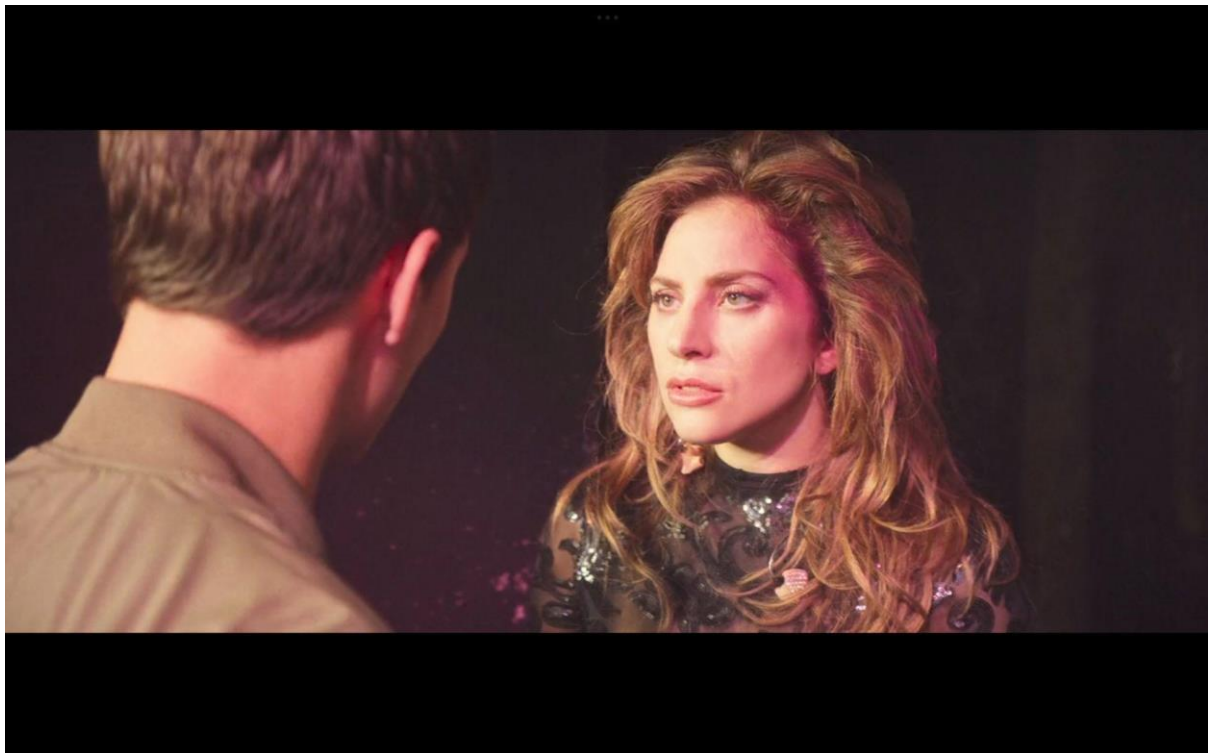


FINDINGS

According to Bearman and Arnhem (2014), there are six behaviors that indicate someone embodies internalized sexism. In this film, there are at least three prominent behaviors that indicate Ally has embodied internalized sexism, namely objectification, invalidation, and derogation.

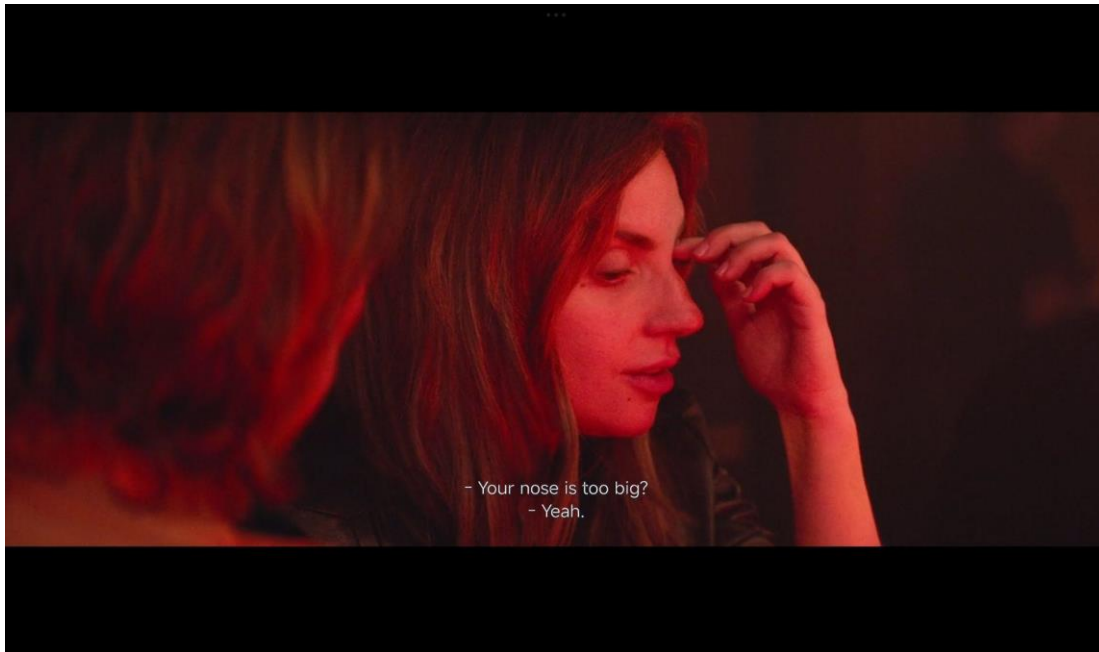
1. Objectification

The first behavior is objectification. Objectification refers to how women perceive themselves as objects (Bearman & Arnhem, 2014). Objectification theory can be defined as the idea that many women are sexually objectified and treated as objects to be valued for their use by others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In this film, Ally often experiences oppression as the men in the music industry objectify her. As a result, she often feels worthless, and her talents are not recognized. Bearman and Arnhem (2014) state that there are three ways that women are being objectified: validating objectification, derogating objectification, and social invisibility.



Scene 1: Ally disagrees with Rez about the idea of changing her appearance. (Cooper, 2018, 1:09:27)

In scene 1, Ally receives derogating objectification when her new manager, Rez Gravnor, criticizes her appearance, specifically her hair. Bearman and Arnheim (2014) state that derogating objectification is when women are criticized, insulted, or punished for their appearance. When Ally's image changes drastically once she begins her pop music career under her new management, she wears more revealing clothes and begins incorporating choreography into her performances. These changes are part of her new, marketable image, not her artistic choices. Rez confronts Ally after performing in a particular scene because she does not want to perform with the dancers. Then, Rez continues to tell Ally what to do, and she needs to change her hair to blonde. In this scene, Ally was annoyed and disagreed with him, and she looked angry. Ally replied to Rez, "*What's wrong with my hair?*" then said, "*I don't want to be fucking blonde. I am who I am*". She firmly stated her decision not to change her appearance based on other people's opinions. This scene applies medium shots to convey the characters raw emotions and body language more clearly (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). The medium close-up allows viewers to see Ally's facial expression in detail; she looks angry, disappointed, and defiant. She is clearly upset by Rez's suggestion that she must change her appearance to make it more marketable. Also, the use of this shot technique helps the audience identify with Ally's frustration. It shows that she is beginning to assert herself, rejecting the pressure to conform to industry beauty standards. However, Ally's reaction that focuses only on her appearance (the color of her hair), may reveal her true feeling. She does not mention her singing ability at all and this implies that she internalizes the belief that her appearance matters more than her talent for succeeding. Even if a woman has extremely negative beliefs about her own body, in the absence of self-objectification, she may still have remarkably high self-esteem, because self-image and body image do not seem to be the same (Bearman & Arnheim, 2014). Ally's self-objectification already happened at the beginning of film and showed another form of derogatory objectification.



Scene 2: Ally talks about her nose (Cooper, 2018, 17:33)

In scene 2, earlier in the film, after watching Ally's performance in a cop bar, Ally and Jackson share stories. Ally receives praise from Jackson for her extraordinary performance. Initially, she admits to Jackson that she doesn't sing her own songs. This is because comments about her nose make her feel insecure and embarrassed. Ally begins to internalized objectification as a result of a long process of objectification in the social environment where she and other women are objectified (Bearman & Arnheim, 2014). As Ally said that "*Almost everyone I meet in the music industry tells me my nose is too big, and I won't make it*", this belief ingrained in her that she must be beautiful to be a successful artist, which highlights that she internalized societal beauty standards. Her body language and tone of voice while talking show that she is used to get rejections and judgments, especially from professionals in the industry (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). Despite being recognized for her raw musical skill, she cannot separate her self-worth from her physical appeal. Her attention on her nose rather than her voice demonstrates that she defines herself through the lens of physical objectification, believing that her worth is determined by her looks rather than what she creates. This is what could be called derogating objectification, as evidenced by the comments about her body parts. Then, Ally was skeptical when Jackson complimented her nose and attempted to show her that he genuinely thinks she is attractive. She refers to him as "*You're full of shit*" which displaying a natural defensiveness resulting from repeated past judgments and low self-esteem.

JACKSON
You're very lucky.

ALLY
Not really.
My nose hasn't made me lucky.
I could've had a hit song if it wasn't for my nose.

JACKSON
That's bullshit.

ALLY
No, it's not.
You go into these rooms, full of men, and they just stare at you—
listening to your record, saying: "Oh, you sound great... but you don't look so great." (Cooper,
2018, 17:54)

This part of the dialogue shows how derogating objectification affects Ally. Instead of thinking her success should come from her talent or creativity, she blames her nose for holding her back. This reflects internalized sexism where women adopt and repeat unrealistic and harmful beauty standards (Bearman & Amrhein, 2014). Although Ally is a skilled singer and songwriter, she believes her appearance is the reason for her career struggles. This shows how unrealistic and strict beauty expectations can hurt women's confidence and overshadow their abilities, especially in male-dominated industries like music and film.

Moreover, scene 2 uses close-up shots to capture Ally's emotions. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008), filmmakers use this close-up technique to emphasize facial expressions, movement details, and important objects. The low-key lighting technique creates a dramatic and intimate interaction between them (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008), with strong contrasts and deep shadows that evoke a dramatic atmosphere. This is the evidence that the relationship between Ally and Jackson is starting to escalate. The relationship is not merely between mentor and disciple, but a lover who falls in love with each other. This relationship will continue until Jackson abuses his power to control and diminish Ally. Ally continues to feel insecure about her appearance, specifically her nose, which appears in the next scene where Ally and Jackson converse while staring at Ally's Billboard.



Scene 3: Ally and Jackson are staring at “Ally Billboard” and talking about Ally’s nose. (Cooper, 2018, 1:19:44)

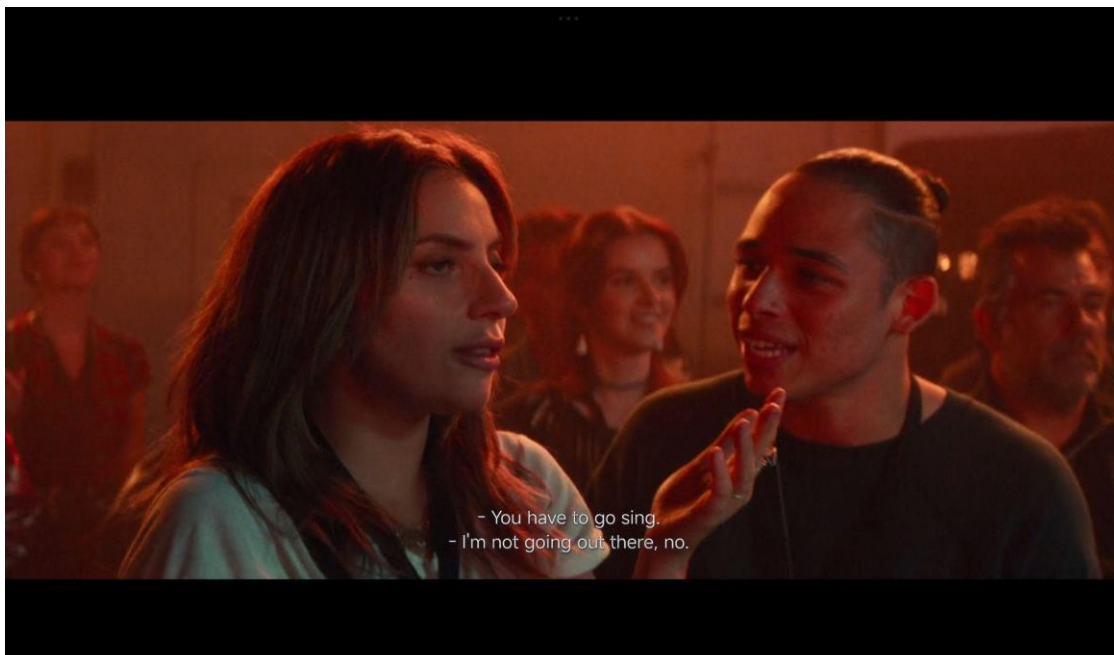
Ally quickly becomes a successful star. Her manager promotes her heavily with a giant billboard with her picture. In scene 3, Ally and Jackson look at the billboard while Jackson hugs her from behind. Medium-long shot technique is utilized to capture the characters (Jackson and Ally) from above the knees up. This technique is used to convey body language and the surrounding environment (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). This shot captures their physical closeness and emotional intimacy, while also placing them within a broader setting. This demonstrates the growing emotional and physical bond between Jackson and Ally, especially after they become husband and wife. Until this moment, Ally still thinks her nose is big. This suggests that Ally has internalized negative views about her appearance, which shows how deeply industry criticism has affected her self-esteem. However, Jackson tries to make her laugh with a joke by saying “*I wish it was bigger up there.*” After he said that, both started laughing. This challenges the idea that Jackson, a man in a male-dominated field, might objectify women. However, Jackson does not devalue Ally’s talent simply because of her appearance. Instead, Ally herself displays deep insecurities about her nose, demonstrating the extent to which Ally has internalized the objectifying norms of the industry. Jackson’s reaction

is surprisingly compassionate; rather than validating certain beauty standards, he dismisses them by complimenting Ally on her appearance for who she is. This shows that not all male characters act as agents of objectification, they can be important allies in the fight against sexism if they speak out when sexist behavior occurs (Cihangir et al., 2014).

To sum up, Ally is objectified by derogating objectification which focuses on Ally's physical appearance, such as her nose or hair. Ally's insecurities are rooted in herself, who has received a form of objectification that internalized in her. This makes Ally objectify herself, which is reflected in her insecurities about her nose. As a result, she felt that her talents are worthless if she does not meet society's beauty standards.

2. Invalidation

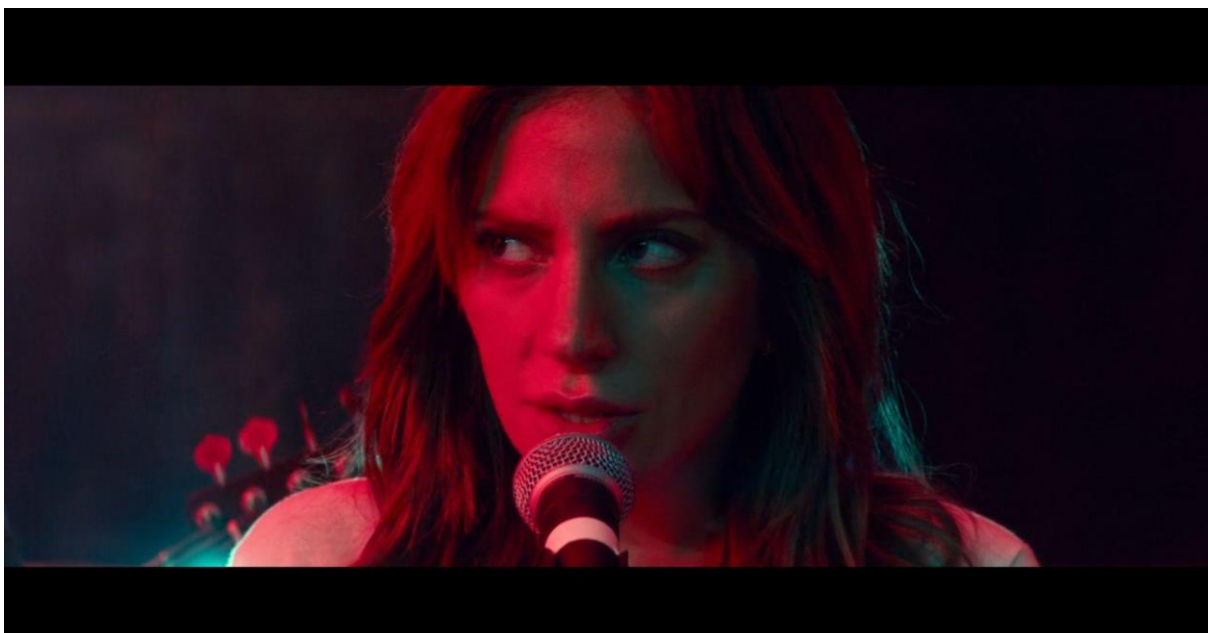
The second behavior is invalidation. When women neglect their feelings and thoughts, precisely when they do not match male standards, this is called invalidation (Bearman and Amrhein, 2014). In the film, the evidence of this invalidation is shown when Ally doubts herself and when Jackson wants to sing “Shallow” together with her.



Scene 4: Steve encourages Ally to singing on stage with Jackson (Cooper, 2018, 38:32)

In scene 4, Ally gets the chance to sing a duet with Jackson. Initially, she hesitates and declines his invitation. She is unsure whether she wants to sing on stage or not. This hesitation arises because she no longer prioritizes her needs and desires, weakening her ability to feel what she wants and needs and possibly even losing the opportunity to return (Bearman and Arnheim, 2014). Steve, her closest friend, was trying to encourage Ally to go on the stage. Steve's act aligns with Bearman & Arnheim (2014) theory that says that encouraging women to trust their thoughts is important to addressing internalized sexism, such as invalidation. Other than Jackson, Steve also is one of the male characters that become Ally's allies.

The inner battle against Ally's own doubts was captured using the medium close-up technique in scene 4. This technique allows audiences to frame Ally from the chest or shoulders up which captures her facial expressions and body movements that show confusion and vulnerability (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). The close-up shots of her face also allow the viewers to be compelled to empathize with her vulnerability. However, she finally convinces herself that she could do it and eventually she appears on stage with Jackson, singing "Shallow" together. This scene implies that Ally wants to show her singing talent but is often hindered by insecurities about her talent and even her appearance. These insecurities are caused by the men in the music industry around her who always underestimate her talent because they judge her solely based on her appearance.



Scene 5: Ally is nervous on stage while singing Shallow (Cooper, 2018, 39:57)

Additionally, scene 5 uses a close-up shot, emphasizing Ally's facial expression (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008) in showing her doubt. With this shot technique, audiences can see Ally's expression is unsure, full of anxiety, and caution. Sometimes she covered her face because she felt embarrassed. From this highlighted expression, viewers can infer that Ally was still nervous and felt insecure to show her singing talent on stage. Red lighting was illuminating Ally face to represent her emotional struggle between passion, danger, and pressure at the same time (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). Despite having a beautiful voice, Ally struggles with insecurity. However, she managed to sing "Shallow" beautifully. The audience started to cheer and gave her a big applause. This part signifies the moment Ally is finally recognized by other people for her amazing singing talent, so that she can be more confident in her talent and herself. This is another evidence of encouraging women to encounter their internalized sexism.

Invalidation occurs when women have their ideas, talents, or even their emotions dismissed by others or by themselves. When women are constantly told, directly or indirectly, that their voices are less valuable, they begin to internalize this belief (Bearman & Arnheim, 2014). That is why scenes like this are important. They depict the moment when a woman, Ally, overcomes doubt and reclaims her voice. Ally's success on stage is a symbolic act of resistance. She sings on stage not just for the audience, but for herself as well. Encouragement and validation play a vital role in challenging the belief that women must seek approval to find their own worth.

While it is good to see Ally has regained her confidence, unfortunately she gets invalidated by her most loved one, Jackson. As someone close to Ally, Jackson always supports her unconditionally, but everything changes when he envies her success. This is shown before Ally and Jackson plan to go on stage at the Grammys. Jackson was drunk and in a fragile state then he approached Ally and told her that she did not deserve her success and implied she was not being true to herself. When the situation escalated, Jackson diminished Ally by comparing her talent with his father. This comparison is not only inappropriate but also deeply demeaning, as it dismisses Ally's individuality and achievements.

JAKCSON

Yeah, you couldn't be my dad if you fucking tried.

He had more talent in his fucking finger than you have in your whole fucking body. So, don't even fucking go there about that, all right?

(Cooper, 2018, 1:28:59)

This judgment and talent comparison eventually invalidate whole Ally talent and making her feel as though her work is worthless unless it is approved by Jackson. Despite the harassment Jackson gives, Ally never expresses her resentment toward Jackson. Instead, she continues to trust him. This happens because of her emotional dependence on Jackson. In other words, she sees him as the only person who has truly known and supported her since the beginning of her career. This emotional contradiction reflects a pattern of internalized sexism, in which women often diminish their own needs and stay loyal to their partners who hurt them emotionally and believing that love should involve sacrifice (Manne, 2018).



Scene 6: Ally is having a conversation with Jackson in the bathtub. (Cooper, 2018, 1:27:34)

When Ally heard that Jackson compared herself to his dad, she was silent and confused for a moment. She did not know how to react, and this moment was extremely painful for Ally. Instead of confronting him, she looked shaken and affected. Ally just staring at him for a while. Self-silencing may refer to the tendency to withhold thoughts or feelings to avoid conflict in a relationship (Swim et al., 2010). Caring as a form of self-sacrifice refers to women's tendency to prioritize the needs and opinions of others over their own. This aligns with prescriptive gender roles that require women to care for others and relationships, as well as gender stereotypes of women being more communal or nurturing than men (Manne, 2018).

In scene 6, to highlight and isolate Ally's overall expression, a close-up technique is used (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). This scene captures Ally's emotional reaction in detail. With her eyes wide open and her mouth open it shows how shocked she is by Jackson's hurtful insult. Based on her gestures and expressions, she shows that she is deeply hurt and takes his words personally, reflecting the invalidation of her success and identity that were belittled by someone close, causing her to doubt herself again. With this shooting technique, the audiences can also feel Ally's inner turmoil when she was belittled but helpless for a moment.

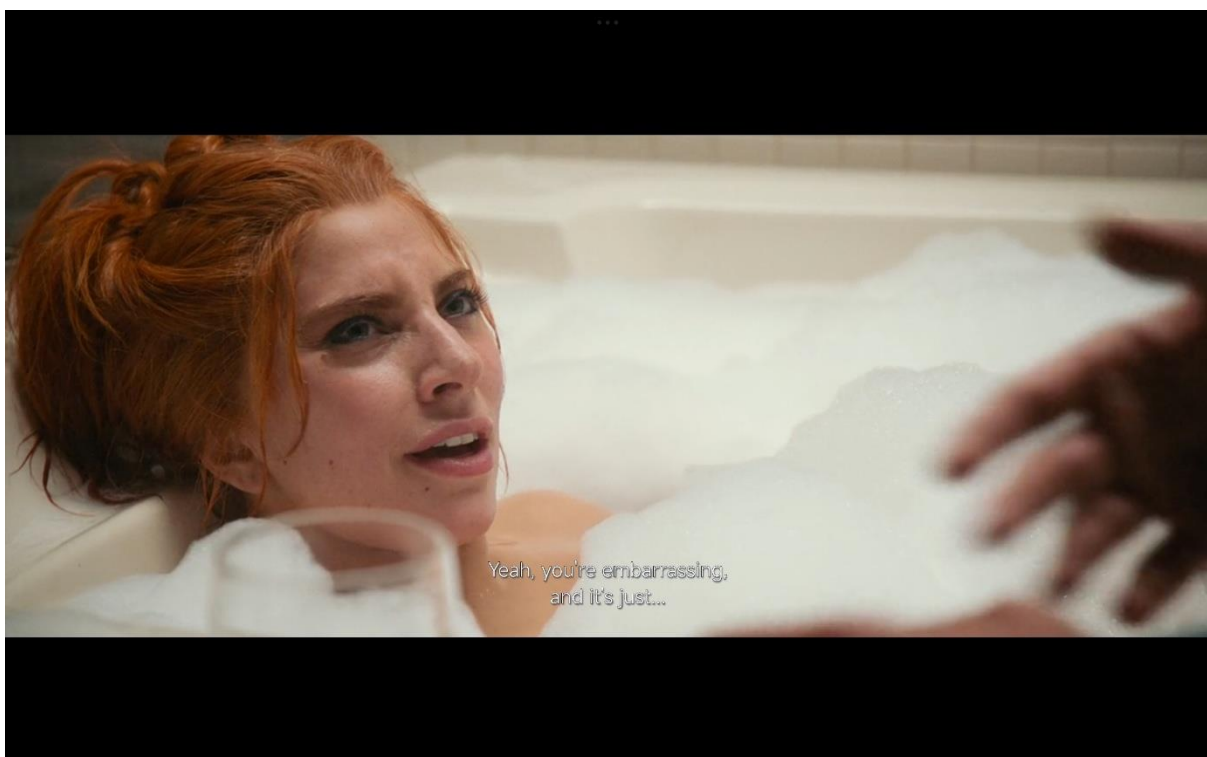
In summary, Jackson's invalidation of Ally's talent leads her to succumb to internalized sexism, causing her to rely more on his validation than on the positive response from her audience. Although Ally receives approval from the crowd, she struggles to overcome her internalized sexism due to the deep-rooted impact of Jackson's consistent invalidation. This aligns with Salter's (2012) analysis, which argues that such acts of invalidation are a form of gender-based manipulation. Jackson's behavior toward Ally can be seen as a manifestation of gender relations that employ strategies of minimization, distrust, and denial.

3. Derogation

The last behavior is derogation. Derogation is an act of demeaning. It is usually used to belittle, denigrate, bad-mouth women or even other women (Uzoma Eburuaja et al., 2017). Moreover, derogation can be internalized then used by women to criticize themselves and each other in an ongoing process of gender role conditioning (Gilbert et al., 2004, as cited in Bearman & Arnheim, 2014). Bearman and Arnheim (2014) also explain that there are two categories of derogatory terms that serve to regulate gender roles.

The first category is gender-specific insults such as “bitch”, term used to refer to women who are vocal and outspoken. These characteristics challenge gender roles that require women to be silent or quiet, passive or submissive. Another category of derogatory terms used to condition women are insults related to mental health, for instance they labeled them as “crazy”, “irrational”, or “obsessed”. The portrayal of women as crazy and irrational often occurs because men's behavior is set as the standard for what is considered “normal” and “rational”.

As a result, women who express their emotions are deemed “abnormal” or “irrational.” This causes their experiences to be invalidated and even considered crazy, even though they are completely reasonable. The insult aims to pushing women back behind the borders, should they wander into territory outside the female role. Some scenes show that Ally received derogation from Jackson because he was envious of her success. Moreover, Ally success made Jackson furious and trying to diminish Ally by criticizing her work (Manne, 2018). One of the pieces of evidence of derogation is presented in the scene when Jackson begins to criticize Ally’s music, calling it “embarrassing” in a bathtub argument scene. This moment visually conveys the vulnerability and emotional confusion that Ally is facing.



Scene 7: Jackson called Ally embarrassing. (Cooper, 2018, 1:27:59)

In scene 7, Jackson was still in a drunk condition and started saying bad and rude words to Ally to demean her. He started to call Ally “embarrassing”. The director uses a close-up shot in this scene that focuses on Ally's face while she is in the bathtub during a tense argument with Jackson (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). Audiences can see that her expression is confused, defensive, and hurt emphasized. Ally immediately denied the accusation that Jackson did by saying "*I'm not fucking embarrassing! You're embarrassing!*". She did not remain silent and tried to interrupt the derogation. She even talked back to Jackson to defend herself. The

key to stopping oppression is to say something or anything (Bearman and Arnheim, 2014). However, it does not stop there. In the next scene, when the situation escalated, Jackson starts saying inappropriate words to Ally to demean her.



Scene 8: Jackson diminished Ally by calling her ugly. (Cooper, 2018, 1:29:17)

In scene 8, Jackson called Ally “*fucking ugly*”. However, this time, she did not say something like “I am not ugly” to deny his claimed, but rather she was shocked and said, “*I’m what?*”. That is the evidence of the self-derogation of Ally, Jackson uses his criticism to derogate her. When she receives demeaning actions, it is possible that she justifies and accepts that she is ugly because in previous scenes, viewers can see Ally always had difficulty accepting her appearance, especially her nose. This is caused by the objectification actions that she received from society. Therefore, when someone close to her starts saying negative words, this can be bad for her since she may try to regain her self-worth, and her confidence is still in a fragile state.

After feeling so disappointed and hurt by Jackson's words, Ally did not want to continue the fight. Instead, she told Jackson to get out and leave her alone. She found it difficult to accept the fact that the person she had trusted the most was in fact derogating her. This medium close-

up in scene 8 focuses on Jackson's expression which emphasizes his psychological condition (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008), and from his expression, audiences can see a slightly frowned forehead, slightly raised eyebrows, and a downward gaze as if looking down on Ally, implying ongoing jealousy and anger. The framing also suggests a subtle power dynamic: although Jackson is sitting, he appears taller and more dominant, while Ally is positioned lower, visually implying submission. This visual arrangement aligns with the male gaze, which argues that classical cinema positions men as active subjects who look, and women as passive objects to be looked at (Mulvey, 2013). This suggests that the director intends to show that Jackson wants to reaffirm Ally that she knows her "place" as her career is on the rise, showing Jackson's insecurity and basic need to dominate.

In summary, derogation is a significant aspect in Ally's internalized sexism. Derogation is instilled through the repetition of self-fulfilling derogatory words from Jackson. Ally felt what Jackson had told her was true. Part of her still believed that her appearance didn't meet society's beauty standards, and that belief was ingrained in her as a form of self-derogation.

DISCUSSION

A Star Is Born (2018) illustrates that the issue of sexism is broader and more complex than superficially seen, encompassing not only obvious external manifestations but also internalized forms of sexism. This study found that Ally experiences internalized sexism, manifested through her behaviors of objectification, invalidation, and self-deprecation. This finding aligns with Bearman and Amrhein's (2014), which emphasizes how women internalize patriarchal values and unconsciously reproduce them against themselves. Ally's pursuit of stardom is accompanied by a struggle against deeply ingrained patriarchal values.

Misogyny functions as a system of surveillance, rewarding women who adhere to patriarchal norms while punishing those who defy them (Manne, 2018). Ally's career path in the Hollywood music industry illustrates this dynamic, with her singing ability often undervalued and her appearance often prioritized. In this case, sexism provides ideological justification for subordination, while misogyny enforces compliance. Ally's personal struggle highlights this phenomenon. Even as she begins to liberate herself from sexism, she still faced struggles that made her difficult for her to unlearn internalized patriarchal norms she has

unconsciously adopted. Then, she chose to overlook her oppressed status in society and eventually succumbed to the internalized sexism. ((Evteeva et al., 2024). This plot illustrates in our society where many women remain unaware of how deeply instilled patriarchal norms are disadvantage them.

Furthermore, this film is to refute the gender progressive narrative in Hollywood. The industry that is known for being progressive for gender equality, but otherwise, there are widespread practices that perpetuate gender inequality across the industry (Milana, 2019). For instance, female characters are usually portrayed very differently from male characters in films. Male characters are usually portrayed broadly, while female characters are often portrayed narrowly and highly sexualized (O'Meara, 2017). It means that female characters in films are mostly seen through their sexual-related traits. Other traits such as female's intelligence and instinct are often overlooked. Using shots and *mise-en-scène*, this film shows that excellent cinematography can shape and alter viewers' perceptions.

While this film is supposed to encourage young female artists to pursue their dreams in the music industry, the underlying gender issues may hinder the process. Instead of claiming Hollywood is a progressive one, people in the industry can try to provide a safer place for the younger generation, so that a star is born and feeling safe to express oneself. Because recognizing the issue, such as internalized sexism can empower women to pursue more inclusive and equitable career paths, fostering a workplace culture of respect and gender equality (Jha, 2024).