

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Misogyny and sexism are interconnected gender issues that have existed for a long time. Walker (2022) defines misogyny as a heavy term that refers to hatred toward women that occurs in speech or actions such as gaslighting, insult, sexual violence, and rape that haunts every culture. Meanwhile, Glick et al. (2010) describe sexism as attitudes that maintain gender inequality by controlling how men and women should act based on patriarchal expectations. Sexism values the patriarchal structure as non-complicated rules than the actual implementation in reality. Each of them represents different concepts of gender discrimination behavior, but both misogyny and sexism create a system that oppresses women's movement to gain freedom. Manne (2018) states that sexism serves as the rationalization branch of patriarchy by making sex differences seem inevitable to support sexist social arrangements, while misogyny serves as its enforcing branch and endorses the subordination of women by having the option to target women selectively rather than universally.

Misogyny and sexism usually stem from men's superiority which believes women should stay in their social status as the lower ones. The reason is because patriarchal society play an important part in giving special rights to men to maintain misogynist views (Amelia et al., 2023). This statement also applies to sexism in society since both

are related. Patriarchal society embraces misogyny and sexism by promoting traditional gender roles. In traditional gender roles, women are associated as a feminine creature with the characteristics of emotional, caring, vulnerable, and submissive. Those who behave like that are more cherished in a patriarchal society than progressive women who tend to deviate from the traditional gender roles. This stereotype is very harmful to women's position because it shows they are only valued if they are passive. As a result, it creates a situation where some women unintentionally embrace these social norms to gain acceptance. However, this often leads women to lose their identity and limit their freedom since they have to adapt themselves according to patriarchal social standards.

Misogyny and sexism has been shown in many popular literary works with a different focus. *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy shows that misogyny and sexism serve as tools to punish women who act out of social norms, while men are allowed to do whatever they want. A research by Muthulakshmi (2023) analyzes how *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood shows that misogyny and sexism are used to objectify women's bodies by classifying them into several hierarchical roles. The result is women are competing with each other because they have been assigned to different positions which makes them struggle to resist. A similar situation is also shown in *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. In this novel, misogyny and sexism are used by men to invalidate women's emotions and create a rivalry between women to gain male approval. A similar issue about misogyny and sexism as tools to infantilize women's voices also appears in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. Another research from Ningsih et al.,(2015) about *EILEEN* by Otessa

Moshfegh shows that women can also be misogynistic and sexist toward themselves as a result of patriarchal culture.

From these literary works, we can see that misogyny and sexism favor men as the dominant, and women are placed in an inferior position. Women often cannot make their own decisions to develop their powers, and as a result, they tend to lack virtue due to the sacrifices they make (Tong, 2009). As a result, women who cannot stand up for themselves are forced to internalize the misogynistic and sexist values as a part of their personality instead of resisting them. Through literary works, many authors illustrate the double standard in society regarding how women and men must behave. An example of a novel that talks about misogyny and sexism in high school is *The Female of the Species* by Mindy McGinnis. She is an American author who specializes in writing young adult fiction. *The Female of the Species* was published in 2016, and it has received several achievements, such as Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Young Adult Fiction (2016), American Library Association's Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults, and Lincoln Award Nominee (2020).

The Female of the Species tells a story about Alex Craft, a girl who seeks justice for her sister, who was murdered after being raped by someone. She decides to take matters into her own hands and kill the perpetrator. Although Alex tries to live a normal life by befriending Peekay, her classmate, and dating Jack, the popular boy at school, she still has difficulty accepting the normalization of misogyny and sexism in her environment that allows boys to treat girls as they want, or make the girls fight each other.

The writer chose *The Female of the Species* as the object because this novel shows that misogyny and sexism are not only shown in adult fiction but also in young adult literature. Through this novel, we can see that misogyny and sexism have a big influence on someone's behavior and ideology, and it also happens in real life. This novel illustrates how women responded to misogyny and sexism through resistance or internalization, depending on their individual personalities. Therefore, the writer decided to conduct research titled ***Resistance and Internalization Toward Misogyny and Sexism in The Female of the Species Novel by Mindy McGinnis.***

1.2 Identification of the Problems

The Female of the Species shows how misogyny and sexism are common in Alex's neighbourhood which makes her decide to confront the perpetrator. While Alex strongly rejects misogyny and sexism, she finds several difficulties. First, her closest friends are the agents of misogyny and sexism, but they are also victims of these two behaviors. Second, sometimes Alex feels insecure for not being able to fit the social standard, and it also happens to her friends. Through these problems, McGinnis shows that sometimes women who try to resist the misogyny and sexism might feel insecure about themselves because the patriarchal norms that have existed make them look different than the others. From these problems, the writer decides to examine how misogyny and sexism are shown in this novel, and the response of female characters by resisting or internalizing it using existentialist feminism as a part of feminist literary research.

1.3 The Review of Previous Studies

The writer has found some articles from journals and thesis that are related to the issue of misogyny and sexism or feminist criticism. It consists of the previous study related to the novel, topic, or theory in the research. A thesis titled *Rape Culture As Presented In Young Adult Literature: The Role Of Young Adult Literature In The Prevention, Causation, And Effects Of Sexual Violence (2020)* by Jada Gohdes examines the reflection of Western norms and standards that allow rape culture as part of misogyny and sexism grow through eight young adult literature, including *The Female of the Species* as the connection of young adult literature to contemporary issues. The researcher divides the analysis into two sections. The first section discusses the definition of young adult literature, understanding rape culture and sexual violence, teaching the boys about consent, and giving a voice to the perpetrator. Meanwhile, the second section shows the act of rape through the chosen texts. The research shows there is an act of encouraging teenagers to report sexual harassment in *The Female of the Species*. However, the follow-up is lacking, and the victim is dealing with their trauma by themselves. This thesis did not focus on the specific character analysis because the researcher limited their focus only to the act of rape culture in the novel. Nevertheless, it is still useful for the writer to see how *The Female of the Species* is used to analyze the issue of sexual violence because it is also part of misogynistic and sexist behavior. The analysis from this previous study still relevant to this research and can serve as a reference for this thesis.

Another thesis using this novel is titled *Starting the Conversation: An Examination of Rape Culture Using The Female of the Species - A Novel Study for ELA 30* (2018) by Amanda Sturies. In this thesis, Sturies stated that the theme of rape culture in the novel can be used in a classroom learning activity to make young people understand this issue. However, this thesis did not analyze the characterization in this novel. Instead, the researcher summarizes each chapter's story and provides several critical questions to be used as the discussion material in the classroom. The writer finds this thesis helpful to get another perspective on this novel as a medium to teach the students about the effect of sexual violence as part of misogyny and sexism. Using the critical questions provided by the researcher, the writer could gain another insight about this novel by trying to answer them while conducting their research.

The next related study about this novel is a journal article titled *Editors' Introduction: #MeToo, Medieval Literature, and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy* (2021) by Candace Barrington, et al. This article examines how young adult (YA) literature nowadays presents strong female characters who dare to take revenge for sexual assault, including Alex Craft from *The Female of the Species*. Barrington et al argue that the reflection on trauma, gender, and power dynamics from this novel is useful for explaining trauma-informed pedagogy while teaching medieval literature in class. Although this article only use the novel as a secondary source for its research, it still relates to this thesis because it strengthens the writer's argument that Alex is a brave female character in young adult (YA) literature who dares to confront the sex offenders. It shows that to gain

equality in society, women must be brave enough to show their resistance instead of being passive and internalize the misogyny and sexism around them.

The first related literature for the theory is a journal article titled *Call It Misogyny* (2024) by Rachel Loewen Walker. This article examines the complex nature of misogyny by stating it as a social phenomenon rather than just a personal shortcoming. Walker expands Kate Manne's idea that suggests that misogyny works as a social control mechanism in a patriarchal society, it is not limited just to hatred towards women, as the origin of the word misogyny itself. Manne summarizes that misogyny can take many different shapes, from the hidden forms of emotional manipulation and marginalization to the explicit acts of violence. This article also stated that misogyny is an intersectional issue that relates to other forms of women's oppression, such as colonialism, racism, and homophobia. The conclusion stated that people should differentiate between misogyny and sexism as gender-based issue. This article is helpful for the writer to enhance their knowledge about the concept of misogyny and learn to distinguish it from sexism.

The next related literature talk about sexism is from the journal article titled *Sexism In Flannery O'Connor's "Wise Blood"* (2024) by Hayder Gebreem and Mustafa Talib Jawad. This article use postmodern literature to explore the theme of sexism through the concept of subjectivity, gender, and power relations across global societies. The findings show several forms of sexism shown in *Flannery O'Connor*. First, women are used as objects of male observation to satisfy their desire through the scene of two men, Hazel and Enoch, who spy on women in the swimming pool. Second, the sexual double standard

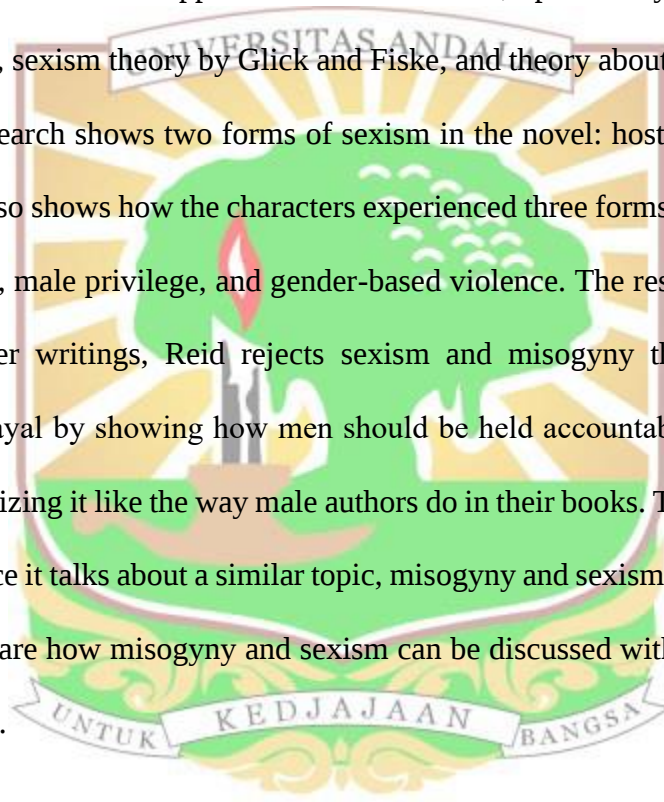
through the character Mrs. Watts who works as a prostitute and labeled as a 'slut'. Her character shows society tends to punish and dehumanize sexually active women, while men are praised because it shows their masculinity by conquering women in sexual intercourse. Third, women's portrayal in this story reflects the old religious stereotypes, such as Adam and Eve, by associating women as someone with inferior morality and more vulnerable to sin. It can be seen through the character Sabbath Lily, a young girl who seduces Hazel and has sex with him. Her character embraces the traditional stereotype of women who lack love from their fathers, seeking validation and affection through romantic or sexual relationships with men. As the researcher, Gebreem and Jawad stated this novel shows how women are objectified, oppressed, and measured according to patriarchal standards of morality and virtue through characters like Mrs. Watts and Sabbath Lily. The writer finds this article useful because it shows how sexism can appear through cultural norms and expectations of gender roles. There is a huge expectation for women to behave in society, while men can do something bad and still get praised because their action shows proof of masculinity.

A journal article titled *Existentialist Feminism of Woman's Struggle in Cigarette Girl Novel* (2020) by Faidah Yusuf and Muh. Iskandar Susilo shows how existentialist feminism theory by Simone de Beauvoir is applied to examine women's struggle and their effort to fight for themselves. The result shows that women in the novel can break the patriarchal system in three ways. First, women can work to secure their financial needs so they do not have to depend on men. This can be seen in the character Roemaisa, who sells klobot in the market. Second, women should be educated to make decisions and

change the perspective that only men can express their opinions in society. It can be seen when Dasiyah criticized her father regarding his choice to rebrand the Kretek Merdeka because she believed the brand contain a historical value that could not be dismissed. Third, women refuse to obey the pre-assigned roles as subordinates in society. The example can be seen through the women who smoke to reject the social norms that consider women who smoke is bad. This article is useful in helping the writer to see how existentialist feminism is used to resist the patriarchal society.

Another related previous study using an existentialist feminist approach by Beauvoir is from a thesis titled *Countering Patriarchal Hegemony in Taylor Jenkins Reid's The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* written by Masayu Siti Raudhatul Jannah (2024). In this thesis, Masayu aims to explain the factors of countering the patriarchal hegemony and how the author tries to counter it through the narrative of Evelyn Hugo as the main character. The result finds that two factors counter hegemony against patriarchy, which are the myths about women and their position as the other. Then, this thesis portrays the countering through Evelyn's character as a women who succeed in transforming society by becoming a successful actress and rejecting her position as the other by embracing intellectualism. In this thesis, the researcher did not explicitly mention the misogynist or sexist treatment that Evelyn has ever received, but this research makes a contribution for the writer to see how women are perceived as the other according to patriarchal hegemony in society and how to reject those values.

The related literature that has discussed misogyny and sexism is from a thesis titled *Sexism and Misogyny as Products of Patriarchal Society Seen in Taylor Jenkins Reid's Novel The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* written by Selma Rahmani (2023) from Universitas Andalas. This research aims to find the forms of misogyny and sexism experienced by the female characters and examine Reid's influence as a female author. In this thesis, the researcher applied feminist criticism, specifically Gynocriticism by Elaine Showalter, sexism theory by Glick and Fiske, and theory about misogyny by Kate Manne. This research shows two forms of sexism in the novel: hostile and benevolent. The researcher also shows how the characters experienced three forms of misogyny, such as objectification, male privilege, and gender-based violence. The result of this research shows that in her writings, Reid rejects sexism and misogyny through her female character's portrayal by showing how men should be held accountable for the damage, instead of normalizing it like the way male authors do in their books. The writer finds this source useful since it talks about a similar topic, misogyny and sexism. It can also be used as a tool to compare how misogyny and sexism can be discussed with different feminist criticism theories.



A journal article titled *"Internalized Misogyny: Oppression Among Women in Lady J Movie"* by Emmanuel Moret (2023) examines how internalized misogyny appears among women in higher social classes. The researcher applied the theory of misogyny, bad women, and silencing by Kate Manne along with Sheryl Sandberg's theory about the relationship between a patriarchal system and the internalization of discrimination. The finding of this research shows that the forms of internalized misogyny in this movie

manifest through discrimination toward lower-class women, categorizing women into 'good' and 'bad' based on their social status, and the normalization of gender domination by women in higher class toward the lower-class women. This research also explained the attempt to fight internalized misogyny by speaking up to defend their life choice instead of worrying about the prejudice around them as women. In conclusion, the researcher said that internalized misogyny might have appeared because women are sacrificing each other to undermine patriarchal power. Therefore, women must unite to fight discrimination from anywhere, including from fellow women. This article is helpful as a reference for the writer to compare with internalized misogyny in *The Female of the Species*.

Another related literature is coming from a journal article titled *Misogyny & Sexism Towards Working-Class Woman In Sophie Treadwell's Machinal* (2023) by I Gusti Ngurah Alexander Surya Bayu Saputra and Jessica Leony uses a play from 1928 as the main object to examine the misogyny and sexism. The research was conducted using a feminist approach to differentiate between misogyny and sexism. The finding shows the acts of misogyny and sexism in episodes 1 through 4. The beginning of episode 1 shows the internalized misogyny, a situation of women hate and feel superior to each other. In episode 2, there is a scene showing benevolent sexism in a parent-child relationship. Instead of taking her daughter's concern seriously regarding the marriage proposal, her mother just told her to accept it so she would become a rich wife and have enough money to share with her mother. In episode 3, the misogyny and sexism show when the boss, who becomes her husband, forces her to satisfy his needs. Then, in episode 4, the main

character got baby blues after giving birth but nobody understood her feelings. Instead of treating her because she cannot produce breastmilk, the doctor ordered the nurse to shove the baby into the main character's breast. This scene shows how women are treated as the lower ones in society and they are only viewed as child caretakers. In the conclusion, the author explained that the effect of misogyny in this play is the main character decides to take revenge by killing her husband, and she got arrested. However, she feels free inside the bars because there is no one to control her. It shows that misogyny and sexism can cause mental damage to women in her society. Since the writer's research aims to see how women respond to misogynist and sexist behavior around them, this article helps support the writer's arguments about the reason why the female character decided to take revenge as an act to reject misogyny and sexism in their society.

The next related literature is from a journal article titled *Victim Blaming, Misogyny, and Hostile Sexism: Feminist Study of Under The Red Flag by Ha Jin* (2021) by Asad Ullah Javed, Ramiza Safdar, Ayesha Khan, Dr. Muhammad Asil, and Ejaz Hussain. This research aims to explore the factors behind prejudice and exploitation toward women, which make them struggle to survive as individuals or as a collective identity. The researcher applied feminist theory, as presented by Simone de Beauvoir, in this research. The finding of this research shows examples of victim-blaming, misogynistic, and sexist attitudes in several short stories. In the first short story, the misogynistic behavior showed the effect of anger and jealousy through the persecution of poor women who worked as prostitutes to earn money for a living. The next story shows the exploitation of women as sexual objects for several men as a result of toxic masculinity. There is also a short story

that shows the victim blaming of a woman for being unable to satisfy her husband. In this research, the researcher also analyzes a short story that shows women's empowerment. The woman in this story succeeds in freeing herself from the criminal by killing him. Although she faces some prejudice, the woman becomes a hero and decides to reject all wedding proposals. In the end, the researcher stated that this research shows how women are always used to fulfill males' interests, which can lead to women's subordination. The writer finds this article useful as a reference to compare whether the same portrayal of misogyny and sexism in this short story can be found in the writer's research.

From these related studies, the writer did not find any article that analyzes *The Female of the Species* using the theory of misogyny, sexism, or existentialist feminism. The previous research tends to focus on using the novel as a tool for classroom learning or raising awareness about sexual violence through young adult literature. There is a lack of attention to the dynamic between the characters throughout the story. Therefore, the writer decided to fill the gap in research by examining the misogyny and sexism shown in *The Female of the Species* and how the female characters resist or internalize it as their response.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does *The Female of the Species* show misogyny and sexism through the story?
2. How do the female characters in *The Female of the Species* resist or internalize the misogyny and sexism?

1.5 The Scope of the Research

In this research, the writer limits the discussion by focusing on explaining the misogyny and sexism toward female characters that has been shown in the novel through action or utterance, and how female characters like Alex, Peekay, Sara, and Branley respond to it. In order to do that, the writer will analyze the intrinsic elements of the novel, such as the plot, the characterization, the setting, the point of view, and the background of the characters.

1.6 The Objective of the Research

This research aims to explore how misogyny and sexism are shown in *The Female of the Species* through the characters' dialogue and actions toward each other, and explain how the female character's resist or internalize misogyny and sexism. It aims to explore how the differences between female characters in this novel respond to misogyny and sexism, considering each personality.

