

## An Analysis of *Écriture Féminine* in *The Selection Series: The One* (2014) Novel

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate *écriture féminine* features in *The Selection Series: The One* novel written by Kiera Cass (2014). Female writers of dystopian literary works have increased in the past current years. The fact that the story of *The Selection Series* by Kiera Cass is narrated from a female perspective in a patriarchal country has drawn a connection to feminist study. This research used descriptive qualitative method and textual analysis that employs the theory of *Écriture féminine* by Helene Cixous (1976) and patriarchy by Gerda Lerner (1986). It is found that two primary features of *écriture féminine*, namely patriarchy and bisexual writing, are depicted in the novel as being interrelated. Patriarchy in the novel is mostly found in public sphere; therefore, a large amount of evidence of bisexual writing is found as responses to the patriarchal system. Three main forms of bisexual writing are found in the novel: negotiation, empowerment, and plurality. It seems that Kiera Cass successfully adapts *écriture féminine* in her novel. However, the end of the story of *The One* (2014) also implies that the deconstruction of patriarchy occurs when there are acceptance and willingness of plurality, not only from women but also from men.

**Keywords:** *bisexual writing, dystopia, écriture féminine, patriarchy.*

## INTRODUCTION

Moylan in his book, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* (2000) briefly explains that dystopia's foremost truth lies in its ability to reflect upon the causes of social and ecological evil as systemic. The ability to register the impact of an unseen and unexamined social system on everyday lives of everyday people is crucial to dystopia's vision. Therefore, it invites the creation of alternative worlds in which the historical space-time of the author can be represented in a way that foregrounds the articulation of its economic, political, and cultural dimensions. Moylan divides dystopia into two categories: classic dystopia and critical dystopia. Both categories have similar dystopian features mostly on totalitarian climate, sexuality and woman, culture and language, and history and memory.

Female writers for dystopian literary works have increased in the past current years. According to Moylan (2000), the growing of dystopian narrative is largely the product of terrors from the twentieth century: repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, debt,

and a hundred years of exploitation. These changing situations in the world motivate writers to create heterogeneous detailed works of fiction from time to time. The description of the dystopian world from Moylan corresponds with Kiera Cass' dystopian world of *The Selection Series*. The caste system, hundred years of exploitation from Illéa predecessor, state violence by the current sovereign leader, and wars made most population of Illéa oppressed. In line with this, Ima (2016) states in her study that writers are affected by the happenings or incident of their contemporary time. This could also be a consideration to one of the reasons why writers, including female writers, are inclined towards writing dystopian genre from time to time.

As one of the current dystopian literary works, *The Selection Series* by Kiera Cass has gained worldwide fame and been translated into several different languages. *The Selection* (2012) is the first published novel of a series, which was later followed by *The Elite* (2013), and *The One* (2014). These

three novels follow the journey of America Singer as the main character for the first three novels. America Singer is a young hot-headed girl with red hair who lives in a five-caste family in a patriarchal country named Illéa. Narrated also by the female lead character who was selected to join The Selection, a competition that is supposed to help the crown prince named Maxon to find his partner for life as well for the future Queen of Illéa, the story turns out to depict bigger matters than just America Singer's complicated love-life. The fact that the story is narrated from a female perspective in a patriarchal country has drawn a connection to feminist study.

Apart from its popularity, *The Selection Series* is still considered to be a less discussed or analyzed text. A study related to this series was done by Winarni (2014) with a focus on the gender and language differences use in expressing gratitude between men and women characters in the first novel of Selection Series. No other studies have been done in regard to this series, leaving some opportunities for researchers to further investigate

the series with various concentrations. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the connection between the dystopian world of *The Selection Series* with feminist studies, especially *écriture féminine*, has not been used frequently in literary work related to dystopian genre makes this series become a valuable research object.

According to Cixous (1976), women and writing are also connected to patriarchal system. Her famous notion of *Écriture féminine* or also known as feminine writing was first mentioned back in 1976. She believes that a woman can give birth to an *écriture féminine* from her bodily experience and create her own identities. It can also be called as a new form of insurgent which aims not only to liberate female body but also deconstruct patriarchal system. She further argues that a woman without a body is dumb, blind, impossible to be a good fighter, and reduced to being a servant or shadow of a militant male. Therefore, a woman must write herself by her own movement to surpass the patriarchal system.

A recent study about *écriture féminine* was done by Joodaki and

Elyasi (2015), which asserts that women writers who write about women have an important part in bringing women to consciousness and deconstructing phallogentrism. Their female pen and feminine discourse reflect the experiences of women in male-centered contexts and as reformers to redefine female identity. For over decades, the notion of *écriture féminine* has been used in various fields of studies to bring new perspectives of theory. Lipton's study in 2015 gives an example of Cixous' theory that impact leadership study. Her study describes how the bisexual mode of writing with the help of myth and metaphor disrupts the gendered dualism in Australian university. Another research was conducted by Novaczek (2015) who tries to adapt *écriture féminine* with another field of research; film studies, which later found that *écriture féminine* can also be used as a new vernacular for avant-garde films. One of the highlighted points from her study is the production of self-reflexivity from *écriture féminine*.

Aside from written by female author and set into a patriarchal

system, *The Selection Series* need to be examined further to be called as an *écriture féminine*. Hence, this paper will focus on analyzing the features of *écriture féminine* that are conveyed in the novels. Before further exploration and discussion, a general definition of *écriture féminine* and a glance of dystopian world will be presented along with reviews of recent research related to *écriture féminine* and its features. With this present study, it is expected that knowledge related to *écriture féminine* and dystopian literary works will be expanded.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Écriture Féminine***

*Écriture féminine* was first coined by Helene Cixous in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976). She proposed the idea of woman's need for writing which relies on understanding her own body that has been misused by phallogentric discourse. She wrote her legendary essay as a response to her formative experiences as an immigrant Jewess in colonial Algeria, where she was excluded from both the ruling French and colonized Arab populations (Kirkley, 2013). The

premise of whole Cixous' essay is; woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing – by her own movement. This lead to the idea that woman's writing achieved by their own bodily experiences represent a source of desire and urge for creativity.

In order to understand *écriture féminine*, Jones (1981) relates Cixous with other French feminists: Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, who share a common opponent and commonly found analysis; masculine thinking and Western Culture as fundamentally oppressive as phallogocentric. Cixous convinced that women's unconscious is totally different from men, and that it is their psychosexual specificity that will empower women to overthrow masculine ideologies and create new female discourses. In other words, women must be able to break up the old traditional rules for her; she must trace her own body with a feminine language.

By using Medusa, one of the Greek mythical figures, Cixous successfully reveals the metaphors of women; beauty, intelligence, and

oppression at the same time. She hints women's jealousy and hatred toward other women under the influence of the masculine viewpoint. This is in line with Cixous' declaration that men have committed the greatest crime against women insidiously, violently, they have led women to hate each other, to be their own enemies. Regarded as one of the foundational texts of *écriture féminine*, *The Laugh of the Medusa* also being the most sustained exploration of myth's inspirational potential for feminism (Zajko, 2006).

*Écriture féminine* is more than about claiming equal rights for women with regard to their male counterpart. Cixous's intention is to approach writing in relation to sexual differences and gender to deconstruct the patriarchal system that hierarchized woman into inferior positions through impregnable language, calling for new modes of writing that imprint the feminine equal to the masculine. Through an *écriture féminine*, woman body “will produce far more radical effects of political and social changes than some might like to think”. Cixous' theory of

*écriture féminine* foregrounds the relation about language and power based on writings, especially written by female writers. Thus, Cixous' notion of *écriture féminine* is relevant as the main analytical framework for this study.

### ***Écriture féminine* Features**

#### **Patriarchal System**

According to Hooks (2004), patriarchy is a political-social system that insists males are inherently dominating and superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females. It is characterized by male domination and power which endowed them with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain the dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. Regarded as a 'natural' way to organize life and shapes the values in particular culture, Hooks (2004) believes that the role of women in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture is fundamental to be highlighted, thus, the patriarchy system will be recognized as a system where women and men support

equally. Lerner (1986) adds that the system of patriarchy can function only with the cooperation of women. This cooperation is secured by a variety of means: gender indoctrination; educational deprivation; the denial to women knowledge of their history; the dividing of women, one from the other by defining "respectability" and "deviance" according to women's sexual activities; restraints and outright coercion; discrimination in access to economic resources and political power; and by awarding class privileges to conforming women.

Patriarchal system has its significance for questioning dominant discourse. For example, Joodaki and Elyasi (2015) point out that it is important to question the rightfulness of the dominant assumptions, along with reshape the false assumptions and ideas of the dominant discourse. With Lacan's theory of subject formation and Cixous' concept of *écriture féminine*, both researchers attempt to redefine the concept of womanhood and construct feminine identity in Parsipur's *Touba and the*

*Meaning of Night* (1989). The results of this study show that the power of phallogocentric discourse in Parsipur's book is insignificant to the construction of female characters as subjects. On the other hand, Cixous's concept of writing from the body; from experience is proven to be true once it brought consciousness, self-perception, and struggle.

### **Bisexual Writing**

The term bisexuality is used in *écriture féminine* rather than androgyny or transsexuality because of the existence of the two sexes in the mind of the writer that is emphasized. Bisexuality establishes a neutral ground; equality, open-ended, fluid, circular, and free from binary opposition. However, this does not mean that binary opposition is a hierarchical concept; one dominating the other. Each binary opposition has the potential to unite in a whole. It is the norms of the patriarchal system that keep binaries apart in order to sustain the prevailing power relations.

Although the emphasis is on the female body, men can also employ *écriture féminine*. According to

Conley (as stated in Peksen, 2008), equality within the body means a whole in which neither is repressed; not two halves of a whole. Writing only about femininity and only through the female body would be as sexist as the phallogocentric language. Thus, the writer of *écriture féminine* needs to free him/herself from the constraints of patriarchy, leaving aside the taboos and social norms, and only focuses on his/her own nature. According to Peksen (2008), in such texts, sex will not matter because any sexual organ is not the one doing the talking. Cixous' essay of "Tancredi Continuous" shows that plurality turns the writing into a harmonious chorus rather than a single authorial voice.

The body's insistence that in order for a man to love a woman as Tancredi loves Clorinda or Amenaide, he has to be a woman – I mean Tancredi...Tancredi loves Clorinda. Tancredi does not know who in Clorinda is loved by who in him? A moment ago it was a man, a second ago a woman, but was it really that? (1988, p. 39).

There is no phallic mother and no penis involved; both sexes are already present in both persons. Sexual identities are lost and what really

matters is just love. Therefore, no struggle or domination appears in the essay; there are only wholes. It indicates that plurality takes place of 'oneness' and everything that is repressed comes out to the surface, thus, the definition of 'normal' is deconstructed.

### **A Review of Related Literature**

Hanne (1994) justifies Cixous' theory of *écriture féminine* in his book titled *The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change*. He states that the reason why Hélène Cixous develops her arguments is to distinguish what she calls "masculine" and "feminine" forms of power. According to her, masculine power is: "always and only a power over others. It is something that relates back to the government, control, and beyond that, to despotism". These issues, however, are often adapted into fiction novel under utopia or dystopia genre. Both genres are also commonly known as a satire of the reality in the real world.

There have been various other articles and studies connected to *écriture féminine* or women in dystopian literary works. Desmet

(2010) and Notenboom (2013) used Cixous' theory in relation to women's representation as the basis for their research. Each study indicates a similar result; language is a highly powerful medium to enhance the quality of women's representation and control or indoctrinate human beings. Beuleun in 2014 finds different manifestations of female power form in *The Handmaid's Tale* (Atwood, 1985) and *Catching Fire* (Collins, 2009) novels; internalized and externalized forms of language power. Unlike previous analyses, Novaczek' (2015) analyzed avant-garde film as a new vernacular for *écriture féminine*.

Another article from Extremo (2015) emphasizes the effects of post-feminist ethos on the representation of female action heroines in selected popular dystopia narratives. She finds that fiction still promotes the women's true place in society is placed in the domestic sphere and not in the public space. This indicates that the patriarchal societies feel threatened by the advance of women. In line with her, Jane Donawerth (2003:31 as cited in Extremo



2014/2015) states through *Dark Horizons Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* book, “females in dominant positions embody anxieties about possible social change that threatens what the author perceives as a ‘natural order’”. Contemporarily, the increase of female leading characters is an acknowledgment of women’s predominance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research used a textual analysis method because the purpose is to reveal *écriture féminine* features in *The Selection Series* Novels by Kiera Cass. This method suits the research because it aims to obtain findings in rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced, and detailed data.

For many qualitative researchers, especially social researchers, text-based document sources are seen as meaningful and appropriate (Mason, 2002); thus, the research data were taken from the original version of *The Selection Series: The One* (2014) written by Kiera Cass and published by

HarperCollins. The novel consists of 32 chapters and an epilogue with an approximately 157 pages in total. The data were in the forms of monologues, dialogues, other actions, and excerpts from the novels.

The collected data were further analyzed by using textual analysis technique with Helene Cixous’ *écriture féminine* (1976) as the main analytical framework, which involved the following steps: First, identifying any kind of textual evidence which contains or supports feminine writing. It can be in the forms of symbols, descriptions, style of writing, or other possible forms; and then, examining the textual evidence and categorizing it into suitable features of *écriture féminine*.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of *The One* (2014) by Kiera Cass reveals the existence of primary *écriture féminine* features, namely patriarchy and bisexual writing. Each feature is established in various forms throughout the story. Patriarchy in the story is depicted through a variety of means: discrimination in access to economic

resources and political power; gender indoctrination; educational deprivation; the dividing of women, one from the other; restraints and outright coercion; and awarding class privileges to conforming women (Lerner, 1986). On the other hand, the evidence of bisexual writing is mostly portrayed as responses to the patriarchal system, mainly in the forms of negotiation, empowerment, and plurality.

### **Patriarchy**

From the very beginning of the story, the great nation of Illéa has issues with patriarchal domination. Most population is oppressed by the caste system. People in lower castes struggle to pass through hunger, get their needs and blame the monarchy who sentenced them to life with no real hope for bettering them; meanwhile, the higher castes are shackled by their own caste, afraid of losing their position and dignity. There is also an uprising from the rebels, the underground colonies that hate the governing system in Illéa. Therefore, it can be concluded that the government system: caste system and

the current sovereign king, King Clarkson, are the main problem in the dystopian world of this novel. Lerner's (1986) categorizations of patriarchy are used to strengthen and simplify the analysis process.

The first form of patriarchal oppression found in the novel is discrimination in access to economic resources and political power. There are numerous pieces of evidence that support this patriarchal form, for instance, the employment which is based on the caste system. There are eight castes in Illéa, each named after a number. The highest one is called One belongs to the royals, while the lowest one is called Eight where people who are unemployed, uneducated and criminals are mostly placed. The employment in Illéa is regulated by the caste system; someone's field of occupation is determined by the caste regardless of the gender. However, men in this novel have more advantages for occupational position and authority held compared to women.

The advantages of occupational position and authority for men can be seen through Aspen

and America's brother work experience. Before entering The Selection, America was dating Aspen who happened to be in the lower caste than America. Despite getting paid significantly less than America, Aspen had much steadier works than she did. Another favor also came to Aspen when he got drafted into the Palace and became a guard with a Three-level status. America's brother also got a chance to upgrade himself into a higher caste when he became famous for his artworks.

While it is possible to climb castes for men, it is difficult for and does not happen often to women. Under public patriarchy, women are allowed to take roles in public sphere but remain oppressed by the gender inequalities in employment, education, economic conditions and positions of power held in society (Walby, 1990).

"You think you're the only one who's ever felt trapped by your caste? Yes, I'm a model. I can't sing. I can't act. So when my face isn't good enough anymore, they're going to forget all about me. I've got maybe five years left, ten if I'm lucky. I've spent

my whole life in the spotlight. Maybe it's a stupid fear to you, but it's real for me: I don't want to lose it." (p. 44)

The excerpt above indicates another hint of economic and political discrimination that comes from Celeste Newsome. She is one of The Selection candidates who naturally is born into a higher caste in Illéa; she is a Two. Celeste's characterization is in line with Donawerth (2013) who states that female in dominant positions embodies anxieties about possible social change. Her conversation with America on one occasion implies that the caste system is still more advantageous for men.

The second form of patriarchal oppression is the dividing of women, one from the other. It can be seen from the beginning of The Selection application. The Selection itself is considered to be one of the resolutions from the monarchy's perspective to appease rebels' attack and soothe the mood of the country. Regarded as an upcoming opportunity to honor the great nation of Illéa, one woman from each province is drawn at random to meet and possibly be

made the bride for Prince Maxon and the adored princess of Illéa.

However, the application for The Selection requires hefty information related to the candidates' background, such as height, weight, hair, eye, skin color, highest grade level they had completed, and skills. These requirements prove Lerner's (1986) theory of patriarchy that there is a separation of women, one from the other because some of the selected candidates actually are not randomly picked up to enter The Selection. The assumed potential candidates are categorized and chosen according to King Clarkson's preferences. It is strengthened by the fact that the last remaining girls, namely America Singer, Marlee Tames, Celeste Newsome, Kriss Ambers, Natalie Luca, and Elise Whisks, survive because they are thought to be beneficial for the kingdom. These six girls are called Elites; the top six final candidates of The Selection.

The third form of Lerner's patriarchy found in *The One* is educational deprivation during The Selection. The remaining selected candidates are required to learn

particular inner workings of the life and obligations expected from a princess. Etiquette lesson, history lesson, and philanthropy project are obligatory only for The Selection candidates and female royal family members. The scheduled activities and life-lesson are only seen as compulsory from the monarchy point of view. These duties confirm educational deprivation for women, especially for the Selection candidates. It becomes deprivation because there are coercion and threats behind the activities. King Clarkson once admonishes America that anyone who fails to behave according to the law or the norm will be considered as the king's enemy.

The subsequent form of patriarchal oppression is restraints and outright coercion. The example of outright coercion in the patriarchal country of Illéa can be seen through The Conviction, where the Elites must publicly condemn some criminals to jail. This event is an attempt of outright coercion by the king to the Elites and the society. The event is seen rather as symbolic obedience of the Elite to the law of the

country and a message to the king political enemies. The criminals are not merely thieves; they are people who are considered to have gotten into the king's way, rebellious sympathizers, or men who are a little too outspoken about what a tyrant the king is. None of them deserves the years of jail they will receive at The Conviction.

“People need to be led by the bit, with blinders on like horses. If you do not guide their steps, they run astray, straight into what's worst for them. You may not like these little speeches, but they'll do more, save more, than you know.” (p. 100)

Another outburst from King Clarkson in the above excerpt justifies the existence of Hooks' (2004) definition of patriarchy as he sees the needs to control and force his opinion and decision to help and save his people. According to Hooks (2004), male and power domination which endows them with the right to dominate, rule, and maintain the dominance over the weak through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence is definitely a characteristic of patriarchy.

Lastly, Lerner's form of patriarchy found in the novel is awarding class privileges to conforming women. It can be seen in the case of Queen Amberly's talks with one of The Selection candidates. Before The Conviction begins, Queen Amberly gives an ultimatum to America when she refuses to do the royal duty. From the queen's perspective, America is the one who needs to do The Conviction of all the Elites. The queen says that America's actions in previous months--stopping a canning, suggesting the undoing of the castes on national television, and encouraging people to fight when their lives are in serious danger—have given most people the impression that she is wild. The queen further says that America needs to show the ability to be obedient if she ever wants to be with Maxon. The way Queen Amberly dictates America on how she should behave shows an indication of class privileges to conforming women. It also means that patriarchy possibly arises among women themselves; giving some boundaries toward those who are powerful and powerless.

The explanation above shows how problematic the patriarchal system in *Illéa*/. Most of public and personal issues are due to the existence of patriarchy. It is strengthened by the existence of Lerner's (1986) patriarchy forms that are found in the novel. However, the writer, Kiera Cass, has its own technique to resolve the problems in her novel. She tries to overcome the perplexity of patriarchy in the novel with an adaptation of another *écriture féminine* form namely bisexual writing.

### **Bisexual Writing**

Another feature of *écriture féminine*, bisexual writing, must also be taken into account to further analyze the degree of *écriture féminine* in *The One* (2014). Bisexuality in writing establishes a neutral ground, equality, fluidity, circularity, and is free from binary opposition. It indicates 'plurality' takes place in 'oneness,' where everything that is repressed comes out to the surface (Peksen, 2008). The girls' participation during The Selection eventually gives new perspectives and hopes of better

living for the society. It signifies that female characters in *The One* (2014) novel have access to public sphere. This is in contrast with Extremo's (2015) study that finds women's true place in society is the domestic sphere. Bisexual writing in this novel is interrelated to the patriarchal system; thus, it is mostly portrayed as responses in the forms of negotiation, empowerment, and plurality.

The first evidence of bisexual writing is found in the form of negotiation. The girls in the novel do not just accept the values coerced against them by the Oppressor, in this case the Elites. However, they also do not outwardly deny these values. Instead, they negotiate with the Elites and among themselves. Most of the time, the negotiation with is meant for survival because outright rejection will only send the girls to doom. An example of negotiation as a response came from one of Lerner's (1986) patriarchy forms: educational deprivation. Most of the days, the Selection candidates are often challenged to prove their ability to become a princess. During the learning process, each of the Elites is

assigned to present a philanthropy project and propose the planning system. Although the challenge contains an indication of coercion, it also constitutes bisexual writing. An act of negotiation emerges when the girls are forced to do something they barely know about. They have to encounter the obstacles by discussing their ideas, not only with other parties, but also among themselves.

Most of the Elites' idea for the philanthropy project came from their repression and represent a source of desire and creativity. Hence, they had to negotiate with themselves before further developing their ideas. For instance, Elise proposes a pen pal-type program that connects people in Illéa with people in her former country, Kriss wants to revamp the public school systems and use her home province's schools as the target object, and America intends to eliminate the caste system. It can be concluded that Elise, Kriss, and America share one similar thing in their ideas: history. They relate and base the ideas on their old life and develop the ideas with some adjustment to the current condition.

This is in accordance with Cixous' (1976) idea of women's writing that represents a source of desire and urges for creativity.

Another example of bisexual writing in the form of negotiation can be seen through the case of *The Conviction*. In this event, The Elites are forced to perform royal duty; each of The Elites is assigned to condemn one criminal into jail. Failure in convicting the criminals will result in the elimination of The Selection candidates. Half of the girls know that the penalties for the criminals are beyond their crime. However, one of the girls, America, decides to keep following the order of *The Conviction* and rethink the solution for the criminal. Despite the fact that she knew her position; only a commoner and an Elite who has no right to make or change the penalty, she gives all of her jewelry that she wears to Adam, the criminal. She hopes her jewelry can be used as payment or negotiation for Adam's penalty. Her consideration and actions also emphasize the existence of bisexual writing because the characterization of America depicts an effort of

constraining the patriarchy; leaving aside taboos, social norms, and only focuses on her own nature (Peksen, 2008).

The second evidence of bisexual writing in the novel is found in the form of America's empowerment. On one occasion, America's speech in Illéa Capital Report empowers not only men or women, but also lots of people of different ages and castes. It starts when King Clarkson interrupts the Elites' regular interview on Illéa Capital Report. He announces urgent and recent news of the rebels' attack. Over the years, the rebels' attack towards the palace has become increasingly aggressive. The remaining young ladies of the Selection represent a wide range of castes. It has given a strange incentive to the rebels, therefore, the rebels are beginning to directly attack Illéa's people by caste. Each of the Selection candidates further asked to propose a suggestion or solution.

"Fight," I said to no one in particular. Then remembering where I was, I turned to the camera. I felt blood and

adrenaline pulsing through me, like I was ready to attack the rebels myself. I'd had enough. They'd kept us all in terror, victimized our families. If one of those Southern rebels was in front of me right now, I wouldn't run. I was so angry, all I could hear was my heart beating in my ears. (p. 33)

America's suggestion to withstand the rebels came from the combination of the shocking news and her memories of the rebels' terror throughout the years. The fact that the writer, Kiera Cass, put America's thoughts based on her experience also emphasize *écriture féminine* notion; woman's writing is achieved by her own bodily experiences (Cixous, 1976). The speech also in accordance with Peksen's (2008) definition of bisexuality on writing; it establishes a neutral ground, equality, and free from binary opposition. America speaks to one in particular but to the whole country. She speaks not as the Elites or a Five-caste member but as a whole; as a 'she'.

Not long after her speech on Illéa Capital Report, America has to deal with the crying Celeste. In



previous paragraphs, Celeste's agitation in her conversation with America about her status as a Two triggers the existence of bisexual writing. America's reaction helps Celeste to realize and reflect on her life. On the other hand, America response can be considered to be empowerment for herself and Celeste. This is in line with Peksen (2008) who identifies that bisexual writing happens when everything that is repressed comes out to the surface. Women must be able to break up the old traditional rules and trace her body with a feminine language (Cixous, 1976). America makes Celeste realize that all she needs to live her life is, at least, her own self. She does not need Maxon's or other people's power to achieve her career pathways; she just has to realize that she has already had the talent, ability, and drive to control her life. America's little speech affects Celeste, for she finally lets her burden go and admits her desire, "I know," she said. "It's not that I'm completely unaware of how lucky I am. It's just hard to accept the possibility of ... I don't know, being less." (p. 45)

The third form of bisexual writing is found in the idea of plurality. Peksen (2008) adds there is a possibility in text showing plurality to turn into a harmonious chorus rather than a single authorial voice. Sexual identities are lost, both sexes are already present in both persons and what really matters is just love. *The One* (2014) by Kiera Cass also gives an example of this harmonious chorus at the end of its story.

"America," Maxon said sweetly.  
"I know you see a king here, but let me be clear; this isn't a command. This is a request, a plea. I beg you; make me the happiest man alive. Please do me the honor of becoming my wife."  
(p. 153)

After winning the massive raids, shoots, and close-to-death experience from the Southern rebels, Prince Maxon confesses his planning of not only his future for Illéa but also for his love life. He intends to dissolve the caste system in the country just like America's dream. He admits that if he had not known America, the caste system eradication project would never have crossed his mind. Right after that, Prince Maxon officially

asking America to marry him. His confession and proposal attest to Peksen's (2008) possibility of plurality as a whole within a text; no struggle or domination over sexes appears. There are only wholes. There is no phallic mother and no penis involved; there is only love.

### CONCLUSION

*The One* (2014) by Kiera Cass is an *écriture féminine* novel that contains two primary features of *écriture féminine* namely patriarchy and bisexual writing. Most of the characters are characterized in particular descriptions in order to challenge the patriarchy. However, patriarchy in the story is mostly depicted in public sphere is different from Extrems (2015) findings on Collin's *Hunger Games* trilogy and Cameron's *Dark Angel*. She finds that women's true place in society is in domestic sphere. Interrelated to patriarchal domination, bisexual writing in Kiera Cass' novel is mostly portrayed as responses to the patriarchy. There are three main forms of bisexual writing found in the novel: negotiation, empowerment,

and plurality. It seems that Kiera Cass successfully adapts *écriture féminine* in her novel. However, the end of the story of *The One* (2014) also implies that the deconstruction of patriarchy occurs when there are acceptance and willingness of plurality not only from women but also from men. Future studies for more in-depth understanding of *écriture féminine* features are needed. Other recent literary works and theory development could be used to find and observe other forms of *écriture féminine* features.

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