقييد وصولهن إلى الموارد الاقتصادية. يتم تمثيل هذه الممارسات الاستغلالية من خلال تجارب النساء في الأمومة والحياة المهنية والزواج والسيطرة الحكومية على الإنجاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تصور الرواية أشكالًا مختلفة من المقاومة النسوية، بما في ذلك التضامن الجماعي والتحدي الشخصي واستعادة الاستقلالية الجسدية. تساهم هذه الدراسة تحليليًا من خلال إظهار كيف يوفر مفهوم فيديريكي للعمل الإنجابي منظورًا نقديًا لكشف الآلية الهيكلية التي يستخدمها الرأسمالية للحفاظ على استغلال النساء، مع تمكين أشكال المقاومة في الوقت نفسه ضمن الممارسات الإنجابية اليومية. وتؤكد الدراسة على المقاومة النسوية كقوة تحويلية ضد القمع الجنساني المنهجي.

## ABSTRAK

**Santuso, Ahmad** (2025) Eksploitasi Perempuan dalam Sistem Kapitalis dalam Novel *Red Clocks* Karya Leni Zumas. Tesis. Departemen Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.,

Kata kunci: Eksploitasi Perempuan, Patriarki Kapitalis, Tenaga Kerja Reproduksi

Penelitian ini menganalisis bentuk-bentuk eksploitasi perempuan yang digambarkan dalam novel Leni Zumas, *Red Clocks* (2018), dengan mengkaji eksploitasi perempuan dan munculnya perlawanan dalam struktur patriarki kapitalis. Menggunakan kritik sastra feminis dan teori Silvia Federici tentang patriarki kapitalis dan kerja reproduktif sebagai kerangka analitis utama, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi empat bentuk eksploitasi dominan: eksploitasi ekonomi melalui kerja reproduktif yang tidak dibayar, eksploitasi sosial melalui marginalisasi berdasarkan gender, eksploitasi ideologis melalui internalisasi nilai-nilai patriarki, dan kemiskinan perempuan akibat akses yang terbatas terhadap sumber daya ekonomi. Praktik-praktik eksploitatif ini diwakili melalui pengalaman perempuan dalam peran keibuan, kehidupan profesional, pernikahan, dan kontrol negara atas reproduksi. Selain itu, novel ini menggambarkan berbagai bentuk resistensi feminis, termasuk solidaritas kolektif, penolakan pribadi, dan pemulihan otonomi tubuh. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi analitis dengan menunjukkan bagaimana konsep kerja reproduktif Federici menyediakan lensa kritis untuk mengungkap mekanisme struktural yang memungkinkan kapitalisme mempertahankan eksploitasi perempuan sambil sekaligus memfasilitasi bentuk-bentuk resistensi dalam praktik reproduktif sehari-hari. Menekankan resistensi feminis sebagai kekuatan transformatif melawan penindasan gender sistemik.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on a brief description of the study. It contains the research background, research problem, research significance, research scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

#### A. Background of the Study

Exploitation has long been a central concern in discussion of capitalist structures, particularly in relation to how unequal social relations generate profit at the expense of marginalized groups. Through this system women experience economic marginalization through limited access to low paid labor, resources, and restricted social power under male dominated state structures. In literary texts, exploitation is not only described as an economic condition, but also as a mechanism of women's experiences. In this context, exploitation is carried out in accordance with political strategies that prioritize economic gain and disregard justice and women's bodily autonomy. (Geovani, et al., 2021).

In the novel *Red Clocks*, the exploitation of women is depicted in state regulations governing reproductive rights and restricted economic access. The novel describes contemporary American society's debate on reproductive autonomy and abortion, reflecting how capitalists and the state have control over the interests of transforming women's bodies as a political and economic arena.

Through these depictions, the novel reveals how capitalist and patriarchal structures marginalize women in both the private and public spheres. Furthermore, the novel depicts exploitation as a narrative mechanism that reveals the intersection between state authority, economic power, and gender inequality.

In the broader context of state control over bodily autonomy and women's reproductive rights, literary works have emerged as part of critical efforts to examine more deeply the intersection between patriarchy, capitalism, and bodily autonomy. One such literary work is *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas.

Leni Zumas' novel *Red Clocks* depicts a society in which women's reproductive rights are systematically restricted by the state. Set in a future America, the novel presents a social system that refers to reproductive technology and criminalized abortion, forcing women to conform to the roles of motherhood and reproduction controlled by the state. Through this narrative, the novel reveals how capitalist and patriarchal power structures work together to regulate women's bodily autonomy.

In this dystopian novel, women face roles where they are forced to return to traditional roles that are entirely controlled by the state, including motherhood and the right to give birth. The novel revolves around the lives of five women who struggle with the many social and state pressures that govern or dictate their bodies and lives. Leni Zumas is a feminist writer

who often portrays gender injustice in the control of women's bodies.

The novel *Red Clocks* was published in 2018 in a time of concern about the anti-abortion policies in the United States under the Donald Trump administration. The political situation the time made many fearful of women's reproductive rights being restricted by the law at the time. Through this novel, the author provides a view of the political reality that limits women's reproductive freedom, and how trapped by the system to treat women's bodily autonomy.

This scholarly investigation endeavors to address the deficiency present in the literary work *Red Clocks* concerning the disparities of gender within the capitalist framework by employing a Marxist Feminist lens, thereby offering an analysis that juxtaposes the fabricated circumstances depicted in the narrative with the prevailing societal realities encountered in contemporary existence. According to Silvia Federici (2004) capitalism uses women as tools to be exploited with low wages. This phenomenon is evident in that female workers' median weekly earnings by group are only \$912 for all women age 16 and older, while men age 16 and older earn \$1,097 (BLS, 2023).

Previous research has explored the relationship between exploitation of women and capitalism, for example through Akhter, S., Shah, S., & Nazir's study (2023) in *Exploitation of Women in Arab Patriarchal Society in Saadawi's God Dies by the Nile: A Marxist Feminist Analysis* which examines how the male-dominated pathways of social and



economic political institutions affect the power that exists. In addition, there are also feminist studies that explain Niyamat, H., Akhter, S., & Waheed, S (2003) *Patriarchal and political credo in 'A Thousand Splendid Suns': A Marxist feminist study* which critically examines the relationship between patriarchal and political credo, socio-political extremism, economic oppression, and patriarchy as an obstacle.

Several previous studies have explored the exploitation and resistance of women using a Marxist feminist lens, although they have a different focus from other works, including Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks*. However, these studies contribute valuable theoretical foundations for understanding how patriarchy and capitalism intersect to exploit women. Akhter (2016) *Characterization of Women in Maxim Gorky's Novel "Mother": A Marxist Feminist Perspective* examines how women gained class and entered the proletariat movement that made socialism the path to women's liberation.

Abbasi et al. (2016) *Marxist feminist critique: socio-economic position of Afro-American women in Alice walker's the color purple* examines how patriarchy is reinforced by economic deprivation and places women at a lower social status than men and perpetuates their exploitation. Al-Badarneh and Amayreh (2023) *Female Commodification in The Great Gatsby: A Feminist Marxist Approach* examines how capitalism manipulates for profit, leading to the exploitation of women in both economic and social spheres.

AL-Almusawi and AL-dihaymawee (2024) *A Marxist Feminist Study in Walter Tevis' The Queen's Gambit* examines the focus on how gender ideology shapes capitalist structures and sustains the exploitation of women. Arnàutu (2016) *A Marxist Feminist Perspective on Kate Chopin's The Awakening* examines the impact of the capitalist system on women's psychological well-being in both public and domestic domains, highlighting forms of exploitation that occur within these spaces. Handayani and Candraningrum (2018) *Oppression to Women in Shirley Conran's Crimson Novel (1992): a feminist literary criticism* examines research that focuses on the experience of gender oppression with implications of exploitation embedded in the characters socio-economic conditions.

There are previous studies that related with the same object of this research. Martínez-Falquina, S. (2021) in the article *Ecofeminist Dystopias: Louise Erdrich's Future Home of the Living God and Leni Zumas's Red Clocks* examines two contemporary feminist dystopian novels that criticize patriarchy and capitalism. This study argues that both novels serve as evidence and a warning that control over women's bodies is being excessively exploited by the capitalist system. Ahmad and Ajmal (2025) *Existence Precedes Essence: Reclaiming Personhood in Zumas's Red Clocks* examine how the novel depicts women's struggle to regain autonomy within a restrictive socio-political structure.

Basu and Tripathi (2023) *An Essence of Postmodern Truth (s):*

*Analyzing "Motherhood" in Red Clocks by Leni Zumas examines the novel Red Clocks* using a postmodern feminist perspective that focuses on the role of a mother, bodily autonomy, and agency. Nassour (2024) *Abortion-Related Anxieties and Colonizing the Female Body in Leni Zumas's Red Clocks* examines feminist dystopian narratives about the colonization of women's bodies and anxieties about abortion

There are previous studies that related with the same theory of this research. Daskalaki (2021) *The subversive potential of witchcraft: A reflection on Federici's Self-reproducing movements* examines practices that have subversive potential within the framework of Silvia Federici's theory on self-reproducing movements. Daskalaki demonstrates Federici's framework of reproductive labor and resistance to the capitalist system, which can be used to understand how magical practices are connected to social and political practices. This theory is not only relevant but also important in contemporary feminist discourse.

Carbin, M. (2021) *Feminist struggles as anti-capitalist struggles: rediscovering Marxist feminism* Examines the women's labor by analyzing the status and meaning of work is one of the most important discussions in feminism. This research uses the theory of marxist feminism to examine issues between gender, work and capitalism as well as feminist critiques of contemporary work. Fraser, N. (2023) *Cannibal Capitalism: How our System is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet and What We Can Do A bout It* examines the capitalist system's exploitation of

natural resources and marginalized groups, showing how capitalism gains wealth from oppression.

Based on previous studies, this research attempts to offer a new analytical perspective on Leni Zumas' novel *Red Clocks*. Although previous studies have examined the novel through a general feminist framework, attention to analyzing the exploitation and resistance of women specifically within the capitalist system using Silvia Federici's Marxist feminist theory has been limited. This study addresses this gap by examining *Red Clocks* through the concepts of capitalist patriarchy and reproductive labor. The uniqueness of this study lies in its specific application of Federici's Marxist feminist framework to reveal the forms of exploitation and resistance experienced by women in the novel.

This novel is a work of fiction that critiques the elimination and exploitation of women's rights in the capitalist system, especially through the exploitation of women's bodies and labor. The novel provides an important discussion due to how gender inequality occurs not only on biological factors, but also through economic and social structural factors. The analysis of the novel *Red Clocks* provides a critical understanding and adds to our knowledge of patriarchy and capitalism and provides a new perspective on how literary works provide a reflection of existing social reality.

There has been no previous research discussing *Red Clocks* using Marxist Feminism, especially Federici's perspective. Therefore, this

research is anticipated to provide academic relevance and novelty by presenting a new analysis of how women are exploited by capitalist structures as portrayed in the novel.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the background of the study presented above, the researcher formulates several issues of this study in following question:

1. What forms of exploitation do the four female characters face within the capitalist context in *Red Clocks* based on Silvia Federici's Marxist Feminist theory?
2. How do the female characters resist women's exploitation imposed by the capitalist system in *Red Clocks* based on Silvia Federici's Marxist Feminist theory?

### C. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of feminist literary criticism, particularly regarding the exploitation of women in capitalist structures as argued by Silvia Federici (2004). This research also serves as a theoretical reference for future studies that use a Marxist feminist framework, especially those focusing on reproductive labor, capitalist patriarchy, and the exploitation of women in literary texts. Furthermore, this research enriches the discourse of feminist literature by examining how capitalist structures shape the roles and life experiences of women in literary narratives.

Practically, this research is expected to contribute insights into the analysis of Leni Zumas' novel *Red Clocks*, allowing readers to gain a deeper understanding of gender inequality under the capitalist system. This research can also educate readers on the importance of recognizing and challenging the exploitation of women in the capitalist system, both in real life and in literary works.

### D. Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on examining the exploitation and resistance experienced by four women in Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks* through Federici's (2004) using Marxist Feminist theory. Federici's theory focuses on women's exploitation within the capitalist system, particularly through the control of women's bodies and reproductive labor. The novel *Red Clocks* was researched as an object of study because it describes a form of

oppression and control over reproduction or control of the female body. Specifically, this research is limited to analyzing four forms of women's exploitation as proposed within Federici's Marxist Feminist framework, namely: (1) unpaid reproductive labor, (2) control over women's reproduction, (3) wage discrimination and economic marginalization, (4) the impoverishment of women.

This study is limited to four female characters in the novel: The Wife (Susan), The Mender (Gin), The Biographer (Ro), and The Daughter (Mattie). Each character is analyzed to identify both the forms of exploitation they experience and the ways they resist these exploitative structures. Through these characters, Zumas shows how capitalist structures, laws, and social norms exploit women in both the public and private spheres.

## **E. Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Capitalism**

Capitalism is a system that relates to labor and wages, and deprives women of their rights in reproductive labor in order to maintain production. Federici argues that capitalism often controls women's bodies, reproduction, and social relations in order to secure sustainable capital (Federici, 2004).

### **2. Exploitation**

Exploitation is an act that deliberately utilizes other parties and

does something at will to get the expected benefits without considering the negative impacts that will occur. Exploitation can be done to anyone who is considered to have no power such as children and women. four forms of women's exploitation as proposed within Federici's Marxist Feminist framework, namely: (1) unpaid reproductive labor, (2) control over women's reproduction, (3) wage discrimination and economic marginalization, (4) the impoverishment of women. (Federici, 2004).

### 3. Resistance

Resistance refers to the collective struggle of women challenging the exploitation of reproductive labor by the capitalist and patriarchal systems. Resistance is expressed through the refusal of unpaid domestic work, the right to bodily autonomy, and opposition to the subordination of women in the capitalist system (Federici, 2020).





## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explain the theory used in this study. This chapter explains the marxist feminism approach and theory. This chapter supports Silvia Federici's (2004) concept of exploitation that will be used in this research.

#### **A. Feminist Literary Criticism.**

Feminist Literary Criticism is a theoretical approach that looks at how literary works reinforce, challenge or construct gender inequality by analyzing the representation of women, gender power dynamics, and socio-political structures that marginalize women's voices (Showalter, 1999). Unlike general literary criticism which focus structure, meaning, and social function (Peck & Coyle, 1993), feminist literary criticism examining how patriarchal ideology is embedded in the text and how literature plays a role in both undermining and reinforcing it.

A key aspect of feminist literary criticism within the Marxist feminist framework is the analysis of the historical and structural oppression of women resulting from the socio-economic system. Silvia Federici explains that the oppression of women is related to or inseparable from capitalism, particularly in relation to bodily autonomy and reproductive rights (Federici, 2004). It invites readers to observe and question the social, cultural, and economic inequalities that exist in the

real world.

Furthermore, Federici argues that the subordination of women must first be understood in a historical context, then continue with the transition to capitalist production. She explains that processes such as control over reproduction, state regulation, and the devaluation of women's labor play an important role in maintaining the patriarchal system (Federici, 2004)..

In Marxist feminist theory, Federici explains that literary representations of female oppression are a reflection of real socio-economic structures. She argues that capitalism is highly dependent on women's reproductive capacity and control over bodily autonomy in order to maintain its system of accumulation (Federici, 2004). From this perspective, literary texts become a medium for revealing how the ruling system operates to control women's lives..

In the context of feminist theory, dystopian fiction provides a space to see how women move within the capitalist system. Gender exploitation occurs not only in economic inequality, but also in state regulations that limit women's reproductive rights. This perspective is in line with Silvia Federici's feminist concept, which reveals that women's bodies are controlled by the system to be used as tools for profit. Based on Jameson's critique, these works are not only predictions of possible future events, but also fight for gender equality where oppression occurs due to the abuse of power by the state, which benefits the dominant group.

In Marxist feminist theory, Silvia Federici explains that women's

resistance arises from material conditions under the influence of capitalism. She argues that the exploitation of reproductive labor and women's bodies gives rise to an awareness that challenges capitalist domination. According to Federici (2004), resistance does not always take the form of open rebellion, but also manifests as women's rejection of the normalization of exploitation under economic and state structures.

Federici further emphasizes that capitalism is highly dependent on the continuous regulation of women's roles in the reproductive system, both in the private and public spheres. However, this systemic control creates space for resistance, as women become aware of how their bodies are exploited for profit. In this case, the representation of women's oppression in literary works can be used as a form of critical reflection on women's struggle against capitalist and patriarchal regulation.

## **B. Marxist Feminism**

Marxist Feminism can be categorized as a fusion of Marxist and feminist studies. In critical literary studies, the above points become studies that synergize with each other. In critical theory and critical culture, it becomes a literary study that practices science in the human field, especially for women. In this section, history and culture are highlighted that various cultural activities and historical reflections are still related to the continuity of human life. Therefore, marxist feminism provides space to study, research, and complete all things. In the reflection of history, we must appreciate that indeed the course of history and culture has an

effect on humans.

Silvia Federici (2004) in *Caliban and the Witch* finds the causes of women's exploitation in the capitalist system historically. Starting from the feudalism tradition of women and transitioning to capitalism in Europe in the 16th to 17th centuries. At that time, women and especially the working class were forced by the capitalist system to become reproductive machines to produce cheap labor even without wages. In this issue, Federici argues that such treatment not only reinforces male dominance in the gender sphere, but the emergence of a social class that benefits the bourgeoisie.

In this research, Marxist Feminism becomes a tool to criticize the capitalist system in the representation of women in various issues depicted in works of fiction. The novel *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas, for example, depicts the role of women in modern society who are trapped in double exploitation. In the content of the novel, namely low-wage workers, the character of the daughter illustrates that workers who come from poor families are often not recognized by society or the capitalist system.

Furthermore, the character of the wife provides an overview of a woman who must take care of the household and work. Federici (2020) in *Revolution at Point Zero* asserts that reproductive work is often invisible such as taking care of children, cleaning the house, and cooking. Therefore, when it becomes invisible, it will be difficult to produce new labor in a sustainable manner. In the capitalist system, this issue is often

ignored by the capitalist system because according to them the economic calculation is not profitable, as a result women never get justice and are valued as autonomous subjects.

Cottais' (2020) study here is also very relevant to this research issue. He suggests that the equality created by the capitalist system is illusory. For example, in the public sphere, regarding women's suffrage, and access to work. Cottais (2020) argues that the equality offered by the capitalist system is nothing but nonsense. She describes how the capitalist system appears to provide equal opportunities and space for women, such as public participation and access to employment, but in reality always marginalizes women. Women's liberation under capitalism is often limited because their roles are still determined by expectations and domestic responsibilities.

### **C. Gender Inequality in Capitalist System**

Federici (2004) in her book *Caliban and the Witch* provides an explanation of Marxist feminism theory that the gender injustice that occurs is the exploitation of women in the capitalist system on the part of unpaid female workers. Dalla Costa and James cited in Federici's (2004) book argue that the exploitation of women is deliberately structured within the capitalist system, where women are positioned as primary agents of both production and reproduction to sustain accumulation.

Therefore, as human beings who still have reason, we must be concerned about the fact that until now there is still exploitation of

workers and it happens to women. It has become very important to see that exploitation does not only occur in a family but also in the capitalist system. To find out the importance of gender inequality in capitalist system in Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks*, the Marxist feminist approach is appropriate for this study.

Based on Federici's (2004) view, the exploitation of women in the capitalist system is systemic and sustained through the structural control of women's reproductive labor. The capitalist system not only exploits women through unpaid labor and inadequate wages, but also through state policies and social norms that control women's reproductive rights. In this case, women's bodies become tools for the state to gain profit through restrictions on reproductive rights, social images that subjugate women, and criminalization of certain practices. In the 16th and 17th centuries, this practice of subjugating women was linked to the history of witch hunts, where women who lived independently and worked as doctors or healers were considered to be disrupting the existing social order, leading to campaigns to hunt them down as witches. Therefore, according to Federici (2004), violence perpetrated by the state and society aims to ensure that women's bodily rights remain under the control of the capitalist system.

Federici (2020) in *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle* also explains that reproductive work is not only for unpaid workers, but also for the sake of being commercialized

by the capitalist system for profit. A simple example is in child and elderly care institutions, where we mostly find women working for low wages. In *Red Clocks*, the character of the daughter is forced to do odd jobs to support her family. Reproductive work should be a shared responsibility, but instead it benefits the bourgeoisie. In this context, it is reinforced by the opinion of Dalla Costa and James (cited by Federici, 2004) that capitalism has planned to make women marginalized and exploited for the purpose of the bourgeoisie.

Research conducted by Arruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser (2019) in *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* supports Federici's argument that capitalism has deepens gender inequality through the systemic control of women's reproductive labor, particularly through public spending cuts on reproductive health services. Therefore, the capitalist system not only exploits women, but also has a debilitating effect on the social structure that should guarantee equality between men and women. The result is that women are always blamed if they cannot adapt to state regulations or policies. Then, this is a polemic that must be resolved in order to support gender equality without intimidating either party.

The key concepts in Federici's Marxist feminist analysis include primitive accumulation, witch hunt, reproductive role as unpaid labor, and capitalist patriarchy as bodily discipline. Federici argues that the transition to capitalism depended not only on the exploitation of wage labor, but also on the systematic control of women's reproductive capacities. Practices



such as witch hunts functioned as mechanisms of social discipline aimed at subjugating women and reinforcing the gender hierarchy necessary for capitalist accumulation (Federici, 2004).

#### **D. Exploitation**

Exploitation is an unequal exchange in economic labor consisting of groups that maximize in various ways and view unequal amounts of human capital and physical capital (Veneziani, R., & Yoshihara, N. (2015). Exploitation of women can be identified through several indicators such as the burden of unpaid domestic work, feminization of poverty, denial of reproductive autonomy, and the wage gap between women and men (Rai, et. Al, 2014). Women are considered to function in society as homemakers and laborers, but economically are often systematically excluded. According to Federici (2004), exploitation in the capitalist system is a mechanism that degrades and utilizes women's labor. Women are often used as forced labor with low wages and long hours. Forms of women's exploitation can be identified through several key forms, including:

- 1) Exploitation through Unpaid Reproductive Labor, for example, women are expected to perform domestic labor such as cleaning, cooking, and child-rearing without financial compensation.
- 2) Exploitation through the Control of Reproduction, for example, state policies that regulated reproductive rights,

such as restrictions on abortion or forced childbirth, limit women's bodily autonomy and position their reproductive under state control.

3) Exploitation through Wage Discrimination and Economic Marginalization, for example, when women receive lower wages than men for the same type of work, despite having equal qualifications.

4) The Impoverishment of Women, for example, during the transition of capitalism, many women were pushed into poverty as they lost access to communal resources and economic independence.

Federici (2004), in her book *Caliban and the Witch*, provides a very complex picture of how the capitalist system systematically exploits women through unpaid labor and reproductive rights. She argues that women as housewives as well as laborers are often undervalued and marginalized. This exploitation is not merely coincidental or incidental, but has been purposefully organized and structured by the capitalist system to maximize profits. She emphasized that domestic works such as cooking, washing, childcare, are made structurally invisible and unpaid despite their purpose of sustaining the workforce. Federici (2004) Emphasizing that domestic work can only be done by women such as childcare, cooking, and cleaning, although it is important in the labor force, it is invisible and

ignored and unpaid under the capitalist system.

Dalla Costa and James, as cited in Federici's (2004) work, further explain this opinion that the capitalist system deliberately gives women the position of low-paid workers for the benefit of the bourgeoisie despite the same position, then they explain that the work of managing a household is a woman's primary duty, such as childcare, emotional support of men at work, and childcare are examples of unpaid work and unwittingly support the capitalist system. They describe how reproductive labor, such as caring for children in the household, even when women work outside, they are also required to take responsibility for their work after they return home, while men are not. This illustrates women's multiple occupations, where women are exploited in both the private and public spheres. Systemic exploitation of women occurs not only in the private sphere, but also in the public sphere, where women are often forced to work for low wages and marginalize their economy.

According to Federici (2004), one of the main forms of exploitation of women under capitalism is the state's control over women's bodies and reproductive capacities, which serves to discipline women for the benefit of capitalism. Therefore, the state and social institutions are viewed as playing an important role in restricting women through limiting access in all areas, restricting contraception, criminalizing abortion, and also reproductive roles. Federici argues that such mechanism function as strategies to discipline women under the capitalist system with the aim of

turning them into tools of labor production.

Based on this perspective, this type of exploitation not only occurs in women's bodies, but also falls into the biological category, where women's bodies become the main target of the state in controlling their bodily and reproductive rights. According to Federici (2020) *Beyond the periphery of the skin: Rethinking, remaking, and reclaiming the body in contemporary capitalism*, this kind of control over women's bodies is part of the exploitation of the state or capitalist system that uses women as a means of producing labor. Furthermore, Fraser (2016) argues that women are often victims of the elimination and lack of public services under the capitalist system in social and health services.

In this case, it is clear that women are often marginalized in public services that are related to women's reproductive work. These public services do not formally recognize women, proving that the capitalist system often places women as worthless. In capitalism, women in domestic work are often invisible and unappreciated. In fact, women are similar to men in that they also contribute to the sustainability of the capitalist system.

In conclusion, the indicators of women's exploitation identified from the perspective of Marxist Feminist Federici include: 1) Exploitation through Unpaid Reproductive Labor; 2) Exploitation through the Control of Reproduction; 3) Exploitation through Wage Discrimination and Economic Marginalization; and 4) The Impoverishment of Women

### E. Political Resistance Against Capitalist System

According to Federici (2004), women's resistance emerged as a symbol of opposition to the capitalist system that exploits women, their bodily autonomy, domestic work, and reproductive labor. In this case, Federici presents the concept of resistance not only as an act of opposition, but as a political transformation that challenges the structure of the capitalist system. She argues that women's resistance takes the form of a struggle to regain control over their bodily autonomy and reproductive rights, which are systematically controlled by the capitalist system. She sees women's resistance as a form of struggle to regain control over reproductive rights.

Furthermore, this form of resistance is also interpreted as an action to counter the interference of the capitalist system in order to redefine reproductive work as socially valuable work. In *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin* (2020), Federici argues that reclaiming bodily autonomy is a central form of resistance, whereby women reclaim their emotional and physical capacities as a form of empowerment.

Fraser (2016) argues that resistance to the capitalist system occurs not only at the individual level, resistance refers to the efforts of individual women to reclaim control over their bodily rights, daily work, and reproductive rights that have been exploited under the capitalist system, but also through collective struggle. Then, she views that the result of women's resistance is none other than demanding equal access to public

and social services, rejecting neoliberal reforms, and rebuilding solidarity networks. Fraser argues that women's resistance in challenging systemic oppression results in care and reproductive work being invisible to the capitalist economy. Although resistance emerges at the individual level, it is personal and political in nature, because personal experiences of bodily autonomy can not be separated from the capitalist system that controls and exploits women in reproductive labor.

Based on Federici's perspective, contemporary feminist studies explain that women's resistance is manifested through multidimensional strategies that combine bodily, economic, and social autonomy. Mohanty (2005) *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* argues that women's resistance is related to reclaiming bodily autonomy and women's labor, which is often used as a tool to subjugate them under the capitalist system. Furthermore, Butler (2015) argues that resistance is manifested through the exposure of the instability of gender hierarchies and the overthrowing of social norms that support patriarchy.

In addition, Hooks (2000) *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics* argues that women's resistance is transformative in nature, aiming to build communities collectively in solidarity and dismantle systems of domination. In this case, resistance is a form of women's response in challenging the culture of power by collectively redefining women's identities. This theoretical understanding provides a framework for examining how the female characters in Leni Zumas' novel *Red Clocks*

resist capitalist and patriarchal control in the form of resistance.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the research method. The contents of this chapter are research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis. The main focus that will be explained in this chapter is to explain the use of research methods and data processing in research.

#### A. Research Design

In this study, feminist literary criticism with a marxist feminist is used to analyze elements in literary works. The technique used in this research is text analysis through (close reading) which focuses on the novel *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas. This novel is the main object to analyze how capitalism shapes gender inequality related to reproductive work and women's bodily autonomy. This approach is used to examine the exploitation of women in the capitalist system.

The main data source in this research is the novel *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas, while the data in the form of books, journals, articles, and scientific writings relevant to marxist feminist theory, especially Silvia Federici's (2004) perspective, are used to strengthen the interpretation of literary texts. This analysis of Federici's theoretical framework explores how the capitalist system shapes women's roles, work, and bodies, as well as how resistance to the system is presented in the narrative. The research design integrates text analysis and theoretical frameworks to



elucidate the correlation between the depiction of women in literature and the critique of the capitalist socio-economic system.

## **B. Data Source**

The data were taken from a novel entitled *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas. The novel was first published by Little, Brown and Company, New York on January 16, 2018, and consists of 368 pages. There are several versions of this novel, including print, audiobook and e-book formats. Therefore, the data of this study is taken from the physical copy of *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas (2018). *Red Clocks* is a feminist dystopian novel that explores the social, political, and personal implications of women's reproductive rights in a society that prohibits abortion and in vitro fertilization.

Structurally, *Red Clocks* is not divided into conventional chapters. The story is set in the United States in the future and follows the lives of four main female characters: The Wife, The Daughter, The Mender, and The Biographer, who show various experiences of gender inequality and resistance to patriarchal control. The researcher uses this novel as the primary data source because it provides information that is in line with the purpose of this study, particularly in analyzing the exploitation and resistance of women under the capitalist system.

## **C. Data Collection**

The data were collected using a reading technique. The researcher

read the novel repeatedly to gain comprehensive understanding the storyline, characters, and main theme. The data collection and analysis were carried out through several systematic steps. First, researchers identified and coded textual data in the form of narratives, dialogues, and character actions that showed the exploitation and resistance of women under the capitalist system. Second, the coded data were categorized based on recurring thematic patterns, such as reproductive work, control over women's bodies, and economic marginalization. Third, the categorized data was interpreted using Silvia Federici's Marxist feminist theoretical framework to analyze how capitalist structures exploit women and how female characters respond to this exploitation. All data collected will be classified based on themes in accordance with Silvia Federici's Marxist feminist theoretical framework.

#### **D. Data Analysis**

After the data were collected, to answer Research Question 1 (RQ1), which focuses on women's exploitation, the researcher analyzed it using the following steps: categorizing and processing the data according to the research focus, identifying quotations in the novel *Red Clocks* that represent the exploitation of women, such as unpaid domestic work, economic marginalization, forced motherhood, and the criminalization of abortion. The data was then classified using Silvia Federici's (2004) Marxist Feminist concepts, and further classified based on reproductive labor, the feminization of women, and control over women's bodies.

Next, to answer the Research Question 2 (RQ2), which examines women's resistance to exploitation, the researcher analyzed dialogues, narratives, and actions that signify resistance by both individuals and groups, as well as symbolic challenges to social norms. These findings are described within a feminist framework by Federici in a more in-depth context of capitalist control over labor and control over women's bodies. Finally, researcher draw conclusions by combining forms of exploitation and resistance with various strategies for a more comprehensive.

It is important to note that this analysis is limited to textual interpretation and is influenced by the researcher's theoretical perspective, meaning that alternative interpretations of the text may exist.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an elaboration of the findings and discussion of the problems identified in this study. In this chapter, the data obtained from the novel *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas shows various forms of women's exploitation experienced by female characters. The information collected is then analyzed using Marxist Feminism approach (Federici, 2004). The analysis focuses on types of exploitation experienced by the female characters, including exploitation through unpaid reproductive labor, control of reproduction, wage discrimination and economic marginalization, as well as the impoverishment of women. and the forms of resistance against capitalist system, including individual acts of resistance, collective and communal networks of survival, symbolic and emotional resistance.

#### **A. Forms of Exploitation Faced by Female Characters in Red Clocks**

To find out and answer the first research question in this study, the researcher adopts the Marxist Feminism approach introduced by Silvia Federici. According to Federici (2004), Marxist Feminism is a critical analysis that investigates how women are squeezed by capitalism through unpaid labor, control of reproduction, wage discrimination, and exclusion impoverishment of women. In this aspect, exploitation is seen not only from an economic point of view, but also includes women's bodies,

domestic functions, and social rights that are weakened by the legal system and state norms. The following are the results of the analysis of the various forms of oppression experienced by four female characters in the novel *Red Clocks* by Leni Zumas.

### 1. Exploitation through Unpaid Reproductive Labor

This section focuses on the form of exploitation through unpaid reproductive work as described by Federici (2004). Federici argues that women's reproductive work, such as childcare, family care, and housework, is devalued because it is unpaid work. The naturalization of women's duties turns women into tools of capitalist labor without compensation. This makes them economically dependent on the capitalist system and marginalized. In the novel *Red Clocks*, this concept is consistent because women are portrayed as tools of domestic labor and unpaid reproductive work without recognition.

The form of exploitation experienced by The Wife (Susan), as shown:

*"Well," he says, "somebody needs to start doing some cleaning. It's*

*like a bus station in there."*

*She won't be asking him tonight.*

*She will write the A again, on a different day.*

*"There were twelve, by the way," he says. "I know you have stuff to*

*do, I'm not saying you don't, but could you maybe wash the toilet once in a while? Twelve hairs." (p.27)*

The data show dialog between the wife (Susan) and her husband. In the scene, Susan's husband reprimands Susan because the house is not tidy, implying that housework such as cleaning the house is Susan's responsibility. His statement, "*somebody needs to start doing some cleaning,*" shows that housework must be assigned to Susan because she is a wife. Even though Susan also works outside the home and takes care of her children physically and emotionally, her husband still ignores housework because he considers it not his responsibility.

According to Federici (2004), this situation reflects exploitation in the context of unpaid labor, where women must do housework such as taking care of children, cleaning the house, and cooking without financial compensation. In this case, the husband's attitude reflects patriarchy, which burdens women with domestic and reproductive work that is often not valued. In this case, Susan's exhaustion is a sign that women's work in the household supports the capitalist system, which burdens women with domestic work without economic and social recognition. The conversation also symbolizes how capitalism and patriarchy exploit women emotionally, temporally, and energetically, under the guise of obligation.

## **2. Exploitation through the Control of Reproduction**

This section focuses on the form of exploitation of women's reproductive control as described by Federici (2004). Federici explains that women's reproductive rights is controlled by the capitalist system to be

used as a tool for labor. By limiting women's reproductive rights, the capitalist system uses this as an instrument to deprive women of their bodily autonomy. Abortion is criminalized despite the fact that the society portrayed still enables and tolerates free sexual relations. This sets up a structural contradiction where women endure all the consequences of sexual activity, whereas men continue to be free legally and socially. This concept aligns with the explanation that women are tightly regulated by laws which are promoted by the capitalist system to regulate abortion, pregnancy, and motherhood.

Next, the form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* and *The Daughter* as shown:

*Two years ago the United States Congress ratified the Personhood Amendment, which gives the constitutional right to life, liberty, and property to a fertilized egg at the moment of conception. Abortion is now illegal in all fifty states. (p.30)*

The data show exploitation through the control of reproduction, as seen in the *Personhood Amendment*, which regulates abortion laws in fifty states. These regulations directly affect women's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. In the context of the novel *Red Clocks*, this law targets the characters *The Biographer* and *The Daughter*. *The Biographer* wants to become a single mother through artificial insemination, but the law prohibits unmarried women from accessing reproductive technology. Meanwhile, *The Daughter* is a teenage girl who is pregnant and is forced to carry her pregnancy to term because abortion is prohibited. The descriptions of these two characters show that women lose their right to



bodily autonomy when the state creates laws that restrict their rights over their own bodies.

According to Federici (2004), this form of exploitation is a form of control carried out under capitalism, whereby women's biological capacity for reproduction is subjugated for economic and social purposes. In this case, criminalization regulates the role of women, and the state exploits women as a source of labor for capitalist interests. This is in line with Federici's view that capitalism regulates women through their reproductive role. Therefore, the *Persoonhood Amendment* act is a powerful example of how women are exploited for their bodily autonomy through state policies that use them as economic and political tools.

Next, the form of exploitation faced by *The Mender* and *The Daughter* as shown:

*Abortion providers can be charged with second-degree murder, abortion seekers with conspiracy to commit murder.*  
(p.30)

The data show how women who attempt to terminate their pregnancies, as well as those who assist them are criminalized by the state, such as *The Mender* using herbal remedies to help women end unwanted pregnancies. Through legislation, the state exercise extensive control over women's reproductive decisions by legally framing abortion as a serious criminal offense. In this case, *The Daughter*, a woman who became pregnant accidentally, lost her right to reproductive choice because the punishment would be her price to pay.

According to Federici (2004), this situation illustrates an exploitation that controls reproduction, where the state and the capitalist system take advantage of control over the body for personal gain. Capitalism criminalizes women by treating reproductive refusals such as abortion as legal violations, thereby denying women their bodies as their own property and instead treating them as reproductive resources managed by the state. Under this arrangement, women who fail to meet reproductive expectations are punished, while men involved in the same sexual relationships remain legally unaccountable.

Through this legislation, the criminalization of abortion functions as a mechanism of discipline that enforces reproduction as an obligation rather than a choice. Federici (2020) argues that this process seeks to ensure that women's biological labor supports the interests of the state and capitalists. This is reflected in *Red Clocks* in the way women's bodies are ideologically and legally regulated, showing that women are treated not as authoritative individuals, but as instruments of national reproductive policy.

Next, the form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* as shown:

*On January fifteenth—in less than three months—this law, also known as Every Child Needs Two, takes effect. Its mission: to restore dignity, strength, and prosperity to American families. Unmarried persons will be legally prohibited from adopting children. (p.31-32)*

The data show that the state has created regulations prohibiting unmarried women from adopting children. The regulation states that it is

to “restore dignity and strength to families,” but in reality, it limits women's rights in strengthening control over the role of mothers. The Biographer, who wanted to adopt a child, was affected by this law, and her wishes were restricted by the state.

According to Federici (2004), this control is a form of reproductive exploitation, in which women's role as mothers is restricted by the state. The state seems to regulate and determine who is worthy of being a mother, turning reproductive work into an instrument of social and economic control. This law not only criminalizes women's physical and emotional autonomy, but also reinforces the state's ideology that women must prove their fulfillment of the state's legitimate family roles.

The form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* as shown:

*“If it makes you feel any better,” says the biographer, “this medication is going to make me have a foul-smelling vaginal discharge.”*  
*“At least it’s for a good cause.”*  
*She clears her throat.*  
*“That’ll be one hundred fifty-seven dollars and sixty-three cents,” he adds.*  
*“Pardon me?”*  
*“I’m really sorry.”*  
*“A hundred and fifty-seven dollars? For ten pills?”*  
*“Your insurance doesn’t cover it.” (p.9)*  
*There is a loving home out there for every baby who comes into the world. (Page 100)*

The data shows that women must pay \$157.63 for ten medications because insurance does not cover them. Although this health issue relates to women's reproductive systems, access to treatment is determined by financial capacity. This issue reflects that women are subject to moral expectations, such as the idea that every baby must be born into a “loving

home.” Federici (2004) argues that this form of exploitation spreads through forced labor and regulation, as well as the monetization of women's needs. Capitalist mechanisms reinforce patriarchal control by turning women's reproductive health care into a market commodity, which directly harms women economically. The state reinforces patriarchal norms by regulating women's access to important reproductive services, making reproduction a moral and even national obligation, rather than an individual one.

### 3. Exploitation through Wage Discrimination and Economic

#### Marginalization

This section focuses on exploitation in the form of discrimination and economic marginalization against women, as described by Federici (2004). Federici explains that women's labor has historically been devalued, in the form of their wages being excluded or paid at lower rates than men. In this situation, women are forced to be economically dependent and marginalized in society. In the novel *Red Clocks*, this is consistent because women are portrayed as economically disadvantaged, which is limited by social and legal constraints that marginalize women's position in gender expectations.

The form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* as shown:

*On her teacher's salary she will die holding notices from credit-card agencies, whereas Susan and Didier, who also live on a teacher's salary, are debt-free, as far as she knows, and pay no rent. (Page 65)*

The data show the economic marginalization that befell the

biographer. Although she received the same teacher's salary as Susan and Didier, she was always in debt, which made her financially uncomfortable. Therefore, this disparity shows structural exploitation directed at single women, who are productive in their labor but economically marginalized by the capitalist system. This inequality occurs precisely because she is a single woman, marginalized from the social and economic benefits given to married women or those who are "recognized" as reproductive.

In the capitalist patriarchal logic described in the novel, a woman's economic value is tied to her reproductive role; because she is neither a wife nor a mother, she has no access to material and organizational support. According to Federici (2004), capitalism deliberately confines women to a system that fails to collectively support them economically, overlooking the social value and reproductive labor they perform. The economic marginalization experienced by Ro shows how women are consistently punished within a systemic economy.

#### **4. The Impoverishment of Women**

This section focuses on one form of exploitation, namely the impoverishment of women, as described by Federici (2004). She explains that the impoverishment of women due to their limited access to wages, land, and resources for survival binds them to continued dependence on the economy. This exploitation is structural in nature and is related to the sustainability of the capitalist system. In the novel *Red Clocks*, this issue is closely related, as it describes women losing their resources and

autonomy as a result of the laws imposed on them by the capitalist system.

Furthermore, the data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of exploitation. The form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* as shown:

*In a room for women whose bodies are broken, Eivør Mínervudóttir's biographer waits her turn. She wears sweatpants, is white skinned and freckle cheeked, not young, not old. Before she is called to climb into stirrups and feel her vagina prodded with a wand that makes black pictures, on a screen, of her ovaries and uterus, the biographer sees every wedding ring in the room. Serious rocks, fat bands of glitter. They live on the fingers of women who have leather sofas and solvent husbands but whose cells and tubes and bloods are failing at their animal destiny. (p.2)*

The data show a woman biographer preparing to wait for her turn to enter a room filled with other women, they look financially strapped. They have fancy rings, nice sofas, and economically stable husbands. Despite that, they have reproductive failure in their bodies. The quotes "women whose bodies are broken" and "failing at their animal destiny" reveal the core issue of exploitation. These quotes show how women are considered defective when their reproductive work fails and how society views their animal destiny as the only measure of their worth as mothers.

In Federici's (2004) framework, this situation is described as the reproductive exploitation of women, where women are treated as reproductive workers whose value is tied to their capacity. When this capacity is defective, they are considered failures. Exploitation here shows that not only physically but also ideologically, women are forced to believe

that the measure of success is assessed by their reproductive system. Therefore, the capitalist system builds social expectations while strengthening capitalism's control over women's bodily autonomy.

Furthermore, the data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of exploitation. The form of exploitation faced by *The Biographer* as shown:

*She starts a new one: Accusations from the world.*

*1. You're too old.*

*2. If you can't have a child the natural way, you shouldn't have one at all.*

*3. Every child needs two parents.*

*4. Children raised by single mothers are more liable to rape/murder/drug-take/score low on standardized tests.*

*5. You're too old.*

*6. You should've thought of this earlier.*

*7. You're selfish.*

*8. You're doing something unnatural.*

*9. How is that child going to feel when she finds out her father is an anonymous masturbator?*

*10. Your body is a grizzled husk.*

*11. You're too old, sad spinster!*

*12. Are you only doing this because you're lonely? (Page 8-9*

The data show the list of accusations that women receive from society regarding their decision to have children outside of what is considered "natural". In practice this means heteronormative marriage and biological pregnancy at a young age. The accusations are hurtful and ongoing, such as *you're too old, you're so selfish, you're doing something unnatural* and they continue to put pressure and moral pressure on them. The data shows the list of accusations that women receive from society regarding their decision to have children outside of what is considered

“natural”.

In practice this means heteronormative marriage and biological pregnancy at a young age. The accusations are hurtful and ongoing, such as you're too old, you're so selfish, you're doing something unnatural clearly represent society's stigma and they continue to put pressure on them. These judgments show a social mechanism of control, discrediting women who do not conform. In Federici's (2004) perspective, exploitation in this case is not only material but also symbolic impoverishment. Symbolically, women are robbed of their legitimacy and social acceptance, their identities are reduced to failure or deviation.

Materially, this exclusion often leads to decreased access to social support, employment, health and services, which are reserved for “normal families”. In short, this stigma disciplines women into economic dependence and strengthens patriarchal structures that only value married and reproductive women. Thus, these allegations are not simply moral insults, but rather instruments that maintain women's economic subordination and vulnerability, in line with Federici's argument that capitalism depends on unpaid.

Furthermore, the data will be analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of exploitation. The form of exploitation faced by Mattie *The Biographer* characters in red clocks as shown:

*Mattie, if I paid for all your checkups and vitamins, would you—Her feet turn left. If I drove you to all the appointments, would you—She is not really doing this. (p.217)*



The data show a character trying to persuade Mattie, possibly a young woman. In this case, offering financial and logistical assistance with the pregnancy, as well as accompanying her to medical appointments. However, there is an implied message of emotion and hesitation in "Her feet turn left" and the quote *She is not really doing this*. According to Federici (2004), This represents the commodification of women's reproductive labor, where women's capacity to reproduce is represented as something that can be endorsed, controlled, or even "purchased" through financial contributions.

In this context, benefits do not always mean direct financial gains; they can refer to ideological, emotional social gains for example, men's efforts to maintain power, reputation, or control over the pregnancy outcome. Thus, these sacrifices function as a subtle mechanism to ensure control over Mattie's body and reproductive options, transforming her biological capacity into a medium for serving the interests of others, rather than her own autonomy.

## **B. Resistance to Exploitation by Female Characters in Red Clocks**

To find out and answer the second research question regarding forms of resistance against exploitation, Silvia Federici's (2004) Marxist Feminism approach is used to analyze the forms of individual resistance carried out by female characters in the novel *Red Clocks*. Federici emphasizes that in the capitalist system, women's bodies are controlled

through unpaid reproductive labor and restrictive social norms. However, within these limitations, forms of resistance emerge individually, both physically, emotionally, and symbolically. Below will be explained some data on the forms of resistance against exploitation.

### 1. Individual Acts of Resistance: Refusal and Self-Determination

The following section is a form of data from the second research problem, which talks about how female characters show a form of resistance to a system that controls and oppresses. This data are analyzed using the concept of feminist resistance from a Marxist perspective proposed by Federici (2004). Individual resistance and self-determination refer to the personal decisions and actions of a character that directly resist the norms, rules, or pressures applied by the capitalist system, especially in the context of control over their bodies, work, and lives. Furthermore, the data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The individual acts of resistance by *The Daughter* and *The Mender* are presented in the following data:

*The witch has a treatment, if it's early enough. And she doesn't charge money. Ash's sister's friend, who got an abortion from the witch last year, said it only works before a certain week in the pregnancy. The witch uses wild herbs that won't incriminate you if you're caught with them, because the police can't tell what they are. And the daughter doesn't plan to be caught. (p.100)*

The data show how *The Daughter*, a young woman facing an unwanted pregnancy, sought help from *The Mender*, a woman who was socially labeled a witch for using traditional healing practices. Despite

being marginalized, she used her knowledge to help women who were criminalized for having abortions safely without commercializing her services. In this case, such actions are a form of resistance against the capitalist system that exploits women's reproductive systems.

According to Federici (2004), such actions are a form of resistance against the capitalist system and patriarchal structures that seek to profit from women's bodies. The mender, by providing free care in maintaining women's bodily autonomy, becomes a form of resistance against the capitalist system that commodifies reproductive labor. Meanwhile, The Daughter's decision becomes a form of defiance against the law and social restrictions.

Next, the data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The individual acts of resistance by The Daughter (Mattie) are presented in the following data:

*She doesn't weep or hyperventilate or text Ash a photo of the plus sign blazing on the stick. She wraps the test box and its contents in a brown paper bag, which she tucks into a rain boot at the back of her closet. She gets dressed. (p.100)*

The data show The Daughter who is pregnant. However, there is no reaction to that. They have no emotional reactions such as sadness, joy, and panic. They choose to keep the pregnancy test kit secretly without anyone knowing about it. According to Federici (2004), in these conditions women are often pressured by society, where they have to react according to the social norms that apply in that place. In the role of a mother they are required to react to their pregnancy, such as for example that the

pregnancy is a *blessing* or showing a sense of helplessness over pregnancy outside the expectations of social society.

These characters prefer to remain silent, without reacting at all in the role, where they can take full charge of themselves. The act of keeping the pregnancy test results in their boots is their way of being calm and taking control of the role. This control is calculated, not a sign of weak women, but a way for them to exist and resist internally. In fact, society has always taken control of the role, where women must conform to the abilities and demands of women in social norms. In a simple example, an out-of-wedlock pregnancy puts women under long-term stress and often isolation.

## **2. Collective and Communal Networks of Survival**

This section discusses forms of resistance in which women collaborate with each other and form informal communities to resist oppression in the capitalist system. The data in this section will be analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of Marxist feminist resistance, which emphasizes the importance of cooperation outside the dominant structure. practical insights from each other while examining the novel. Regularly, the external environment is used. The data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The collective and communal networks of survival by *The Mender* (Gin) and *The Daughter* (Mattie) are presented in the following data:

*"We don't do the procedures here at headquarters. We use temporary sites that*

*keep changing. For safety reasons. And I need to ask you to wear masks during the drive.*

*The biographer laughs. "Are you serious?"*

*L. drags up the garage's roll door. "Yeah, we take the surveillance state and male-supremacist legislation pretty seriously. Call us crazy."*

*"No, it's fine, say Mattie.*

*"Seat belts, please. Then I'll give you the masks. Did you lock the car?"*

*"aye, aye!" says the biographer.*

*Mattie turns from the passenger seat to give her a little frown, and the world is flipped, the order reserved." (p.312)*

The data show how The Daughter and The Mender built a collective network in order to survive in the face of state oppression. The biographer secretly visited the Dukun (The Mender) to have an illegal abortion while concealing her identity. In order to avoid detection by the authorities, she and the other women wore masks and moved from place to place. Their mobility is highly secretive, with methods such as wearing masks and using temporary locations serving as evidence of a hidden network that ensures women's safety from abortion criminalization and legal prosecution.

In this context, The Mender not only functions as a healer but also as part of women's solidarity in resisting state control over women's bodies through collective action. According to Federici (2004), collective political resistance is a form of women's solidarity in defending and reclaiming their bodily and reproductive autonomy outside patriarchal institutions. This suffering becomes collective empowerment; despite criminalization, women unite in collaboration.

The data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The collective and comunal networks of survival by member of the *Polyphonte Collective* are presented in the following data:

*She wanders into a front hallway, where posters and pamphlets describe the other services offered by the Polyphonte Collective. Slidingscale mental-health counseling. Sliding-scale legal services for women who are unhoused, undocumented, battered, addicted. (p.314)*

The data show how members of the *Polyphonte Collective* formed an organized women's resistance through communal care. The collective offers easily accessible services such as legal aid and mental health support aimed at women who are oppressed by the patriarchal system and state indifference. Through these affordable services, the group challenges capitalist structures that limit access to economic status and class. According to Federici (2004), working with the community is a practice in achieving common interests in an effort to reclaim the space that has been taken away by the capitalist system. Through the *Polyphonte Collective*, Zumas demonstrates a network of solidarity that transforms work into political action in redefining resistance as liberation.

The data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The collective and comunal networks of survival by The Mender (Gin) and The Biographer (Ro) are presented in the following data:

*She pulls down the tea jar from the north cupboard. Shakes some into a brown bag, tapes it closed, hands it to Ro. "Heat this up in a big pot of water. After it boils, turn the heat down and simmer for three hours. Drink a cup every morning and every night. (p.45)*

The data show how The Mender was labeled a witch by the community for helping The Biographer use traditional medicine in alternative healing as a way to escape the patriarchy and healthcare

system. Healing practices using herbal medicines are a form of knowledge transfer between women in resisting institutional control over their bodies. According to Federici (2004), these healing practices have historically formed the foundation for the survival of communities in resisting the capitalist system that commodifies women's bodies. Through this knowledge, The Mender resists not through direct confrontation, but through the preservation of women's care and nurturing. This action is a form of counterattack by The Mender, who have been labeled as witches by society, by forming a repressive agency.

### 3. Symbolic and Emotional Resistance

This section examines forms of resistance where women support each other and form informal communities to challenge both patriarchal state and the capitalist system. In *Red Clocks*, the state functions as a link in the capitalist order, controlling women's bodies through laws and regulations. Therefore, symbolic and emotional resistance is formed when women form solidarity networks outside this structure, sharing knowledge, emotional support, and resource support as a concrete action for survival.

The data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The symbolic and emotional resistance by The Daughter (Mattie) are presented in the following data:

*Dear baby,  
I love you already. Can't wait for you to get here. Your hometown is one of the most beautiful places I've ever known. Full of ocean and cliffs and mountains and the best trees in America. You'll see for yourself, unless you are born blind, in which case I will love you even harder. (p.217-218)*

The data shows a mother's expression of love for her unborn child, written with hope in a letter. However, the letter contains implied text that reveals the burden of capitalist and patriarchal ideology. The sentence *"Can't wait for you to get here"* positions women as the main purpose of her life. In this case, it is in line with Federici's (2004) concept that the capitalist system places women's reproductive function as an addition to labor production, while also limiting their scope as mothers.

Then, the quote *"Unless you are born blind, in which case I will love you even harder"* shows the existence of standards of normality or physical condition, which is a project of capitalist ideology, while on the other hand it is also referred to as unconditional love. This quote triggers a paradox which shows exploitation through the role of motherhood and the demands of reproduction, while on the other hand showing resistance in the form of affection and acceptance that transcends capitalist thinking and standards. This quote is part of a symbolic resistance that rejects the logic of capitalism, which only demands that humans be valuable through their productivity and perfection.

The data are analyzed using Federici's (2004) concept of resistance. The symbolic and emotional resistance by The Mender (Gin) are presented in the following data:

*Unable to see Mr. Fivey's face, she pictures its mortification.*



*Everyone knows his business now. The principal's wife and her backwoods abortion. No matter how this case turns out, the Fiveys will leave tarnished. (p.250-251)*

The data depicts a The Mender giving herbal concoctions to Ro, complete with recipes and how to use them. For three hours the herb was taken twice a day. This process does not take place in a hospital or other state-run health service, but in a simple private home. This act is a form of women's resistance to state health services that continue to exploit their bodies and deprive them of full agency over their bodies.

According to Federici (2004), this traditional knowledge and medicine is an old heritage that is often considered unscientific and continues to be undermined by the capitalist system. Women continue to maintain these healing traditions as a subtle form of resistance to the capitalist system. This herb is not just a medicine, but a symbol of women's power in sharing knowledge, mutual care, and collaboration that provides a safe space above the capitalist system's control over women's bodies. In this sense, the quotations in *Red Clocks* emphasize the need to maintain sovereignty over one's body, despite social pressures and legal restrictions.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the exploitation that occurs in women in the novel *Red Clocks* using the Marxist Feminism approach by Silvia Federici. The results of the analysis show that forms of gender inequality and exploitation occur at various levels. These findings show that exploitation of women takes the form of control over their bodies and restrictions on their bodily autonomy, especially in their roles as mothers and in the reproductive system.

This form of exploitation is reflected in the novel *Red Clocks*, which shows how patriarchy and the capitalist system attempt to marginalize women by taking away not only their material independence, but also burdening them socially and psychologically. The system often asserts its dominance over moral and legal structures to normalize the oppression of women. Through the complex characters in *Red Clocks*, this research presents a picture of how a sharp critique of the capitalist system places women as tools in overt and covert exploitation.

Furthermore, the findings on the second research question reveal that the female characters in the novel *Red Clocks* demonstrate several forms of resistance against exploitation. This resistance is not only aimed at regaining autonomy over their bodies, but also at creating a path to oppose state control over women and patriarchal structures. On a

personal level, the female characters assert themselves by rejecting the roles imposed on them by the system, which is a form of resistance that takes place in their most personal lives.

Collectively, women resist through the formation of solidarity and support networks that challenge the isolation created by the capitalist system. In symbolic and emotional resistance, female figures use silence, writing, and practices that challenge the dominant ideology in interpreting the meaning of women. This finding is in line with Federici's view that women's struggle against oppression is inseparable from their capacity, in an oppressive system, to resist, which is the most important way to overthrow capitalist domination.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the application of Silvia Federici's Marxist feminist theory by showing that resistance in literary texts does not only appear as overt political actions, but also through everyday practices related to reproductive labor and bodily autonomy. Thus, this study reinforces Federici's argument that women's resistance is an important countervailing force to capitalist patriarchy, extending her theoretical framework into literary analysis.

## **B. Suggestion**

Based on the above conclusions, several suggestions can be made for future researchers. Future studies can apply intersectional feminism to examine how gender exploitation in *Red Clocks* intersects with race, class,

and legal status, particularly in relation to reproductive control and state regulation. Alternatively, an ecofeminist approach could be used to analyze the relationship between women's bodies, reproductive labor, and environmental control in dystopian narratives. Because this study focuses exclusively on Silvia Federici's Marxist feminist framework, it does not extensively discuss individual agency outside of reproductive labor, cross-identity dynamics, or the ecological dimensions of oppression.

Future researchers are also encouraged to conduct comparative studies between *Red Clocks* and other dystopian novels that depict reproductive control, such as works with similar themes of state intervention, to identify patterns and variations of women's exploitation and resistance in various socio-political contexts. By expanding the object of study and theoretical framework, future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how capitalist patriarchy operates in literary representations of women.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE



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