



## **The Interpellation of Misogyny by Female Characters In novel *EILEEN* By Otessa Moshfegh (2015)**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis is an analysis of Otessa Moshfegh's novel entitled *EILEEN* (2015). This analysis is related to the concept of Interpellation by Luis Althusser and Misogyny by Sheila Jeffrey and it is under the Feminist literary theory which can reveal issues in the novel. This can be seen in two methods: form of misogynistic women and the way misogyny can get interpellated. The issues raised are women who interpellated the ideology of misogyny and they also did it. Self-judgement, self-objectification, and negative attitude toward other women are the dominant forms of misogynistic behaviour expressed by female characters in this novel. Family and workplace are the place or the background how this ideology can be interpellated. The analysis shows that misogyny is not only done by men but women also do it. It can be concluded that the ideology formed by these patriarchs is indirectly also supported by women.

**Key words:** misogyny, women, patriarchy, interpellation

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This issue about misogyny is exposed in literary work entitled *Eileen* (2015) by Otessa Moshfegh. Through this novel, the protagonist shows the interpellation of misogyny that is reflected by her behaviour. She believes she is inferior, ugly, and depend on her father. The novel exposes the way women still influenced by patriarchy that use negative body image and inferiority. *Eileen* (2015) is a novel by Otessa Moshfegh. The novel exposes the way women is still influenced by patriarchy that use negative body image and inferiority.

The ideology is a way of thinking that will be the reason of taking a certain attitude like attitude towards certain sex and towards our body. In this case, the way of thinking which govern how women and their body are viewed is called misogyny. This novel is important to be analysed because it is proved that misogyny still exists and that's not only carried out by men, but also women. Misogyny is a behavior or attitude that hates women or

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demeans a woman. According to Manne in Konstantinovsky (2018), misogyny is a systems or environments in our social life where women are susceptible to hatred and hostility because they are living in a man-centric world. Flood (2016), he added that although misogyny is often found from men, it also exists and practiced by women against other women or even themselves. Srivastava (2017), she clarify that misogyny at its front had male supporters, but over years, few females also supported the ideology. Misogyny also infects women, including their attitudes toward themselves as well as toward others. This important to note that is not necessarily practiced by man.

Althusser (1918-1990) explains the way in which ideas get into our heads and have an effect on our lives, so much so that cultural ideas have such a hold on us that we believe they are our own. Interpellation is a process, a process in which we encounter our culture's values and internalize them. This is how misogyny spread and thrive even in woman's mind. In other words ideology and interpellation mutually reinforce each other. Althusser (1972) explains that ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amount to make it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which can be interpreted as "individuals is more or less subject" (p.176).

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

Related to the collected data, the data will be analysed based on feminist literary theory. This study discuss about misogyny that started by patriarchal thought. Misogyny functions as an ideology or belief system that has accompanied patriarchal, or male-dominated societies for thousands of years and continues to place women in subordinate positions with limited access to power and decision making. Feminist theorists have expanded the definition of patriarchal society to describe a systemic bias against women. One of the roles of women is to bear and take care of children, a role that has been adopted in various cultures. It is because of her roles as mother and care givers, women are absorbed into domestic activities. In other words, women have double burden. In this novel the character have to nurturing her father and work to earn money. This study also use concept of interpellation of Althusser.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the issue of interpellation of misogyny. The protagonist, Eileen are the representation of the misogynistic women. She is too love with her weirdness. She hate herself by describing the weaknesses that exist in her and towards other women. It through a process of feeling inferior; self-objectification and self-judgement. Self-objectification is associated with reports of low self-esteem, impairments in cognitive functioning, feelings of shame about the body, and anxiety about appearance. Thus, interpellation of misogyny can be proven in two ways: manifests from misogyny attitude and social construction.

## 4.1 Form of Misogyny Attitude

### 4.1.1 self-judgement

Self-judgment is the form of misogyny. The manifestations of this form can be many things such as self-objectification and self-judgement. She has the internal conflicts cannot be faced by the character successfully. A young women trapped as a daughter of alcoholic father's care taker in a home that she do not want lives there. She is felt that she is just not comfortable with her life.

i looked like a girl you'd expect to see on city bus, reading some clothbound book from the library about plants or geography, perhaps wearing a net over my light brown hair. You might take me for a nursing student or a typist, a note the nervous hands, a foot tapping, bitten lip. I looked like nothing special.

Page. 1

The excerpt above shows that the protagonist does not have confidence. The character also does not feel safe with her environment. Feeling chronically insecure around others. She always looks down on herself. The way to release her inner conflict is by hating herself. The sentence I looked like nothing special means that the character does not appreciate herself. According to Jeffrey in Ussher (2005) this is also called self-judgment manifestation of misogyny which sees itself as a human being inferior in terms of appearance. She felt helpless. She is constantly finding fault with herself and putting herself down with no real awareness that there is anything amiss.

In addition, another data which showing self-judgement as a form of misogyny can be seen from the following excerpt:

The sunlight in the morning illuminated the thin down on my face, which I tried to cover with pressed powder, a shade too pink for my wan complexion. I was thin, my figure was jagged, my movement pointy and hesitant, my posture stiff. The terrain of my face was heavy with soft, rumbling acne scars blurring whatever delight or madness lay beneath that cold and deadly New England exterior.

Page. 1

The quotation above reveals that misogyny damages the physical and mental health of women. Unequal treatment of women by their community and family puts them at a disadvantage throughout their lives and stifles the development of their societies. I was thin this sentence shows one form of character is misogynistic; eating disorder and anxiety about appearance. The character does not pay attention to eating patterns, it means the character does not care about her own body. The terrain of my face was heavy with soft, rumbling acne scars this sentence also proves the character does not pay attention and care about her own body. There are acne scars because the face is pimply and it is caused by a dirty and untreated face. My movement pointy and hesitant, my posture stiff this sentence proves that the character is not confident. She felt to be the object of guilt. Whatever is in his body and whatever she does will be considered wrong. In sum, self-judgement is someone who thinks low of themselves based on appearance. This feeling arises because there is anxiety within yourself about how others will judge him. Women think not in accordance with the standards of society that should be.

Since this ideology by patriarchal system was formed to against women, since then some of the women were also influenced and supported the ideology. This affect in women always feeling themselves inferior to men. The explanation above is related to the Flood (2016) concept of misogyny also added that although misogyny is often found from men, it is also exists and practiced by women against other women or even themselves.

#### 4.1.2 Self-objectification

Another form of misogyny that impacts the women character is feelings of shame about the body till you are willing to be raped. Self-objectification is how you view yourself mostly in critical way. According to Code (2000) misogyny manifests in numerous ways one of them is called sexual objectification. It's fuelled by anger, low self-esteem, and a distorted perception of oneself due to misguided thoughts and self-beliefs. In most cases, self-loathing is the result of having a dysfunctional upbringing. Proven in the quote below:

No one had ever tried to rape me, after all. I'd always believed that my first time would be by force. Of course I hoped to be raped by only the most soulful, gentle, handsome of men, somebody



who was secretly in love with me—  
Randy, ideally.

Page. 27

The quotation above proves the character of demeaning herself. The character feels too low so he imagines that she will be raped. She felt herself worthless. This is a form of misogyny; low-self-esteem. Misogyny also serves to maintain the position of women as a 'second sex'. This will make the character internalize the idea that something is flawed or wrong with her. The character feels worthless or inferior if she does not meet their standards of success. Related to the explanation above Jeffrey in Ussher (2005) explains that misogyny is manifested by women and girls through a cycle of self-objectification; self-judgement in relation to unfair societal norms or sexual attractiveness.

Another data which shows self-objectification as a form of misogyny Also supported in the excerpt below:

At some point I got an itch in my underwear, and since there was nobody to see me, I stuck my hand up my skirt to get at it. As swaddled as they were, my nether regions were difficult to scratch. So I had to dig my hand down the front of my skirt, under the girdle, inside the underwear, and when the itch had been relieved, I pulled my fingers out and smelled them. It's a natural curiosity.

Page. 19

The quotation above reveals the character being self-objectification when she view herself as object for use instead of as human being. Self-objectification is a result of objectification and commonly the more girls and women objectify their bodies. Self-objectification was associated with lower sexual self-esteem which mediated the relationship between self-objectification and sexual imagery.

Another data which prove self-objectification as misogyny attitude, can be seen in quotation below:

Or instead, he'd take hold of me by the shoulders and steer me up against the Dodge, press my face into the frosted window, reach up my skirt to rip my stockings, my underpants, then around my leg to feel my caverns and folds with his fingers as he pushed into me, his breath hot at my ear, saying nothing. In that fantasy, I wore no girdle.

page. 28

The quotation above supports that the character is misogynistic women, because low self-esteem is a manifestation of misogyny which is interpreted in women. She judges herself to be inferior. Low self-esteem manifests in female relationships. This happens because women believe that they cannot be without men. And he considers his existence to be considered only if she becomes a sexual object. This will result in women imagining themselves in the form of sexual imagery because they consider themselves very inferior.

These are examples of women they are thinking not good enough and their existence comes from the man's opinion and his prais. These thoughts become subconscious to women, as they internalize them so much that they don't notice them anymore. It is something that is being planted in women's minds by objectification, and then cultivated into self-objectification. It is related to Jaffreys (2005) self-objectification is associated with reports of low self-esteem, impairments in cognitive functioning, feelings of shame about the body, and anxiety about appearance. in concluded, self-objectification occurs when some of the character treats herself as an object to be seen based on appearance. The character places itself as a sexual object.

#### 4.1.4 Negative attitude towards other women

Character is a misogynistic woman. She not only mentioned her weaknesses, hated herself but also looked down on other women. According to Bogaard (2019) it is called self-loather. Her humiliation of her own sex gives her a kind of control in an unintelligible and unjust world.

Working day shifts in the office with them, I really didn't have it so bad. Having a desk job meant I rarely had to interact with one of the four or five terrifying and pig-nosed correctional officers whose job it was to mend the

wicked ways of Moorehead's young residents.

Page. 14

The above quote proves through the character the form of misogyny inspired by the character is to do body shaming, pig-nosed by saying this character has physically degrading other women through verbal. Misogyny also infects women, including their attitudes toward themselves as well as toward others. The character acted this way because she had gotten the same thing from his father. Misogyny performed by character has formed in various forms such as belittling of women. It is related to Flood (2016), also added that although misogyny is often found from men, it is also exists and practiced by women against other women.

Another data that proves that the ideology formed by men and usually carried out by patriarchs is also Carried out by women against other women, can be seen in the excerpt below:

My suspicions about the office ladies weren't necessarily disparaging. It helped me to have a little compassion when I imagined them going home at night to their disgusting husbands, so bitter, so lonely. On the other hand, to think of them with their blouses unbuttoned, hands in each other's brassieres, legs spread, made me want to vomit.

Page.16

The quotation above shows that the form of misogyny carried out by the characters is to put down other women through sexual imagery. Usually those who do this are men who want to look down on women and make women uncomfortable with themselves. The character also likes to suspect other women who are different from him like characters do not like grooming and unclean but other women do it. Insulting fellow women is not new. The insult is negative about the beauty and shape of a woman's body.

#### 4.2 The way misogyny get interpellated

When women has believe this values and internalize them, it was there that this ideology has been interpellated. How does this ideology can be interpellation by female characters it is through family and workplace.

#### 4.2.1 Family

Tedman (2009) the family is a state apparatus then it is, indeed, partly superstructural in its role in reproducing the correct subjective upbringing for the human subject. Ideology is formed and interpellated through the family. The house is the biggest place where an ideology can be interpellated. In this novel the father is the main actor in instilling an ideology in his child. Ideology is interpellated through verbal which is continuously obtained by the character so that the character believes that she is indeed like that. Poven in the text below:

“Poor Eileen,” he said sarcastically when I walked through the door. He was very contemptuous of me, found me pathetic and unattractive and had no qualms about saying so. My father’s demands that I do his bidding like a maid, a servant, were constant. But I was not the kind of girl to say no to anyone. “All right,” I said. My father grunted and puffed on the short butt of his cigar.”

page.7

In the quotation above through the setting can reveal that the house is the place where the most influential ideological cultivation takes place. It can be seen clearly with the word "poor eileen" it is an ideology that is indirectly implanted by her father into the character, and when the character believes that she is "poor" poor and helpless therein an ideology is already interrelated through the home or family carried out by men to women. And the quote above also proves that the duty of women is to comply with every demand, to be caregivers and servant. I was not the kind of girl to say no to anyone this sentence also proves the character has been interpellated by ideology that women must always be obedient and cannot argue. Thus, not infrequently many of the women victims of bullying are hidden over time feeling that he really deserves to be treated as such. In this case being hurt, humiliated, or even sexually exploited. The explanation can be supported with Jeffreys (2005) misogyny is manifested through religious and cultural beliefs which represent women as dangerous, defiled, or polluting; hostile folklore and jokes; the sexualisation and objectification of women.

Other excerpt that prove the statement above about ideology is formed and interpellated through the family and and that make the character interpellated by that ideology can be seen in the excerpt below:



His voice was eerily measured, grave. "I can hardly look at you, I'm so ashamed. Oliver Twist would be grateful for this home, this nice house. But you, Eileen, you seem to think you can just come and go as you please." His voice cracked. "You aren't going anywhere dressed like that. Now really, Eileen. He sat on his hands, bowed his head. "Trash, Eileen, just trash," he whined.

Page. 160

The quotation above proves that the dominance of men over women is in this novel. Male dominant society which narrowed their vision and made them a supporter of patriarchal society. Men should always command and women should follow as they were inferior being created. You aren't going anywhere dressed like that this sentence proves the dominance of men over women. Men take control of women's lives. Trash, Eileen, just trash, "he whined is also included verbal violence, when the utterance is pronounced many times it will be embedded in the character's mind as a useless and inferior woman. This explanation can be associated with Althusser (1972) emphasizes the ubiquity of ideology and interpellation by noting how subjects are consistently constituted by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as the family, educational institutions, and media such as literature, radio and television. In sum, the most influential places to instill an ideology are home and family. The family has the power to develop an ideology through words and deeds. The words that are said repeatedly will be embedded in the mind and form an action.

#### 4.2.2 Workplace

Ideology implantation also takes place through the workplace. Character has been interpellated that there is a standard of this form of beauty. It is related to Althusser (1918-1990) explains the way in which ideas get into our heads and have an effect on our lives, so much so that cultural ideas have such a hold on us that we believe they are our own. She believes that she does not rise these standards so she does not get the attention of men in this novel. This proves that women in society are constructed. This is prove in quotation below:

Still, I could dream. I spent many hours watching his biceps flick and pump as he turned each page of his comic book. When I imagine him now, I think of the way he'd swerve a toothpick around in his mouth. It was beautiful. It was

poetry. I asked him once, nervous and ridiculous, whether he felt cold wearing just short sleeves in winter. He shrugged. I was not his type, and I knew so, and that pained me though I never would have admitted it. His type was pretty, long-legged pouty probably blond, I suspected.

Page. 15

In the quotation above proves that women also support the ideology of the patriarchy by believing in the standards of beauty do exist with word “ i suspected’ . Some of the women who did not fulfill their existence were considered absent. His type was pretty, long-legged pouty probably blond the existence of a woman can only be seen from the beauty she has, not from the work or abilities they have. Thus, when the character believes that the existence of women must meet existing standards, then an ideology interpellation has taken place. Since patriarchy take a dominant place in social life, they form standards that must be met by women, even beauty standards to identify if they are women. Beauvoir in Butler (1990) the female body is marked within masculinist discourse, whereby the masculine body, in its conflation with the universal, remains unmarked.

The difference faced by the character does not only come from the men in the workplace, but from the women themselves who do it to other women. Menurut Srivastava (2017), clarify that misogyny at its front had male supporters, but over years, few females also supported the ideology. This is supported in the quotation below:

Of course nobody in the prison office had any interest in me and my woes, or my breasts. When my mother died and I’d gone to work at Moorehead, Mrs. Stephens and Mrs. Murray had kept their distance. No condolences, no kind or even pitying looks. They were the least maternal women I’ve ever met, and so they were very well suited for the positions they held at the prison. They weren’t severe or strict as you’d imagine. They were lazy, uncultured, total slobs. It gave me some satisfaction to imagine that. Perhaps it made me feel dignified in comparison.

Page.22

In the above quotation makes it clear that the separation faced by the main characters of women is usually done by men against women, but this is done by women against other women. Characters feel shunned, set aside, and distinguished. Also seen between women there is no mutual encouragement to one another, even vice versa. This explanation is related to Ussher (2011) who said that misogyny also serves to maintain women's position as the 'second sex', which benefits men financially, politically, and socially. The character is also placed on "second sex" but this is done by other women against him. Usually men who place women as second sex, in this case it turns out women also do it. In concluded, the discriminating behavior of women is not only done by men. But other women also do it by not mutually supporting and alienating one another.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The issue of the interpellation of misogyny is revealed in nove Eileen (2015) written by Otessa Moshfegh. This analysis is analyzed by using the feminist literary theory because this study discuss about how society see women and women see themselves. This analysis also deals with the concept of misogyny by Jeffrey and interpellation by Althusser. Interpellation of misogyny in this study refers to how women hatred themselves and still influenced by ideology patriarchy and females also supported the ideology.

The most influential forms of misogyny that make a women into a misogyny are self-judgment, self-objectification, and has a negative attitude towards other women. It happen because they do not has role model as a women who shows their a value of being a women. They only saw and heard people around them treat them so badly that it was implanted in their mind and make it as a daily habit. Womens who became misogyny because they said bad things about herself, considered herself worthless, and did the same thing to other women, so that she became a misogyny offender. Misogyny usually are done by men, but women also do the same.

It follows that, family and workplace are the place or the background how this idology can be interpellated and women can be misogynistic. Family, the fundamental unit of a patriarchal society, perpetuates violence against women and becomes the most effective tool to perpetuate the subordination of women and that is also carried by people at work. The practice of the idology is based on feelings, or rather, if we feel something we generally act out those feelings whatever we may think.

Interpellation of miosgyny is planting ideology can be done through the house and the people around. An ideology that is indirectly instilled is hatred of women. This ideology affects women who make them have a misogynistic attitude. This is certainly dangerous because it can defend the patriarchs and also

develop the ideology and women will increasingly become number two and always have a lower position than men.

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