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ON THE FEMALE NUDE, SEXUAL BODILY SERVICES, AND WOMEN'S OBJECTIFICATION: A CASE STUDY ON ARAKI'S SEXUALLY EXPLICIT PHOTOGRAPHS

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Abstract: The thin line between art and politics concerning women's objectification is one of the most apparent problems in the representation of the female body in sex markets and creative spaces. This paper aims to explore and provide a philosophical analysis on women's objectification and the male construction of female sexuality and femininity apparent in Nobuyoshi Araki's controversial and sexually explicit photographs. To attain this, I derive from the ethical theory of Kant and his views on the "beautiful" embodied by women, and the moral problem presented by Nussbaum on the legalization of bodily services. I employ the carceral-neoliberalism approach through the method of philosophical analysis to problematize the treatment of women's bodies under the sheets of high-value art, policy-making, and commodification. The curatorial and commentary of Araki's photographs as case studies aim to juxtapose the ethical theories and the underlying problems of female sexuality. Therefore, the peculiarities in Araki's works—presented as the female nude—are addressed and problematized. The discussions are divided in the following: (1) Kantian notions on the female, (2) Nussbaum's theory on bodily services, (3) Carceral-neoliberalism approach to feminism, and (4) the case study on Araki's sexually explicit photographs. The results of the discussion show that the portrayal of women in Araki's photographs establishes the link between the female's body and her sexuality. Assertions of objectification and personification are byproducts of the male gaze as well as a patriarchal indoctrination and colonization of women and their bodies. Repercussions of neoliberalism are also reflected in the marketization of women. I finally conclude that the necessity of continuously framing the problems in women's sexuality should be recognized so stigmatization against women may be eradicated.

Keywords: Kant, objectification, bodily services, Araki, explicit photograph, female nude

Content Warning. The paper includes explicit materials (i.e., photographs) located in the Results and Discussion section that may be uncomfortable for some audiences and may be unsuitable for viewership among younger readers.

Introduction

The imperative to emphasize the positions advancing the liberation and the granting of women her moral and rational autonomy, in turn, projects the traditional roles given to women as such in Kantian ethics and his remarks on women. To problematize the female body and her sexuality is to imbue it with patriarchal connotations. This dilemma is based on women's political and social confinement, as

well as repressive social standards on women's identities and how they ought to carry themselves. Addressing the political demands of women's sexuality raises the notion of the female body when it is commodified, particularly in sexual bodily services. I will expound on Nussbaum's concept of sexual bodily services and its implications on sex markets and creative spaces concerning the representation of the female body. The thin line between art and women's objectification, especially when presented as female nudity, raises ethical concerns. I intend to delve deeper into Araki's work and photographs. By integrating human dignity, objectification, and bodily services, we arrive at the notion of spectatorship's maleness, which is central to my arguments.

It is critical to question how women's bodies are treated even in high-value art and to strengthen the argument that women's objectification, be it through bodily services or sexually charged photographs, is closely related to masculine ideals.

Materials and Methods

The female in Kantian ethics

In discussing the implications of Kantian ethics to the woman or the female, one must look back at his widely-known thesis on humans as both rational and autonomous (Shafer-Landau, 2021, p. 82). These two highly regarded characteristics signify humans' moral status, granting them the so-called privilege of dignity. I call this a privilege because Kantian philosophy, particularly his views on women, is in tension with the very claim of the moral status when juxtaposed with the underlying patriarchal notions on the female, at least in Western philosophy where he had been an important figure.

I argue that his claims on the principle of humanity are at risk of contradiction and inconsistency when carefully evaluating his other works that illustrate his views on women (given their minimal representation in his moral philosophy). Nevertheless, Kant was able to have a contemptuous effect on contemporary readers and critics—especially feminists.

I begin with the position of some feminist scholars who were empathetic towards Kant. They argue that we should be able to acknowledge, if not entirely appreciate, his principle of humanity as applicable to both men and women. The principle of humanity holds that humans are to be treated as ends in themselves (ibid.). In this treatment, one can elicit the necessary respect that is naturally a product of the privilege granted by the principle. This also served as a critical response to the utilitarian ideals of treating situations or people as means to a greater end. To be treated as a means to something means being reduced to merely a means for another end. The counterpart becomes detached from the whole of, say, having the right to be seen as a woman in her own right.

Mosser (1999) argues that there are two distinct articulations of the two sexes: the fair and the noble sex. The former is attributed to the female, and the latter is attributed to the male. Much of this distinction is manifested in Kant's notions of the "beautiful" (fair sex) and the "sublime" (noble sex) in his Observations (p. 323). Here, we see the initial attempt to construct the characteristics of both the male and the female entailing a stark contrast between the two. Kant also employs a societal and more normative distinction or what I would call an assignment of roles and a solid attempt to designate which traits belong to whom. Women, for Kant, are confined to their biological or reproductive role–they

"preserve the species" while men dominate the more significant and extrinsic part of societal spheres. All this entails his highly patriarchal observation that men, by nature, are superior in the guise of the "husband" (p. 324). These types of role and trait designations are not new, and (Kant's notions) may have strengthened the long-sought male dominance in society by subordinating and limiting women to male-defined norms and ideals.

A study by Mikkola (2011) extends the Kantian notion and designation of gender roles by illuminating the feminist critique of Kant regarding women as "morally deficient" (p. 89). This is partly an elaboration of Kant's claim that humans (assuming that he views humans as male and female) are rational and autonomous, where reason entails agency. If, for Kant, women, in particular, are morally deficient, then it becomes counterproductive to his impartiality project as it implies that both men and women are rational agents. From this assumption alone, it appears that men are given complete access to reason, whereas women are not because if they were, they would not have any moral deficiencies. This is my initial critique of the view that women are, in some way, morally deficient. However, it is critical to remember that this attribution does not necessarily apply to women and men in parts but in the spirit of theorizing them collectively.

In Kant's view, women are morally deficient because the situations are not judged from reason but from inclinations–where women are "inclined to" the beautiful (p. 90). This goes on to the Kantian argument that women fall short of reason because their natural impulses drive them. I regard Kant's ideas about the nature of the male and female as a claim to their inherence, which is tied to the intrinsic essence of reason and autonomy. However, this is where Kantian ethics is deemed inconsistent. The claim that women are rational and autonomous human beings implies that they are not limited to the impulses he claims. On this basis, I argue that his claim on humans might be restricted to those who normatively embody reason and autonomy–men. Moreover, the principle of treating humans as ends and not mere means becomes inapplicable to women because these forced designations are veiled as natural. This encourages the male to treat the female body and her sexuality for his natural purposes, that of dominance. In reality, there are numerous problems and issues with Kant's claims on women as they are implemented in societies and cultures, particularly concerning women's sexuality. In the later sections of the paper, I discuss the problem of women's bodily services.

In the next section, the problem is looked at from Nussbaum's point of view on objectification and women's involvement in the sex market. This is done to explain how a woman's body can be used for service or "art."

Martha Nussbaum and bodily services: A liberation

Nussbaum (1998) begins with the argument that most of what we do in life and what we observe of others in the realm of work is to use our body for specific services and receive something, particularly pay, in return (p. 693). This includes performing publicly or showcasing our talents. Ordinary jobs, including side jobs, involve, in one way or another, using the body or a part of oneself to offer a service.

So far, the argument seems to make sense. But if we consider jobs outside of the category of the "ordinary," for instance, prostitution—the normalcy of bodily services claimed earlier by Nussbaum, is now met with extreme stigma, especially on the part of women understood to be confined within the

notion of the "beautiful" and her body to be kept in chastity. It was generally considered prostitution to use one's body publicly for service (p. 694), but when performed without gain, it is somewhat acceptable. The latter claim, however, is not always applicable to women's use of her body, specifically sexual services, as they are deemed unadmirable and, in Nussbaum's words, "inherently bad" (p. 695). These transactions are now subject to women's objectification because it is in these commodifying activities that men can practice their dominance and pay for the pleasure. For Nussbaum, the whole situation is indicative of a social stigma attached to such work on women, thus subjecting itself to moral evaluation (ibid.). The nature of the stigma, which is typically associated with patriarchal notions of women, is at the heart of the problem.

Sexual commodification is a problem in many ways because it involves doing dangerous things involving control, aggression, and exploitation, especially for women whose dignities have been demeaned and objectified in the same narrative. Moreover, the problem overlaps with the pre-existing malaises of commodification, which contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities. Nussbaum draws from this problem and advocates moral, legal, and political considerations for formalizing the work, especially for those with limited options. The call for legalization should entail strong policies addressing and preventing sexual exploitation and health risks (p. 696).

Rethinking the perceptions of taboo bodily services might help us assess and delve into the roots of the stigma—patriarchal, moral, and economic—and extreme violence that exists in work.

Undeniably, such bodily services are linked to both social privileges and discrimination. Because of existing discriminatory views about sexual money-making, those who are constrained or have limited survival options face stigmatization (p. 699). For instance, women who do not have that many options opt to work using their bodies, but in return, they are shamed and despised for doing so. Nussbaum explores the parameters of prostitution and its distinctions with other bodily services. I find this helpful in pinpointing the reasons, if not the root, of the stigma. In her elaboration, I deduce 11 critical features of prostitution based on the comparisons made by Nussbaum (pp. 701–706):

1. (commonly) low-paying job

2. Concerning health risks

3. Susceptible to violence

4. Internal private space is invaded.

5. Is subjected to social stigma

6. Serious implications for dignity and self-esteem

7. Involvement of the client's pleasure

8. Involves intimacy

9. Involves physical contact

10. Erotic (in some cases)

11. Should be consensual (preferably)

Features 2-3 and 6-10 might be why prostitution is still viewed as anathema to most societies. These features are symptoms of the immoral views attached to them. The immorality of prostitution is grounded in the view that sexual activities should only be done within marital relationships (which will be discussed later). Furthermore, because prostitution is typically non-marital, it becomes subject to moral evaluation regarding ideals of sex performed within marriage. Another cause comes from the way men and other people with power define a woman's sexuality. This makes it hard for her to act sexually and makes her feel like her body is being limited.

The laws' treatment of prostitutes as criminals of some sort exacerbates the stigma already attached to them (p. 207). One can argue against this by problematizing the pleasures or demands of the clients—usually male. It seems plausible to argue against it, especially if prostitutes carry the social shame alone and let those who demand it be accountable instead. The case study section will examine the complexities and dynamics of male and female characteristics in sexually explicit works.

Nussbaum significantly attaches consent to the possibility of legalizing sexual bodily services to advance women's autonomy. However, as far as feminist critique is concerned, consent is sufficient for the legitimacy of specific sexual acts, including prostitution. This rigorously sets parameters against forced or coerced prostitution, including children and women's trafficking.

The prominence of monogamous sexuality forwarded by patriarchal values in many societies and religious beliefs is responsible for morally maintaining and legitimizing the so-called social order that mostly restricts how a woman should see herself. Seeing that consensual and legitimized bodily services enable the woman to achieve autonomy, as a consequence, this gain demonstrates a lack of "limit," amplifying the stigma surrounding her (p. 709). Furthermore, the justification for criminalizing such bodily services should not be limited to the danger posed by the anonymous social order and the stigmatization of women and their sexuality.

It is generally understood that bodily services requiring bodily contact and sexual interaction and invasion generate health risks. However, health risks are perpetuated because of a lack of sound policies and fair regulation (p. 710).

Regarding the regulation and penalizing of prostitutes, the police should also be in question: are they allies or oppressors? Nussbaum posits that the risks of violence can only be legitimately controlled if "the police is the ally" (p. 711). To briefly extend this argument, criminalizing women regardless of the notions of just punishment and treatment can also be oppressive to her, especially if the ones executing the laws, such as the police, are their oppressors. This spells an iron fist and carceral dangers to women. Even now, women in the court and police stations aren't always heeded for their reports. Cases of harassment are apparent; thus, entrusting policies to oppressors can only worsen the situation, exacerbate paternalistic regulation, and endanger women's safety and protection (ibid.).

Contrary to the earlier claim that prostitutes have autonomy and therefore shake male dominance, arguments opposing this posit that others still control them. This can still apply to other bodily services,

specifically sexual ones, including sexually explicit art. However, this is also Nussbaum's way of forwarding the position that there should be a promotion of women's autonomy, especially towards those who cannot afford education, which automatically excludes them from the privilege of options and participation in so-called decent jobs. The advocacy of autonomy, in Nussbaum's position, necessitates consent so it becomes separated from the grave offenses of sexuality such as rape.

Instances of using the body for labor and services contribute to a particular form of alienation. Usually, it is the kind that separates the individual giving the service from his or her own body because it is commodified. On the contrary, feminists would argue that in terms of sexual services such as prostitution, one's sexuality is not necessarily detached just because, in hindsight, the body is commodified. Nussbaum's argument on women's sexuality as non-fungible is defended. It is different from the goods that are being sold and traded because, in the first place, prostitution is a service. Although other bodily services that are more controversial in this aspect overlap with being labeled as fungible or not. For instance, nude photographs that I present in the case study are distributed as art photo books, or in the case of pornography, photos or videos are distributed either digitally or as magazines. Here, there is a shift from service to goods.

Nussbaum's arguments and points of departure against widely-held feminist notions regarding the dangers of rigorous objectification and perpetuation of male dominance advocate for a more political and economic consideration as much as it is morally problematized. Neoliberalism, or capitalism as a whole, is inevitably one of the reasons for creating more safe spaces and options for women in the spirit of remedying inequalities. Nussbaum argues for a positive objectification in considering the legitimization of sexual prostitution. However, I argue that the points of relying solely on policies and punishment of offenders and women's objectification are not really addressed here, even if positive objectification does make sense. I still find it necessary to examine cases of perpetual objectification and accepted ones in light of discussing political, social, and economical remedies to women's deprivation of autonomy. Hypothetically, if the economic conditions have improved, it would entail that prostitution and other services will no longer be an option. However, this makes the previous arguments of Nussbaum devoid of the deep intricacies like bodily services, let alone exposing the body. In this hypothesis, prostitution seems to be irrelevant to the woman who has been liberated from poor economic options. Thus, limiting the problem to remedying economic inequalities via legitimate bodily services manifests specific gaps in addressing women's constant state of fear and submission to patriarchal institutions. I argue that there is a need to resist them.

A review on the carceral and neoliberal approach to feminist problems

Before going into the case study and examining the problem of objectification of women, I shall briefly expand our understanding of the underlying politics of Nussbaum's thesis.

The previous arguments talked about women under economic conditions thus, but does not necessarily, entail the legitimacy of bodily services like prostitution. While going through those arguments, a neoliberal paradigm of approaching the political and economic conditions surrounding women and feminist activism arises. Bernstein (2012) argues that the majority of the projects in liberating and safeguarding women against patriarchal institutions are "resolved in penal systems" (p. 234). There is an ongoing project to instill fear towards crimes and violations, and it plays a role in realizing the

neoliberal ideas in the market, the society, and the political spheres. Bernstein terms this situation as "carceral," wherein dependency on confinement and policies justify the remasculinization efforts of feminist advocacies such as providing more safeguards for women prostitutes, even if these also become subject to neoliberal politics.

Women's trafficking incidents, for instance, are usually fought for via policy movements expectant of protection and criminalization of offenders, who are usually the oppressors. Undoubtedly, such strategies and adaptations of the feminist movement to the changing politics of our time still attempt to advance feminist goals such as liberation from patriarchal institutions (p. 244).

Nussbaum's campaign might heighten the need for neoliberal conditions in sex markets (p. 245). Policies against continuing human trafficking that are not adequately regulated or executed might worsen the condition. To resolve the overlap of the campaign to protect and enhance women's autonomy, a balance has to be ensured between relying on carceral strategies and giving attention to the existing problems of women through efforts to reframe existing institutions, problematize the demand for sex services (p. 249), and build on a rationale that addresses both strategies and concerns.

The Araki case study: Getting to know the controversial photographer behind sexually explicit images of women

Nobuyoshi Araki is a Japanese photographer who is both artistically recognized and contended for his sexually explicit representation of women and banal photographs of his daily life, the Japanese culture, and still life juxtaposed with sensuality, nature, and contrast (Lederman, 2018 & Vittachi, 2016). His works, appearing controversial, seem to narrate how he spectates the aesthetics of life and his self-described natural impulses to take photographs of the "naked" and actual sexual activities (Yi, 2011).

Araki embodies the parallelism of art, the real, and women's representation. It is rare not to be disturbed by his photographs and, at the same time, be tolerant of his non-explicit photographs of nature and still life, especially with the progress of the critical standpoint. It is as what Lederman (2018) questions: "can a feminist embrace Araki?".

Araki's sexually explicit photographs of women's private parts and nude women, often contradicted by the seductive effect of his models' clothing, intending to reveal and not reveal both at the same time, are indeed daring and intrusive. However, as a viewer, it is inevitable to ask how he establishes the artist-model or artist-subject relationship, especially as most of his subjects are women and the nature of his work is very intimate. Araki directly confronts this curiosity by saying that sexual intercourse was necessary, although he had to halt the method at some point in his career. However, questions as to whether intercourse was part of the contract were not addressed in the two interviews. It is certain, however, that this type of work and artistic process, even if only Araki engages with this type of method, is already relevant to the problem of bodily services, especially if it is indeed consensual. It is also subject to criticism regarding the sexual nature of the relationship before actually producing the work.

Araki's projects are also indicative of his spatial involvement in the controversial themes of his chosen subjects, like documenting actual sexual practices and Araki himself participating in the said practices. These can be seen in Tokyo Lucky Hole (1990), one of his collections. He claims that he is a very

subjective photographer, and getting close or intimate with the subject breaks the boundary between the photographer and the subject. The said relationship can also be seen in photographs where he can be found. This relationship is unusual, one that is distinct from self-portrait paintings.

Realism as in honesty and personal documentation as Araki's approach to his photographs is quite significant in his artistic journey and subject to social commentary. Taking photographs is similar to keeping personal diaries for Araki, but they are pseudo-real snapshots. He views photography as a form of lying because existence comes first for him, and the photographs are nothing more than mere copies of reality (Yi, 2011).

Araki also confronts the ironies in his shots, sometimes indistinguishable from pornography, since photography as a form of art sort of excuses photographs of nudes, private parts, and actual sexual activities. Nevertheless, his confrontation is lacking in the sense that he avoids the ethical problem of his shots, especially in how he represents his subjects. Araki says he usually does not complicate or think about how his male audience might derive visual or erotic pleasure from his work. At the same time, he does not try to go against the male gaze. He explains that his friends cannot derive sexual pleasure from his shots because, for him, "they do not have a sense of how to look at photography" (ibid.).

Therefore, Araki's photographs can be considered another type of "pornography" that deviates from the traditions of usual or soft pornography. He enjoins artistry, unusual aesthetics, and technicalities in his masterpiece and yet avoids the underlying problem of the nature of his unconventional photography—pornography.

"I want to make photographs that maintain their incompleteness. I do not want them to lose their reality, presence, speed, heat, or humidity... Therefore, I stop and shoot before they become refined or sophisticated." (Artspace Editors, 2018)

Araki's artistic gaze treats photography as a form of drawing something out of the subject (ibid.). He differentiates his own work from that of the paintings. To some extent, something is violated, perhaps in its most literal sense or the metaphorical violation of the act of spectating within and outside his photographs. For Araki (2018), it is a collaboration, an attempt to break boundaries.

Results and Discussion

The Araki curatorial and commentary

In this section, I present some of Araki's photographs and unravel the underlying problems of the representation of women in his photographs by using various feminist critiques and implications of Kant and Nussbaum's notions of the female as a participant in sexual bodily services.

Women in Japan

Araki is known for his bondage photographs known as Kinbaku, a form of sexually-charged artistic bondage in Japanese erotic culture. This work is said to be a representation of sex and death,

Figure 1: Araki, N. & Artuner. (1995–2008). KINBAKU, 1995–2008/2017 [Photograph]. Artuner. https://www.artuner.com/shop/kinbaku-1995-2008-2016-2-nobuyoshi-araki/

but I see it as a clear contrast between the real and the unreal, given the existence of a Godzilla-like toy taking up space in the corner-half-center of the subject in the background, making it noticeable and unnoticeable at the same time. The presence of the traditional sexual binding and kimono elicits a non-censored celebration or even a deviance from the more formal use of kimono, representative of women's femininity. The subject's discomfort in the bondage is quickly contrasted by the boldness of the woman's facial expressions.

Traditional gender roles assigned to women in Japan are very similar to the Kantian designation that in relationships, women are to be submissive and passive to their counterparts (Belarmino & Roberts, 2019). The place of women in Japanese society is still mostly based on Confucian teachings and philosophy. This is similar to how Kant and Socrates saw fairness and justice as being faithful to one's social role.

Japanese women are also expected to fulfill the sexual standards men impose, which could be the reason for the presence of immense sexualization in Araki's photographs of women. Rather than these photographs devoting a sort of celebration of women's sexuality, they are symptoms of the coercive

nature of sex slavery, for instance, (ibid.) in contrast to Nussbaum's argument on prostitution as a space allowing for women's autonomy.

In the end, with the overlap of the unconventional pornography-like genius of Araki and existing gender inequalities in Japan, the portrayal of women is still firmly based on their sexuality or their bodies.

Women objectified and spectated by men

With the fusion of a traditional Japanese setting and custom to one of the crucial events in the Western religion, the upside-down position seems to reference how St. Peter honored Christ in his last days. The contrast of the crucifix placed on the ceiling to its vertical—the female genitals posit a deviation from the normal position, literally or sexually. The woman's position, coupled with tight ropes around the female's body parts, is a remark of offensive objectification, or how the woman's body is displayed, evokes discomfort and dishonoring of the female's body, as crucifixion has historically been a punishment of shame. Here, I employ the heaviness of male objectification of women through the objectification theory and some important views on it.

According to Szymanski et al. (2010), objectification theory frames a woman as objectified through her body and sexual functions (p. 6). To be objectified, in Kantian terms, is to be treated as a means to an end—that is, to be treated as an object of men (pp. 7-8). As women still live in sexually objectifying environments, it is difficult not to be alienated from the actuality of a woman's persona. This results in diminished self-worth and the proliferation of sexual assault by male perpetrators (p. 11). Objectification presupposes an "approval of the male gaze" (p. 24): an assessment of the body through visual perception.

The masculine vision, or male gaze, views women as "objects of male pleasure" (Snow, 1989, p. 30). However, the male gaze, admittedly, is a feminist characterization and articulation of widely-held oppressive experiences and views under patriarchal dominance. Some scholars like Snow present a fair problem with the theory as a generalized negative against masculine vision. While the theory of the male gaze plays a considerable part in problematizing perplexing outcomes such as Araki's, it is also important to draw lines to the conscious male population who are not entirely dominant, sadistic, and egoistic. Although this does not mean that the word "male" in feminist critique can easily be treated with discretion for those who are not at all identified with the negative connotation, because, in the first place, patriarchy is still persistent, and secondly, the assertion of the male gaze pertains to the specific problem under such dominance and not to which male does so or not.

Finally, objectification and personification are correlated because one cannot personify an object without viewing the body as an object to a certain extent (Saul, 2006).

Figure 2: Araki, N. & Artuner. (2008). KINBAKU, 2008/2017 [Photograph]. Artuner. https://www.artuner.com/shop/kinbaku-2008-2016-3-nobuyoshi-araki/

Female sexuality and the notion of consent

When used to Araki's sexually explicit photographs, this kinbaku shot seems pretty normal and unintrusive compared to his daring shots. The shot indicates the coalescence of innocence and purity with subtle sexual appeal unleashed by the deceiving bondage—because, at first sight, it seems like an ordinary binding. However, a further look into the photo indicates it to be a sexual one.

The overpowering tones of blue darkened the model's face, making it glowy as if inviting the spectator to be captivated by her daring stare. Overall, the photograph is consistent with Araki's aesthetic capturing of life, women, and nature.

Figure 3: Araki, N. & Artuner. (1995–2008a). KINBAKU, 1995–2008 [Photograph]. Artuner. https://www.artuner.com/shop/kinbaku-1995-2008-2016-nobuyoshi-araki/

Many of the ideas about female sexuality are manifestations of moral conceptions and, arguably, restrictions on women as individuals and as a group. According to Geach, the most well-known notion of female sexuality is her virginity, which is considered an essential precondition to marriage (15, p. 215). It can also be a social construct when perceived as the property of husbands and paternal figures. Virginity was a "prized possession" (Smith, 2011).

Secondly, mutuality in the act of sex should be deemed necessary as a feminist ideal, especially in battling coercion and exploitation (p. 212). The idea of mutuality gives political and moral legitimacy to sexual acts and even bodily services. Here, objectification is viewed as inevitable between parties in the relationship because they can still view each other as people afterward or even during the process.

Primoratz (2001) argues that moral consent is sufficient for legitimate sexual acts, including bodily services. For others, it should be necessary first before it is sufficient.

I contrast this view with Smith's argument that patriarchal institutions often take advantage of consent until it becomes their language. She elaborates that in cases of rape, the term "consent" is manipulated given its comprehensive semantics. Because of this, instead of protecting the victims, they are held accountable for their so-called provocation. For Smith, autonomy was deceiving. In cases of sexual assault or rape, a woman's lack of self-precaution becomes her consent, especially in more complex situations such as romantic relationships. This provocation is her consent. Worse, victims of rape and

other sexual assault cases deem them "undignified" because of how they were treated. The touch of men was enough to damage the victim's humanity.

Overall, the contrast in the notion of consent is important, especially in tricky cases of subtle coercion. Legitimacy of consent is practically the moral basis for almost every aspect of human interaction; it is only proper that discussions about it continue.

Contingencies on treating the female nude as art

This shot of Araki is bare. Araki employs a fine art depiction of the female nude. The studio-like setting gives the photograph a formal and classic shot of a female body with a sexually-charged appeal, masqueraded by the ropes tied around her. At the same time, the shot is not as complicated compared to his more complex shots. His shots can almost be indistinguishable from pornography. Araki, on the other hand, resists the typical pornography by employing sophisticated technicalities and artistic techniques.

The notion that the body is an art results from the so-called masculine perception. This attribution is almost always linked with the female nude. In Kant's philosophy, women are easily identified with the beautiful, and so the Renaissance's influence on putting great value on female nudes can be argued as the root of the continuation of sexual and visual objectification of women's bodies and their appearance.

One might ask why female nudes in the form of art are mostly excused from moral considerations. If not excused, it may be tolerated. The viewer's gaze, understood to be primarily masculine, dramatically affects how women's bodies are perceived (Neiley, 2018).

There is undeniably a market play in that most female nudes, especially in the Renaissance, are commissioned by male clients (ibid.). Intricacies in these sorts of market play encourage a banal sexualization of the female body and view the nude in art as sophisticated, beautiful, and elegant. While I cannot wholly argue for the view that the body is indeed art in itself, I recognize the significance of the body as inherently beautiful. However, it is different from merely treating it as an object for the pleasure of the gaze or mere display because the significance becomes insignificant and transforms itself into a fragment of nude desires.

The elaboration of the female nude leads us to the nature and definition of pornography. Nead (1990) explains that pornography is confined to documentation but not necessarily to producing an aesthetic value. Instead, it is directed toward satisfying sexual pleasures (p. 324). The sexual explicitness of Araki's photography and other nude photographs that are not necessarily pornography are undoubtedly an influence of Renaissance art. Admiration of the female nude overlaps with the complexities of privacy and alienation in the sense that women's bodies are separated from their value as moral and rational agents.

Figure 4: Araki, N. & Artuner. (2008a). KINBAKU 2008 [Photograph]. Artuner. https://www.artuner.com/shop/kinbaku-2008-2016-4-nobuyoshi-araki/

Whether the female nude is subject to artistic implications of patriarchal objectification and the definition of female sexuality, the conflict remains, such as the photographs of Araki. I strongly argue that patriarchal objectification should not be brushed off as mere artistic sophistication without much consideration on the artwork and its elements.

Conclusion

The juxtaposed philosophical commentaries and analyses I posited in Araki's works, coupled with contradictions, signify the persistent problem of masculine bias embodied in women's objectification and Kant's minimal yet problematic presentation of women. I have argued that Kantian ethics is inconsistent in designating humans a seemingly universal principle while still excluding women due to their alleged lack of reason and capacity to judge moral situations. Nussbaum's views, on the other hand, seek to liberate women from patriarchal systems by restricting her autonomy and advocating for the legalization of sexual bodily acts, specifically prostitution, in the absence of economic alternatives. I also argued that Nussbaum's advocacy, while plausible, indicates a limit, especially on treating

prostitution and other bodily services in their rights devoid of the pressure of deficient economic options. Lastly, the explication of the underlying themes in Araki's work elaborated on the gravity of women's objectification and their male-constructed societal ideals.

Debates over the legitimacy of women's bodily services are symptoms of patriarchal ailments in society that have deprived women of their agency. Thus, in discussing the controversial tensions in this paper, the necessity of continuously framing the problems in women's sexuality should be recognized so stigmatization against workers, victims, and women in general, may be eradicated.

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Declaration of Interest Statement

The author declares that she has no conflict of interests.

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