

## The depiction of sexism experienced by female character Elizabeth Zott in *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) series

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### ABSTRACT

*This study employs the sexism theory developed by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske to examine the portrayal of sexism in the 1950s through the character of Elizabeth Zott in the series Lessons in Chemistry (2023). The research method is qualitative with a descriptive approach. This research shows that Elizabeth Zott encounters two forms of sexism in a male-dominated workplace: hostile sexism, which includes direct hostility and discrimination, and benevolent sexism, which is more subtle and paternalistic but still excludes women from equal opportunities. Elizabeth is a woman who boldly rejects the traditional roles expected by a patriarchal society and confidently asserts her independence as an individual, despite social pressures. In the face of hostile sexism, Elizabeth is determined and courageous, continuing her career in science despite facing direct discrimination and challenges. She also challenges social expectations that limit women's roles and demands change for gender equality in the face of benevolent sexism. This study highlights Elizabeth's resistance strategies against both forms of sexism and the importance of understanding and addressing various forms of sexism in a male-dominated workplace.*

**Keywords:** *sexism, workplace, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, traditional roles*

### INTRODUCTION

The United States may be considered a developed country, but it is still not free of gender discrimination. In the 1950s, American men and women had significant differences in roles and status. Women's work was limited to domestic work due to the emergence of deep-rooted social ideas in the United States caused by popular culture, which significantly affected the image of American women. The media often depicts

the ideal woman as a suburban housewife responsible for household chores and raising children. These are seen as separate social responsibilities.

Although there is no official prohibition or denial of certain rights based on gender, forms of sexism still occur in everyday life. In other words, even if laws or policies do not directly discriminate, sexist attitudes and treatment may still occur in everyday practice. Sexism is the unfair or detrimental treatment of someone based on their gender, resulting in gender inequality or gender discrimination, especially against women (Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021, p. 6). Sexism manifests itself in many ways. For example, sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, employment discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, wage gaps for women who perform the same tasks as men, and laws that limit women's rights. Several studies have found that sexism has a significant impact on women's daily lives. Women's experiences of this form of sexism are often associated with unpleasant emotional feelings, lack of self-confidence, feelings of incompetence, discomfort, increased feelings of anger and hopelessness, and low self-esteem (Jannah, 2021, p. 65).

There are many media such as books, films, and even series that raise the issue of sexism, and most of these series plots involve women as the main characters. One example of a series that raises the issue of sexism is the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) which features the main character Brie Larson as Elizabeth Zott. In this series, female characters often face discrimination in the form of sexism. *3 Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) is a series that was released on Apple TV+ in October 13, 2023. This series is about women's lives, careers, and struggle for empowerment in the late 50s and early 60s. It follows the story of Elizabeth Zott, a brilliant chemist who is forced to become a television chef when she finds herself a young and single mother. Elizabeth Zott, a chemist in the 1950s is portrayed in the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) attempts to overcome sexism and make her way in the male-dominated field of science. The series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) attempts to depict and address the sexism that was rampant in the 1950s.

The researcher of this study looked for and discovered some comparable studies. However, no one is researching the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023). However, despite the absence of a specific literature review on the Chemistry Lessons series (2023), researchers have identified comparable studies that inform the analytical approach used entitled: *Women's Struggle Against Sexism in Bombshell (2019) Film* is a thesis by Sadenia Adyaga from the Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, in 2023. The purpose of this study is to examine how difficult it is for women to combat sexism in the workplace at Fox News. The existentialist feminist theory of Simone de Beauvoir is used in this thesis to address research problems. The researcher used qualitative approaches and descriptive data analysis methods to reach conclusions and compile statistics, scenes, dialogues, and cinematography from the film. Based on the research findings, this study

discovered how difficult it is for women to confront and overcome sexism in the Fox News workplace. The study's results indicate that the existentialist contributions of feminists to each woman's personality play a significant role in the struggle against sexism and harassment and the liberation of women from objectification. It also shows that women can stand independently and support themselves without being used as props in men's plans. Ultimately, this study shows the significant impact that existential feminists have had on women's lives, helping them survive in the male domain and fight against sexist views in the workplace and society (Adyaga, 2019).

## LITERATURE REVIEW (TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12, CAPITAL, BOLD)

### Sexism Theory

Sexism refers to human attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and practices in organizations, institutions, and cultures that reflect unfair gender judgments or encourage gender inequity. This leads to gender discrimination, stereotyping, and disparate treatment of men and women. In this context, gender is a fundamental aspect of a person's social and cultural identity that originates from the roles, behaviors, and attributes considered appropriate for men or women (Humardhiana & Hidayah, 2020, p. 139). Sexist attitudes are pervasive in society as a result of a patriarchal culture that values men above women in many spheres of life. Actions and attitudes toward women are influenced by patriarchy. Women are still seen as inferior by the society around them, which contributes to the creation and maintenance of gender stereotypes. These factors impact many facets of life, such as women's participation in public life and professional achievement (Molina et al., 2020, p. 3).

The theory of ambivalence in the context of sexism is presented, encompassing not only hostile attitudes but also those that may be perceived as benevolent towards women. The Ambivalent Sexism Theory distinguishes between hostile sexism and what is considered benevolent sexism (each addressing issues of power, gender differentiation, and sexuality). The concept of benevolent sexism encompasses subjectively positive attitudes towards women in traditional roles, including protective paternalism, idealization of women, and a desire for intimate relationships. In contrast, the notion of hostile sexism encompasses negative counterparts on each of these dimensions, including dominating paternalism, assertive beliefs, and heterosexual hostility. Both forms of sexism serve to justify and maintain patriarchy and traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1997, p. 119).

Firstly, **Hostile sexism** refers to an adversarial view of gender relations in which women are perceived to be attempting to control men, whether through sexuality or feminist ideology (Glick & Fiske, 1997, p. 121). Hostile sexism is associated with

negative attitudes toward women in positions of power, whereas benevolent sexism is not. Sexists who are hostile to women are more likely to condone violence against women, including rape. Hostile sexist attitudes towards women who are deemed incapable of carrying out agentic roles provide the view that women are not suitable for holding positions in bureaucratic systems such as in economic, legal, and political institutions (Gothreau et al., 2022, p. 3). Most bureaucratic systems are based on masculine principles, requiring leadership that is aggressive, goal-oriented, competitive, and efficient. In contrast, feminine qualities are often associated with being more gentle, polite, submissive, and fragile. As a result, men gain access to dominant positions and develop their talents in “masculine” sectors such as politics, business and research (Newman & O’Brien, 2013, p. 207). An example of hostile sexism in the workplace is when a woman is subjected to demeaning comments or aggressive behavior from her male colleagues because she is not as capable of performing her job as well as a man. In this case, a male worker may ignore a woman's contributions in meetings, make sexist or derogatory remarks, or openly question her competence, suggesting that women should not occupy roles in fields.

Secondly, **Benevolent sexism** is defined as a positive subjective opinion of women. This point of view involves assumptions comparable to the concept of hostile sexism, specifically that women have a limited role in the family and are considered a gender of lower standing. Although the term "benevolent sexism" may appear oxymoronic, it recognizes that some forms of sexism are subjectively benevolent for the perpetrator, characterizing women as pure creatures who should be protected, supported, and adored and whose love is required to make a man complete (Glick & Susan, 2001, p. 201). Sexist attitudes and beliefs towards women contribute to justifying and maintaining men's dominance and power in the context of gender relations in society (Berke & Zeichner, 2016, p. 201). An example of benevolent sexism can be observed when men praise women for displaying traditionally feminine qualities, such as gentleness, warmth, and nurturing abilities. However, this praise is often accompanied by limitations or restrictions on the roles of women. For instance, a boss who consistently commends female employees for their "natural skills" at home or their ability to be good mothers may not acknowledge or encourage their professional abilities on the job. In combating sexism requires sustained efforts to change the norms and social structures that drive inequality. This includes improving the effectiveness of gender equality education and enforcing strong actions against all forms of discrimination.

Furthermore, it is important to create environments where women can speak up and be heard, and to ensure that their perspectives and experiences are included in decision-making processes across domains. This effort should also involve raising public awareness of the harmful consequences of sexism and empowering individuals and communities to reject and challenge harmful gender stereotypes. By taking these steps,

we can work towards a more just and equitable society where everyone, regardless of gender, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This is qualitative descriptive research, which explains a phenomenon, the context in which it occurs, or a person's point of view. In qualitative research, data is typically entered in words rather than numbers (Busetto et al., 2020, p. 1). In qualitative descriptive research, data collection is carried out by watching the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) carefully and repeatedly until the end to understand each event that is revealed according to the storyline in the series, then marking data that is relevant to the research question. The analysis technique used is a descriptive analytical technique which includes the following steps. First, examine the data that has been classified and describe its meaning according to the research problem formulation, by analyzing the data and connecting it with the theory of sexism by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske. Second, interpret the data that has been explained for further development. Third, concluding the data that has been analyzed based on the concept of sexism theory by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Sexism in *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) Toward Elizabeth Zott

*Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) is an original series on Apple TV+ set in the 1950s. This series depicts Elizabeth Zott as a skilled scientist whose progress is hampered by deep-rooted sexism. Elizabeth Zott earned a master's degree in chemistry from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) when she was 28. However, instead of becoming a researcher, her professional path landed her a job as a laboratory technician at the Hastings Research Institute. Elizabeth Zott described that she has wavy blonde hair extending to her shoulders, fair skin with perfect and balanced facial features, and light-colored eyes radiating strength and gentleness. She has a calm, confident demeanor and always maintains a neat white shirt, indicating her work in a professional environment such as a laboratory.

The series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) powerfully illustrates how Elizabeth Zott was a victim of various forms of sexism, including institutional discrimination and physical violence rooted in patriarchal norms. As a brilliant scientist, Elizabeth was often underestimated and ignored by her male colleagues, not because of her lack of ability but because of her gender. In a highly masculine academic environment, her talents and achievements were overshadowed by sexist prejudice, which led to her

being deprived of the right to advance and contribute fully to the field of chemistry. In addition, the series also reveals how bullying and sexism are used as tools to maintain unfair social structures. When Elizabeth becomes pregnant, she is faced with the inevitable dilemma of continuing her scientific career or conforming to social expectations that require her to put her professional ambitions second in favor of motherhood. Her choice to move to a job as a chef on the television program “Supper at Six” is not only a compromise, but also a clear demonstration of how social pressures and gender discrimination can prevent women from reaching their full potential.

Furthermore, the series highlights the challenges Elizabeth faces and explores how these experiences reflect the dynamics of sexism in women’s everyday lives. The sexism Elizabeth faces in the workplace, in the lab, and on TV is not an isolated incident. It is part of a broader pattern designed to limit women’s choices in making choices. Through Elizabeth’s character *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) provides a sharp critique of this unfair system. It also offers an inspiring look at one woman’s courage and determination in the face of adversity. In analyzing sexism in the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023), two forms of sexism were found, which can be divided into two parts, namely hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, which can be explained in this section.

### Hostile Sexism

**Doctor Donatti** : *Young lady, setting aside the fact that you’re using lab equipment without the proper supervision of a chemist.*

**Elizabeth Zott** : *I am a chemist.*

**Doctor Donatti** : *Our chemist has PhD’s. I could never put the Hastings name on the submission lab tech that proudly waving around her master’s at UCLA. You are not just smart enough.*

**(Episode 1, 00:13:19 – 00:13:27)**

Dr. Donatti blatantly belittles Elizabeth’s qualifications simply because she does not have a Ph.D., even though Elizabeth has demonstrated competence and expertise in the sciences. The emphasis on a degree as the primary requirement and ignoring Elizabeth’s practical skills and knowledge, is a clear example of gender discrimination. It reflects a form of hostile sexism, where gender bias directly influences the assessment and opportunities given to women in professional settings. Hostile sexism is seen in the underestimation and unfair assessment of women, blatantly placing them in a position of inferiority to men, even when they have equal or greater abilities. By dismissing Elizabeth's scientific skills and accomplishments and discussing her

potential based on her gender, Dr. Donatti reinforces discriminatory patriarchal structures and hinders progress toward gender equality at The Hastings Institute. This reflects the discriminatory attitudes that women often face in the workplace, where their accomplishments and abilities are ignored or devalued because of their gender (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015, p. 7). Overall, Dr. Donatti's attitude toward Elizabeth illustrates how hostile sexism works to impede women's advancement in male-dominated fields.

## Benevolent Sexism

**Phil Lebensmal** : *Big hair, tight dress, homey set. Check. But we need a sexy wife loving mother that every man loves to see when he comes home from work. We want tight dresses, suggestive movements, like how she dons her potholders. and at the end of every show, she should make her husband a cocktail.*

**(Episode 5, 00:22:22 – 00:22:35)**

This attitude also occurs in the scene when Walter finally meets Elizabeth Zott and asks her to work together as a host on a cooking TV show called "Supper at Six." Elizabeth then agrees to become the host of the cooking show and Phill doesn't like Elizabeth's presenting style because Elizabeth uses many scientific terms that the viewers, including Walter and Phill, so he calls Walter to evaluate Elizabeth's performance and expresses his desire to find a sexy wife and loving mother whom all the men will idolize when they come home from work. In this scene, the form of Benevolent sexism is seen when Phill asks Walter to evaluate Elizabeth Zott's appearance to be a sexually attractive figure for male viewers when she hosts the cooking show "Supper at Six."

Phill's objective is to create an image of Elizabeth that is simultaneously sexualized and maternal also aims to portray her as a woman with "big hair, a tight dress, homey set," and as "the sexy, loving mother that every man loves when he comes home from work." The use of visual elements such as the "tight dress" and "seductive movements" serves to reduce Elizabeth's role to that of a sexual object, while simultaneously disregarding her abilities and expertise as a scientist and tv show cooking host.

Furthermore, Elizabeth must look like "she should make her husband a cocktail." This statement reflects the persistent anticipation that women will embody conventional gender roles that prioritize service to men. This indicates that benevolent sexism is exemplified by the perpetuation of traditional gender roles for women

through the portrayal of women as individuals who should adhere to traditional gender roles, such as that of a wife or mother, which are typically expected by men (Glick & Fiske, 1997, p. 122). This reflects the ongoing expectation that women will fulfill traditional gender roles that prioritize service to men. Phill's attitude also shows how benevolent sexism combines praise with restraint and condescension packaged in the form of seemingly positive advice. This not only devalues Elizabeth's professional worth but also reinforces patriarchal norms that limit women's freedom and potential in the workplace and society. This perspective also posits women as occupying a subordinate position, whereby their worth and identity are gauged by the extent to which they align with traditional expectations shaped by the needs and desires of men. By reinforcing these roles, benevolent sexism effectively constrains women's capacity to define themselves beyond the confines of patriarchal society.

## **B. Elizabeth Zott's Response Against Sexism**

This section will explore how Elizabeth Zott reacts to the two forms of sexism experienced by female characters in the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023). Elizabeth Zott demonstrates resilience and courage in the face of hostile and benevolent discrimination while remaining committed to her ambitions and principles.

### **Elizabeth Rejection to Gender Stereotypes**

**Elizabeth Zott** : Men are always trying to explain and women are expected to sit and listen. I will not do that, and there is no amount of menace that will change my mind.

**Phill Lebensmal** : A man wants his wife to make him a drink after a long day at work. So, make the fucking drink.

**Elizabeth Zott** : Why do you assume that his day was longer than hers? Why don't you make the fucking drink?

**(Episode 5, 00:37:25 – 00:37:56)**

Elizabeth rejects traditional gender roles that assume women are stupid and only care about trivial matters. Although she is less interested in hosting a TV cooking show, Elizabeth makes it clear that she will work hard to create a meaningful show. When Phill tries to force her to conform to the conventional female role of preparing drinks for male viewers, Elizabeth challenges this assumption and questions its validity, asserting that men should be able to do this job. As like what she said in the dialogue above, "Why do you assume that his day was longer than hers? Why don't you make



the fucking drink?" In this context, Elizabeth Zott criticizes household work and childcare as being only women's responsibilities. Elizabeth's dialogue shows a conflict between the roles and responsibilities of men and women in that household tasks must be shared fairly regardless of gender differences between men and women. Elizabeth refuses to conform to traditional gender expectations that place women in a passive, listener role. She emphasized that even though she doesn't want the job, she will work hard to make the show successful. However, she refuses to take to the narrative that depicts women as stupid and only concerned with trivial matters.



In the image above, Elizabeth's assertive attitude shows a rejection of gender stereotypes that hinder women's progress in society. Phill, on the other hand, reinforces gender stereotypes with the assumption that women should act according to men's expectations without considering their needs or perspectives. By refusing Phill's request, Elizabeth rejects the unfair expectations placed on her as a woman. This reflects Elizabeth's struggle to gain recognition and appreciation for her abilities outside the gender boundaries set by the society of her time. Elizabeth boldly wears a blazer and trousers on the cooking show "Supper at Six." By making this choice, she sends a clear message in response to the sexism she received from Phill Lebensmal, who suggested that she should appear more "sexually attractive" for the pleasure of male viewers and to increase the shows.

Elizabeth's choice to wear trousers and a formal suit represents a rejection of the various forms of sexism that pertain to women. These forms of resistance to gender stereotypes often require women to embody certain characteristics, such as friendliness, gentleness, and attractiveness to men. Elizabeth, however, does not adhere to these stereotypes. Instead, she presents herself as a professional who prioritizes hosting cooking shows and conveying educational messages, rather than conforming to the visual expectations of the audience, particularly male viewers. This illustrates that Elizabeth upholds her integrity as a scientist and a woman who rejects objectification and expects that she can diminish her value to a mere visual object. Furthermore, it conveys the crucial message that a woman can be esteemed and regarded as competent without adhering to the standards of beauty or sexual attractiveness established by society (Yovita et al., 2022, p. 402)

Instead of merely conforming to conventional gender expectations by presenting herself as "sexually attractive," Elizabeth succeeded in garnering a significant female viewership for her cooking show, "Supper at Six." She achieved this by transforming the cooking show into an educational platform, where she taught chemistry and science principles related to the cooking process. This approach was both engaging and educational, offering new knowledge to female viewers who lacked access to education, particularly in the sciences. In this context, Elizabeth provided "Supper at Six" as a space for female viewers to feel valued not only as housewives but also as intelligent and capable individuals seeking role models who could demonstrate that they could exceed the expectations of patriarchal society.

In this case, Elizabeth uses different strategies to overcome both forms of sexism. When faced with benevolent sexism, Elizabeth tends to use rationality and logic. She refuses to accept unfair gender stereotypes and expectations, showing that she has the same skills and independence as men. This attitude shows her desire to be recognized as an independent and capable person, unaffected by limiting gender norms.

On the other hand, in the face of hostile sexism, Elizabeth shows a brave and assertive attitude. She not only rejects discrimination verbally, but also proves her ability through real actions. By positioning herself as an active and competent subject, Elizabeth overcomes degrading treatment by showing that she has the same skills and abilities, or even better, than her male colleagues. This attitude reflects Elizabeth's determination not to submit to degrading judgments, while also asserting her right to be treated with respect and equality. Elizabeth demands recognition for her abilities and challenges the social structures that support gender inequality through her actions.

### **Elizabeth Uses Media to Advocate for Gender Equality**

**Elizabeth Zott** : *Courage is the root of change and change is what we are chemically designed for. I will not ask you to pull yourself up by your bootstrap because many women do not have bootstrap to pull themselves up by. If your life has been anything like mine, your dreams will not come to you in a linear fashion. But if you have a voice, you feel is not being heard, we would love to meet you.*

**(Episode 8, 00:30:44 – 00:31:11)**

In this scene, at the height of Supper at Six's success, Elizabeth Zott announced on air that she would be stepping down as host. She explained that the show would be looking for a replacement from Supper at Six's loyal fan base of housewives. Elizabeth also

shared some inspiring words about how women can take charge of their own destiny. Elizabeth delivers an empowering message that challenges the sexist attitudes and struggles women face using the live broadcast media at Supper at Six TV show. Because the media is a powerful force that has shaped and continues to influence gender equality. From movements to social change, the media is a crucial tool in the fight for gender equality (Fu, 2022, p. 3).

In the dialogue, *“Courage is the root of change and change is what we are chemically designed for”* Elizabeth stated emphatically that women must have the courage to overcome sexism. She also made it clear that change is not easy to achieve and that women will face challenges that are not in line with their plans or expectations for achieving equality. Elizabeth also recognized that women cannot achieve equality on their own. Furthermore, in the dialogue, *“I will not ask you to pull yourself up by your bootstrap because many women do not have bootstrap to pull themselves up by”* Elizabeth shows empathy and understanding for women by giving them a ‘voice’ and a platform to speak up and to seek better treatment. She also understands the barriers that women face and is committed to creating a world where women are heard and where their experiences are valued.

Elizabeth Zott boldly confronted sexism, challenging the patriarchal norms that had long limited women's roles and existence. With her courageous attitude, Elizabeth rejected the restrictions imposed on her and fought for a space where women could assert themselves with power and potential. She not only raised objections to the unfair treatment she faced but also pushed for broader changes in society, ensuring women had equal opportunities. By speaking out with courage and advocating for change, in an effort to dismantle power structures that disadvantage women and assert their right to self-determination. Elizabeth is committed to eradicating sexism and making a significant impact on society and inspiring other women in the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) to assert their rights and show that meaningful change can be achieved through courage and determination in the face of injustice.

**Avery Parker** : *I caught your show in Supper at Six. You quit?*

**Elizabeth Zott** : *I did. I want to get back to science.*

**Avery Parker** : *You know, I have foundation specifically geared toward funding the work of scientists.*

**Elizabeth Zott** : *I am aware. Your application offers a “Mr.,” not “Mrs.” and certainly not “Miss.”*

**Avery Parker** : *Well, I’ll fix that and after I do, I’d love to help you with whatever it is you’re interested in pursuing as a chemist.*

**(Episode 8, 00:35:26 – 00:35:52)**

After Elizabeth decides to step down as host, she has a conversation with Avery Parker, the owner of The Remsen Foundation makes it clear that she is interested and supportive of Elizabeth's decision to return to science. She mentions that their foundation is specifically dedicated to funding scientists, which is an ideal opportunity for Elizabeth to continue her research. The dialogue above is a result of Elizabeth's response against sexism she has faced throughout her career. After facing various forms of discrimination in the world of science and television, Elizabeth made the bold decision to leave her position as a cooking show television host and return to focusing on science. She did this to uphold her principles and challenge patriarchal norms.

The conversation with Avery Parker revealed that Elizabeth is not just quitting as a TV host cooking shows to avoid sexism; she is taking action to create change. By criticizing the foundation's application for only using the term "Mr.", Elizabeth made it clear that inclusivity and gender equality are essential. Avery Parker, who was receptive to the criticism, promised to correct the mistake, demonstrating that change can originate from seemingly minor actions. Elizabeth's decision to overcome sexism and pursue her scientific ambitions has been recognized and appreciated by Avery Parker and The Remsen Foundation. The foundation's support allows Elizabeth to continue her research and confronting and fighting all forms of sexism is the key to opening new paths for women's careers towards equality. By taking a stand, women can create a more inclusive and equitable work environment and strengthen their position in their profession (Becker et al., 2014, p. 604).

Avery Parker is making strides toward a more inclusive and equitable environment by directing attention and resources to support female scientists like Elizabeth. She is backing her right to excel in a male-dominated field. Elizabeth displays a powerful response strategy in the face of sexism, both hostile and benevolent. She boldly confronts hostile sexism, such as rejection and discrimination in a male-dominated field in the world of science. Elizabeth boldly refuses to yield to pressure and rejects the gender stereotypes that society has imposed. She also courageously decides to drop herself from the TV cooking show, "Supper at Six," and highlights the significance of women's resilience in challenging patriarchal norms that restrict their freedom. Furthermore, Elizabeth demonstrates a clear response strategy in benevolent sexism, evident in her criticism of the use of the term "Mr." on the Remsen Foundation applicant form directed at Avery Parker, the owner of the Remsen Institute. Elizabeth knows that changing the "honorific" term on the form will have a significant impact on creating an inclusive environment.

In this context, Elizabeth not only rejects gender-based discrimination but also demands that the Ramsen Institute Foundation improve its policies to support female scientists in the future. This strategy demonstrates that Elizabeth not only withstands sexism but also boldly challenges it and takes action to bring about change. This

strategy makes it clear that women must have a voice and a place in creating a world where they can determine their destiny without fear of facing gender expectations in a patriarchal society (Costrani & Burhan, 2024, p. 416) Elizabeth's attitudes and actions inspire other women in the series *Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) to fight sexism and demand equal space in pursuing their dreams.

## CONCLUSION

*Lessons in Chemistry* (2023) is interesting to research because the series depicts sexism through characters, plot, and dialogue. The character of Elizabeth Zott, a scientist in the United States in the 1950s, is depicted as a symbol of resistance to patriarchy, opposing gender stereotypes, and fighting for women's rights to fight prejudice and gender injustice. From the analysis above, it was found that Elizabeth Zott experienced gender discrimination in the form of sexism, which can be identified into two types: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, which can be explained through the theory of sexism by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske.

Hostile sexism is sexism that is openly restrictive, discriminating against women because they are seen as threatening men's dominance in a patriarchal environment. In this context, Elizabeth Zott often faces obstacles in her progress in the field of chemistry due to sexist views and behavior that determine the position of women, which is a clear example of hostile sexism. Meanwhile, benevolent sexism is a more subtle but still detrimental form of discrimination. Benevolent sexism can be interpreted as sexism that considers women weak creatures and must be protected by men. It holds the view that women are expected to carry out tasks that are traditionally considered women's work in the domestic realm. The character of Elizabeth Zott is often asked to carry out traditional functions in the work environment and has her main job in the scientific field even though she has an educational background and a clear interest in chemistry.

Elizabeth Zott's response to hostile sexism exemplifies a strategic approach to maintaining her integrity as a scientist despite experiencing discriminatory treatment. Despite having been compelled to resign from her position in the scientific field and subsequently transitioning to a role as a cooking show host, which was perceived as more aligned with the conventional expectations for women at that time, Elizabeth demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination. She ultimately made the courageous decision to leave her role as a cooking show host and re-dedicate herself to her scientific career, despite facing significant pressure and challenges. This exemplifies her unwavering commitment to upholding the principles of equality and recognition as a capable and talented scientist.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth's response is one of resistance to the form of benevolent sexism. She does this by making sharp criticisms of the policies and practices that support this form of discrimination. To provide an example, Elizabeth, who is committed to resuming her career in science, demands recognition of her abilities based on the quality of her work, which is not differentiated based on her gender. Elizabeth even dares to criticize policies that subtly belittle women's abilities, such as the use of honorifics in application forms. Through this action, Elizabeth refuses to be treated in a demeaning manner based on her gender and fights for equality in her professional environment in science.

Elizabeth Zott did not just confront sexism; she also took action to empower herself and other women. In the scientific environment, she confronted hostile sexism boldly, refusing to submit to discrimination and demeaning treatment. She made the bold decision to leave a position that was considered more appropriate for women, determined to return to her passion. On the other hand, in the face of benevolent sexism, she fearlessly challenged traditional expectations and demanded policy changes to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

By actively confronting and rejecting both forms of sexism, Elizabeth Zott is contributing to the shift towards gender equality and making a positive impact on women in all aspects of their lives. She is fighting for her and other women's rights to self-determination, both in science and in everyday life, and demonstrating that bold and decisive action can trigger meaningful change in society.

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