

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Literature is a social institution using language as a medium and social creature. However, that literature represents life as a whole. How to measure social reality, even in the natural and the inner world, the subjective world of the individual has become the object of imitation of literature. (Warren and Wellek, 1948: 94). Then, real life is a form of literary work that can be found in people's lives. The writer cannot be separated from the flow of society in the process of doing literary works. And then, it will make a new life with language and its perspective on phenomena into academic work. In imaginative creation, the writer used beautiful language as a form of creativity. Therefore, according to Greenlaw's theory and the practice of many scholars, the study of literature thus becomes not have closely related to the history of civilization but synonymous with it. The main source of much of it is history.

According to Nancy Chodorow, women's mothering must begin at a different level, especially in this contemporary era where every need is different. Women have a greater capacity and opportunity to get satisfaction from a strong and upright internal shape. The combination of feminine-masculine is fluid, far from the rigidity practised; it results from a mother's socialization at the beginning of the children's psyche, which is then forced. In addition, its soul is reproduced and replicated in

the sociology of adult sexuality. For Chodorow, human nature is formed based on affection or social affirmations at a young age. The interaction formed is the active communication of a baby with the mother. And it then shows soul form in them through the relationship between the child and the mother. Their identity is a self-in relation. The relationship that exists will bring the child to form their character. It happens unconsciously in the form of culture. When you have a daughter, usually the mother tends to teach things according to her reflection—a mother trying to teach her daughter various things. For example, women will be trapped in a system of oppression in domestic tasks.

Social construction theory is an assumption that explains people constructing (creating, discovering) their understanding of the world—the meanings created after encounters with other people or with products made. Social construction is formed collectively and cannot be clear individually because it requires coordination. This theory explains that everything that develops is a social process. There are three main social construction points: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Humans need to adapt to the sociocultural world, interact to create harmony, identify themselves, and enter into a group.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, discrimination is a situation where there is no equality or fair treatment in sharing of wealth and opportunities between various groups in society. Therefore, gender discrimination is society's unfair treatment of women. Another perception about Gender discrimination, according to Borgen Magazine

(2004), explained that the discrimination of women who are placed in Seattle, Washington that is McCunn stated, “Women are faced with systematic denial of rights, namely legal discrimination makes them lower than men. “Pay attention to our surroundings, how the daily lives of men and women or the films they watch will be considered a reflection of society. There appears to be a large difference between them regarding gender roles. In part, feminists consider it real discrimination. By reading this novel, readers can learn that they are basically women. It has its own abilities like a man. Furthermore, it should have had the same rights and too equal position with men in society. Women also have to be highly educated like men. Women must be allowed to give their role in society. Give aspirations in politics like men. Develop their own dreams, and they can make them happen.

According to Lisa Tuttle, the goal of feminist criticism is to develop and uncover the tradition of women’s writing, then analyze women writers. Their writings from a women’s perspective rediscover old texts and see the symbolism of women’s writing so as not to be lost or ignored by a male perspective. Reject sexism in literature and raise awareness of the language and style of sexual politics.” (Lisa Tuttle: 1986, 184). Furthermore, the patriarchal ideology “destroys women against the awareness of the potential power they have from the needs of society to reproduce itself.” (Eisenstein, 1981: 14)

The novel *Beauty is a Wound* by Eka Kurniawan takes the theme of an inferior class. The woman’s name is Dewi Ayu. She was

beautiful and forced to become a prostitute. There was a lot of resistance here, historical facts wrapped in a love story. This novel tells a pretty tense story of when a massive massacre took place at Dewi Ayu's place. It is told that Dewi Ayu experienced gender injustice; she had to get married at the age of twelve, had to leave her childhood early, and could not be like other children who are happy and play at their age. The injustice felt by the characters in this novel is like when they are in prison sick but not given medicines. Therefore, they are powerless to give their bodies as payment for the medicine given to them.

The main character, Dewi Ayu, depicts the gender issue in this novel. These articles have inferiority, such as *Canting by Arswendo Atmowiloto*, *Saman by Ayu Utami*, *Nyai Dasimah by Rahmat Ali*, *Namaku Tewerawut by Ani Sekarningsih*, and many other novels, one of which is Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*. In this figure who experiences inferiority is the main character, Dewi Ayu, and her children. That is quite important to be revealed in a study; the choice of this novel is based on several reasons. First, this novel fits into feminist literary criticism. Secondly, this novel is related to the history of Indonesian independence in the Halimunda area. Although this novel is fictional, a historical value occurred in the area. The third, this novel discusses gender injustice experienced by the main character, Dewi Ayu, and other women in this novel. Fourth, this novel also tells how inferiority occurs in the main character; it is explained that the position

of women is vulnerable to violence and sexual harassment. The life of women who depend on men. Recently, there was a previous study that analyzed this novel. The First one is a journal article by Okky Madasari entitled *The Discrimination against Women Reflected in Novels Entrok, Maryam, And Pasung Jiwa* (2019). This research focuses on showing the existence of discrimination against women in the economic and social fields. It is written in the utterances of the three novels by Okky Madasari. In this article, it is explained that women play a role in keeping the house and taking care of their children, while men have the role of making a living and protecting their families.

On the other hand, an article by Paula A. Rochon entitled *the impact of gender discrimination on a Woman's Mental Health* (2020). It focused on the many inequalities that cause women to be mistreated based on sex. This more subtle form of gender discrimination is deeply embedded in our societal systems. It isn't easy to restore and requires international cooperation from health and social advocates. The roles of government and policymakers of all genders also play a part.

The following study analyzed by Paula England, entitled *Progress toward gender equality in the United States, has slowed or stalled* (2020). This research focused on the conclusion that several scientists have reached recently that *Progress toward gender inequality has slowed in recent decades. Some indicators have stopped completely.* The researcher concludes by suggesting what may be needed for further

reductions in gender inequality.

As explained by Ali Ahmed, Granberg M, Khanna S, entitled Gender discrimination in hiring: An experimental reexamination of the Swedish case (2021) using a correspondence study design, this journal focused on estimated gender discrimination rates in Sweden across alloccupations. Their analysis of employer responses to fictitious job applications across 15 jobs revealed that the overall positive employer response rate was higher for women than for men, with nearly 5 percentage points present.

The differences between the research above to this writer are the object and the theory supports; those researchers discuss gender discrimination in different novels or articles. This study focused on women characters in Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*, on how the women in this novel try to get out of their pain and struggle with its strengths, which will find justified in the novel. The main character, Dewi Ayu, becomes a prostitute with four children whose father is unknown. With the endless turmoil of her life, not making her surrender to the situation. Instead, she tried to improve her life through her daughters with gender injustice at that time.

There are some reasons why the writer chose this novel to be studied; *Beauty is a Wound* novel is suitable for studying feminist literary criticism. Afterward, *Beauty is a Wound* novel tells about the inferiority of women to men. Not only the main character experienced

this, but also the other woman in the story. This study also determines the mothering through Dewi Ayu in Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*. And then explain about social beauty construction of society. The last, Dewi Ayu, describes the position of woman who are vulnerable to violence, as well as women who always depend on men. Taking these things into account, in this study, the writers took a title: *Women Beauty Construction in Novel "Beauty is a Wound"*.

### **1.2 Research Question**

1. How does Eka Kurniawan describe the mothering in the character of Dewi Ayu?
2. How is beauty constructed in a novel?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to analyze:

1. To analyze mothering in the character of Dewi Ayu in a novel.
2. To find out beauty construction in Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*.

### **1.4 Scope of the study**

This analysis focused on the women's beauty construction, the mothering through Dewi Ayu's character, and the social beauty construction of society through feminist literary approaches. The analysis of this study used some theories, namely the theory of gender, Peter L. Berger's theory, Simone De Beauvoir's theory, and Nancy Chodorow's theory. That is used as a spectacle to see the dynamics of women as agents in a novel. This novel focused on the

theme of discrimination and how women were humiliated and lost justice from the patriarchal system still inherent at that time.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The writer hopes this study is expected to increase knowledge about analytical literature studies by utilizing feminist literary criticism theory. This study is also expected to contribute to applying feminist literary criticism to reveal women's beauty construction in Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound* novel. Furthermore, this study adds knowledge and insight for readers about feminist literary criticism, social construction, the beauty of society, mothering, and the inferior class. It increases readers' appreciation of literary works. It is also expected that the study is to be a reference for further research.

