

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In patriarchal society, women are associated with being weak, being dominated, and need protection; on the contrary, men are defined as superior, strong, dominating, and dependable. This condition creates binary opposition for women and men. The unequal treatment based on the sex has happened since long time ago even before people recognize gender inequality as a societal problem (Lorenzi-Cioldi and Kulich 2015, 2). In feminist perspective, gender inequality leads to a phenomenon called sexism. The idea of sexism is the product of patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal ideology in the society perpetuates the idea that women are inferior rather than men (L. Tyson 2014, 85). Sexism is the systematic unequal treatment of individuals based on their sex and mostly happened on girls and women and practiced by men and society (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, *The Fabric of Internalized Sexism* 2009, 11). The manifestation of sexism occurs in many ways in our daily life such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, job discrimination, and sexist legislation in order to limit women's right.

Nowadays, sexism still happened in society and mostly the victims of this inequitable treatment are girls and women. For example, in 2019, the citizens in Bantul area refused to accept the new village head just because of her gender. As reported by *detiknews*, sexism leads to false perspective about women that woman is incompetent compared with man as leader (Damarjati 2019). This socio-

political phenomenon shows that gender issues as the result of patriarchal culture give women lots of disadvantages, in this case she lost her equal political rights. In patriarchal society, society prefers to believe the men in order to lead them than the women as leader.

The society still doubt the capability of women in many sectors in daily life, one of them is in the sport sector. Women often gain sexist attitudes in sport sector because people always believe that sports are for men. According to the report in *The New Yorker*, Doris Burke is the smartest and best prepared basketball analyst, however, even she always gives fantastic analysis, she only works on the sidelines during the playoffs. Meanwhile, the man analyst dominates the airwaves at courtside. As reported by *The New Yorker*, quoted from ESPN.com, Bill Simmon, a basketball writer and sports podcaster, stated that Burke is doing a fine job but he can not keep thinking “woman talking woman talking...” in the entire time when he listened her analysis about NBA playoff games (Remnick 2019). This case happens because people always think sports are not for women and there is no woman who know as much as man.

The differences between men and women, both biologically and physically, make people still underestimate the role of women in everyday life. In most cases, women tend to be oppressed and gain less advantage than men. Beside biological and physical differences, traditional gender role in society also has contribution in the establishment of sexist attitudes. For the example, the allocation of domestic sphere duties between men and women is usually imbalance because men tend to avoid this duty and make their wives to take care

of it (Rantalaiho 1997, Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 1999). The traditional gender role is constructed by social and cultural values in society. In patriarchal system, domestic sphere always connected with women meanwhile the men dominate in public sphere.

In everyday life, women usually face difficulty when they want to contribute in the public sphere. Society believes women have to take care of feminine roles in the domestic sphere such as childbearing, raising children, taking care of household, and sexual pleasure of their husbands. It is different with the men that gain lots of advantages from society, as the example in some countries, the boys have privilege to gain education meanwhile the girls gain less chance to obtain education (Glick and Sahna 2000). Even though now women start to make a move and join the men in public sphere but men's skill and qualification usually obtain more appreciation than women's skill and qualification (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell 1990).

The concept of sexism is made by social-cultural construction and it does not appear naturally in the world. Both men and women are taught by their society, through family and formal institution, about how they have to behave and how they have to think. Sexism makes people believe that women are less qualified and inferior. In patriarchal society, a woman always being an object or the Other (Beauvoir 2007, 84). The sexist attitudes make women always left behind the men. On this day, people have unawareness about their sexist attitude because they think it is normal to behave like that. Sexism towards women is an ongoing problem that has yet to be resolved. Patriarchy and sexism is a unity and

can not be separated. When sexism becomes a part of culture, the internalized sexism will include in it. Internalized sexism occurs when a woman creates and enacts the sexist attitudes and behaviors towards herself and other women (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, *The Fabric of Internalized Sexism* 2009, 10).

The sexist attitudes in everyday life make the agents and the targets becomes unaware with the sexism in their interactions, however sexism has big impact on girls and women's life. As the example, girls and women will start to doubt their capabilities in public sphere and avoid male-dominated job, they will believe that they need to be taken care by the men, believe that they have to be passive in every interaction, and start to think that people will only appreciate them from their appearance. These effects of sexism affect how women shape their identities and behaviors toward themselves and others. Then, without their intention, they perpetuate sexist attitudes among women, even without men's intervention or knowing as internalized sexism (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, *The Fabric of Internalized Sexism* 2009, 11).

Internalized sexism is rooted from internalized oppression which consists of oppressive practices that continue to make rounds even when the member of the oppressor group are not present (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, *The Fabric of Internalized Sexism* 2009, 13). Internalized sexism is not only about sexism from women to other women but also involves two distinct groups, one of which is systematically do not have power like the other (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, *The Fabric of Internalized Sexism* 2009, 14). People know and hear about sexist stereotype about women over their entire life. Internalized sexism appears

because the girls and the women believe with all of the sexist stereotype about their sex that are delivered to everyone in patriarchal society. The consequence of this belief is girls and women believe that all of the sexist stereotypes are true and start to doubt themselves and other women. This is the way women contribute on the perpetuation of sexism. The result of internalized sexism are psychological disorders such as depression, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and less social support among women (Szymanski, Gupta and Carr 2009).

The existence of sexist attitudes among women without the presence of men creates an important question about the key features of sexism. Sexism often considered as the unequal and hurtful treatment based on gender between men and women, however these days women often say and do hurtful things to other women in sexist ways. They also make objectification about themselves and other women based on men's perspective. This internalized sexism among women appears because women always obtain sexist attitudes from their surroundings in multiple times. After multiple repetitions, these sexist attitudes and messages become their belief and shape their mindset and personality. Then, the girls and women might pass these sexist treatments to their female partners.

Internalized sexism has big impact to young women. According to Pipher (1994), in United States, the girls start to be involved in the internalization of sexism when they are in 11-14 years old. The period between 11-14 years old is the transition period from childhood to adolescence, and during early and middle adolescence, the girls begin to change their personalities and become more self-critical and depressed (Pipher 1994, 19). As surveyed by Young Women's Trust

in 2019, 64% young women in the United Kingdom reported experiencing sexism in their daily life. According to Dr. Ruth Hackett from University of College London in Young Women's Trust report, young women in the age group between 16-30 years old mostly experience sexism and it affects their mental health (Young Women's Trust 2019).

Young adult women are seen as easier sexism target because people assume they are naïve and lack of experience. Society doubt their capabilities and existence in the daily interactions. They also experience more internalized sexism because they are in the age where girls tend to adopt and behave in particular ways as seen in social media or television. The young women gain more pressure to compete and impress their peers. They will start to look other girls as their competitors. This phenomenon of internalized sexism and its impacts toward young women are reflected in the *Only Ever Yours* (2014) novel by Louise O'Neill.

*Only Ever Yours* is a feminist dystopian novel written by Louise O'Neill and published for the first time in 2014. This novel is the debut novel of Louise O'Neill and awarded The Irish Book Award in 2014, The 2015 YA Book Prize, and gained rating around 3.8 in Goodreads and 4.5 in The Telegraph. Dystopia is one of the sub genre from science fiction genre. Dystopia stands for "bad place" that represent a very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous future culmination (Abrams and Harpham 2009, 328). Dystopian literature also used as a critique of social condition or political systems in the society. It

criticizes the present society through different ways of its display. *Only Ever Yours* categorizes as feminist dystopia novel, because it can be defined as “the presentation of a dystopian world in which the role of women is moved to the foreground and through which consequences for society become visible” (Pigmans 2018, 43). This novel portrayed Dystopian world of our own and satirized about women’s condition. This study focuses on internalized sexism that appears in the novel.

*Only Ever Yours* (2014) novel by Louise O’Neill takes setting in a dystopian world. In this novel, women are created by the scientists in order to prevent human extinction. The duty of women is conceiving male children and being the object of men. Due to the fact that women are engineered, they are seen as state property and nobody sees them as human. Even they do not have any capital letters at their name and usually called by number. The girls called as the Eves and they raised in the “School” in order to learn how to be ideal women. Since their duty is giving a birth, when the young women are in marriageable age or around sixteen years old, they have to compete with other Eves to be chosen as a companion. Because of the limited spaces available, the Eves fight against each other and are encouraged to put each other down.

The writer found previous studies that examined about internalized sexism such as how internalized misogyny and sexist events affect women’s mental health (D. Szymanski, et al. 2009) and the effects of internalized sexism’s manifestations in counselor education (Chaney, et al. 2019). Meanwhile, for previous studies that examined the same object, *Only Ever Yours* novel, cover the

issue about media and advertising discourse that appears in the novel (Muraveva 2018); othering of female's characters in *Only Ever Yours* novel (Elices 2016); and a feminist critique of the postfeminist discourse in novel *Only Ever Yours* (Moll 2018). Even though many studies used novel *Only Ever Yours* (2014), but no formal study has been found explaining about internalized sexism that appeared in the novel. The same goes to the issue of internalized sexism; some previous studies found mostly do not examine the issue of internalized sexism that appears in the literary work, this study tries to fill the gap that is overlooked by the other writers as it deals with internalized sexism that appears among female characters in the novel *Only Ever Yours* (2014).

The reason why this study choose *Only Ever Yours* (2014) as the object of the study because the novel contains interesting issue that related with the young women's condition around the world that still often trap in internalized sexism. The novel also depicts a society where sexism and oppression of women happens not only because the dominance of men but also women collude with the perpetuation of sexism. The study will be focused on analyzing internalized sexism among the Eves. The study will analyze *Only Ever Yours* (2014) novel using feminist literary criticism, mainly using Steve Bearman, Neill Korobov, and Avril Thorne's concept about internalized sexism.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems**



In order to analyze the internalized sexism among young women in feminist dystopian novel *Only Ever Yours* by Louise O’Neill through the Eves, the writer would like to state one question to analyze:

1. How is the manifestation of internalized sexism among the Eves characters depicted in Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours* novel?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the statements of the problem, this study aims to:

1. To identify the manifestation of internalized sexism among the Eves characters in “*Only Ever Yours*” by Louise O’Neill.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study analyzes internalized sexism among young women through the Eves characters in *Only Ever Yours* novel. Sexism often happens in society and still being ongoing problem which has yet to be resolved. The women as the victims often get sexist attitudes in their life because they are considered powerless and inferior. People are not aware that they are being sexist to the woman because it already became a normal thing in society, even the women also do not understand that they are oppressed by sexism. The women also contribute in internalized sexism toward other women. Thus, this study aimed to increase readers’ awareness, particularly the young women, about internalized sexism. In addition, this study is also expected to give a new perspective and contribution to literary research, especially in feminist study. Then, the writer expects this study

can be useful for students who are interested in conducting similar studies, especially in the English Department, Universitas Airlangga.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

**Sexism** :Sexism is the systematic inequitable treatment of girls and women by men and by society as a whole (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, The Fabric of Internalized Sexism 2009, 11)

**Internalized Sexism** :Internalized sexism is a kind of sexism when a woman creates and enacts the sexist attitudes and behaviors towards herself and other women (Bearman, Korobov and Thorne, The Fabric of Internalized Sexism 2009, 10)

**Oppression** :Oppression is an enclosing structure that, by way of institutional practice, harms members of a social group, while members of another, or other, corresponding social groups benefit from the harm suffered by those oppressed (Egidius 2007)

**Eve** :Eve is the synonym of woman and as the reflection of how woman is viewed and how she should view herself (Edwards 2008)