

**MEN SUPERIORITY
IN LYNN NOTTAGE'S PLAY *RUINED* (2009)**

THESIS

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements
to Obtain Strata 1 (S1 Degree)*



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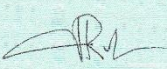
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


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ABSTRAK

Emra, Bebby, M. 2019. “Men Superiority in Lynn Nottage’s Play *Ruined* (2009). Thesis. Universitas Negeri Padang.

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Skripsi ini merupakan analisa naskah drama *Ruined* karya Lynn Nottage. Masalah yang diangkat adalah sejauh mana naskah drama ini merefleksikan isu pengaruh superioritas laki-laki yang dialami oleh karakter perempuan di Republik Kongo. Tujuan penganalisaan ini adalah mengungkapkan sejauh mana naskah drama ini menggambarkan topik superioritas laki-laki atas perempuan dan sejauh mana karakter, alur (konflik) dan latar memberikan kontribusi untuk mengungkapkan hal tersebut. Analisa ini dikaitkan dengan konsep feminis oleh Simone de Beauvoir. Hasil analisa menunjukkan bahwa ada dua cara yang ditunjukkan oleh karakter dalam mengungkapkan pengaruh superioritas laki-laki tersebut yaitu dengan memperlihatkan kondisi mental dan kondisi fisik mereka.

Kata Kunci: laki-laki, superioritas, perempuan,

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In the name of Allah SWT, The Beneficent, The Merciful. All the honors are just for Allah SWT, the writer eventually able to finish her thesis entitled **“Men Superiority in Lynn Nottage’s Play *Ruined* (2009)”**. She also sends *shalawat* and *salam* to the prophet Muhammad SAW as a leader of human being.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Every society passes down a different system from generation to generation. Then society builds on certain values and cultures that make the system distinctive. One of the systems raised by the society is the patriarchal system, which overvalues men and make male's symbols more dominant than the women's. This symbol differences lead to the emergence of different perspectives, roles and status between men and women. This leads to the acts of privileged men over women. The result is women occupy the inferior positions.

In the patriarchal system, men and women behave, think, and aspire differently because they have been taught to think of masculine and feminine in ways, that are conditioned for the differences to occur. Bakuuro (2017:38) states that patriarchal system shows and accept that man have, or should have, one set of qualities and characteristics such as masculine qualities (strength, bravery, fearlessness, dominance, etc.). On the other hand, women must have the characteristic of feminine such as caring, obedient, timid, shy, submissive and so on. Patriarchal system can be harmful into women. It makes men superior to women. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018) superiority means the state of being higher in rank, status or quality. It is socially-constructed attitudes that describe men as violent, unemotional, and sexually aggressive toward women. It shows the horror patriarchal system strategy that is segregating and subordinating women.

Due to male superiority, women face gross subordination and oppression in the conflict area. Different kinds of violence are used to control and subjugate women. Certain violences by men may even be considered as legitimate. Women are subjected to threats of violence such as rape and murder that are both designed to evoke terror for them. According to Esther Lubunga in his journal (2012), in the Democratic Republic of Congo which has supplied with wars, civil strife, and multiple rebellions movements, the women suffer greatly from gender-based violences, and other terrible horrors.

In reality, there are several people who have been through the impact that caused by men superiority in conflict area. For example, Eugenie, 33, lives daily with memory of rape. According to her interview with WMC (Women Media Center), she was raped by 10 men. The attack happened in 2010 in her village outside Bunia eastern of Congo. Militia members raped her and she even does not know where the men are now; there were no arrests. The violence accompanies her every day of her life. She is still suffering and it is difficult for her to forget.

The issue of men superiority is interesting to be analyzed. Lynn's Nottage play *Ruined* shows how the women experience the horror of men superiority in their life, specifically in the conflict area. This makes people realize that how the brutality of patriarchal culture and male biology is deadly mix for violence against women. This work also represents the women are forced to face the sexual violence as a part and parcel of men superiority. It shows the acts of the Congolese women to experience the impact of men superiority.

1.2 Women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the longest occurred in Modern African history involving nine African nations and affecting over 50 million Congolese lives. The Congolese population is made up of over 200 ethnic groups, separated regionally each with their own distinct language (BBC, 2018). Eventually, this great amount of diversity would lead to the continuation of disunity and conflicts within the Congo communities.

Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo have unfortunately fallen victims to the Congo's civil war, their status as a woman sometimes being even more dangerous than that of a soldier in the war. Human Right Watch (2018) says:

“Rebels and soldiers alike have resulted to using a weapon that punctures far deeper than physical wounds. Rape is now their weapon of choice. It used to destroy, detach, humiliate and invoke fear within its victims, families, and communities.

From the statement above, it can be concluded that by instilling fear in its victims and communities, the perpetrators gain a sense of power and control over the minds of the people. So, there is not only physical damage that is left to set an example, but also a lasting emotional and psychological destruction.

The threat and use of physical violence, including rape, have become part of daily landscapes for women and girls, in particularly in the Eastern provinces of Congo. Due to chronic under reporting and lack of rule of law, gender-based violence can only be estimated through anecdotal evidence

suggests that sexual violence widespread and high. Sexual violence in Congo is vastly underreported due to insecurity in or inaccessibility to many areas and the physical or material inability of some victims to travel. Further, survivors may fear reprisals by preparators if they were to come forward.

1.3 Men Superiority

There are two terms in this analysis. They are *men* and *superiority*. The first term is *men*. According to in Collins Dictionary (2018), men means adult human male. The second term is *superiority*. As stated Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018) superiority means the state of being higher in rank, status or quality.

In this analysis *men superiority* refers to the impact of men superiority to women in the Democratic Republic of Congo in play *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage (2009). It is represented through what is done towards the characters Sophie and Salima. They show men superiority have been acted on them through their physical and mental condition.

1.4 A Brief Description of Author's Biography

Lynn Nottage was born on November 2, 1964 in Brooklyn, New York, USA. His mother, Ruby Nottage was a teacher and principal. Her father, Wallace, was a child psychologist. She began to write her first play at her age eight. The women in her family became her inspiration to write the play. Nottage went to Saint Ann's School for elementary school. She entered New York's High School of Music and Art in Harlem and she got her high school diploma in 1982. In the same year, she attended Brown University where she

received her B.A. degree in 1986. She continued her studies and received her M.F.A. degree in playwriting at Yale School of Drama in 1989.

In the 1990s, Nottage spent her entire time to become a playwright after being a national press officer at Amnesty International for four years. Her first break came as a monologue for a musical entitled, *A...My Name is Still Alice*. Her short play, *Poof!*, about a woman whose husband spontaneously combusts premiered at the Actors Theater in Louisville, Kentucky, where it won the Heideman Award in 1993. In 1996, the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, Illinois, produced one of her most known plays, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*.

According to her official website, Nottage took the time off from writing about seven years, but in 2003, her drama *Intimate Apparel*, a play about a young African American woman who turn as to New York to get her dreams and becoming an independent woman as seamstress, won major awards including the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Francesca Primus Prize and the Steinberg Award. In 2005, her play *Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine* about Undine, a successful African-American publicist living in Manhattan get the nomination and won the Obie Awards.

Nottage's plays have been produced the worldwide. Nottage has been writing plays for almost two decades and next in 2009 and 2017 became the winner for Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Ruined* and *Sweat*. *Ruined*, which opens at the Almeida next week, was originally intended as an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*. In transporting the action of Brecht's play, set

around the Thirty Years' War in 17th-century Europe, to 21st-century Africa, Nottage wanted to expose the horrors endured in a country ravaged by war and especially by women.

In her interview with UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) Web Editor Leo Dobbs, Nottage told that she became very interested in the impact of armed conflict in Africa. She travelled to east Africa in 2004 while she was writing *Ruined*. She spent two weeks interviewing a number of Congolese women refugees in Uganda; they had fled their country during the second Congo war between 1998 and 2003. As she said during her interview:

"Almost all the women I interviewed had been sexually abused and assaulted in horrific ways. The women's stories were so specific to Africa, and to that conflict, that the play had to be about them. I didn't need *Mother Courage* in the end. Theirs was the story that wasn't being told."

From her statements above, it can be concluded that Nottage wrote the play based on the true story of the Congolese women. She wrote the play to build the bridges and an environment of empathy. *Ruined* also struck a chord with US audiences and critics. Oprah Winfrey was so moved she stayed behind to give the actors a hug. It caught the attention of politicians, too: last month, Nottage delivered a speech to the House of Lords about her research in Africa (New York Times 2011). The play's most recent New York production had its run extended a record nine times; US TV's most creative powerhouse, HBO, are working on a small-screen adaptation.

1.5 *Ruined* (2009)

A play entitled *Ruined* (2009) written by Lynn Nottage reflects the issue of *men superiority*. In this analysis men superiority refers to the impact of men in the state of being superior into women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is represented through what is done towards the characters Sophie and Salima. Sophie, is a young woman who was brought by her uncle to Mama Nadi's place by her uncle. She has been raped and has almost been killed. She comes with Salima, the girl who has been caught by the rebel soldiers and separated from her husband. They are live in Mama Nadi's bar that is isolated in a mining town which rebels and government soldiers roam and return. It provides music, foods and drinks. Mama Nadi Bar survive their business by profiting from the men's loneliness and their desire. Thus, Sophie and Salima are forced to become objects to please men's desire. They face the horror in the crossfire of men's war. The impact of men superiority can be seen through their physical and mental condition.

The impact of men superiority can be seen from their mental conditions. They have traumatic feeling and bad memories that haunted them. They bear pain and shame from what they have been through before. They suffer from the harsh situation. They feel displeasure and anger toward men. They are frustrated with their own lives.

Their physical conditions also show the impact of men superiority. Their body got injury experience violence and get non-human treatment. Their genital area got damaged. They are physically weak and forced into sexual slavery.

1.6 Problem of the Study

This analysis focuses on the ways about men superiority. There are two research questions that give contribution to this analysis to reveal the issue. The questions are:

1. How far do the characters in the play script *Ruined* (2009) expose the issue of men superiority?
2. To what extent do the plot and setting in play script *Ruined* (2009) support the issue of men superiority?

1.7 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out how far the play *Ruined* (2009) exposes the issue of men superiority. It is also intended to find out how the characters, plot, setting contribute in revealing the meaning of men superiority.

1.8 Previous Study

There are some studies about Lynn Nottage's play *Ruined*, but the analysis that focuses on *men superiority* has not been found yet. There are two studies that have given contribution and inspiration in analyzing this playscript. The first study is *Feminine Spaces and Identity in Lynn's Nottage Ruined* by Carmen Garcia (2012), and the second study is *An Ecofeminist Deconstruction of Lynn Nottage's Ruined and Edward Zwick's Blood Diamond* (2013) from Jennifer Belliveau.

The first analysis is by Carmen Garcia (2012) entitled *Feminine Spaces and Identity in Lynn Nottage's Ruined*. This analysis studies issue

about women and domesticity. This study focuses on her concern with feminine identities and subverts the meaning of spaces traditionally considered to be domestic and the feminine stereotypes. The research uses character and conflict to find the meaning of the play. The result of this study shows that the borders of one's space, both in physical world, and when pertaining to one's identity, are constantly subject to transgression, invasion, and ruin.

The second study that also gives contribution to this analysis is *Prospectus: An Ecofeminist Deconstruction of Lynn Nottage's Ruined and Edward Zwick's Blood Diamond (2013)* by Jennifer Belliveau. This analysis deals with ecofeminism theory. In analyzing the play *Ruined* and *Blood Diamond*, the researcher uses post-colonial Africa as their setting. The result of the study reveals that despite the intentions of Edward Zwick and Lynn Nottage of giving voice to the people of these regions and increasing American awareness of the problems that the conflict trade causes, they both fail to do so in a gender-equitable.

Unlike the previous studies above, this study is focused on the ways the female characters in the story show the terrifying conditions that they suffer as the result of men violence towards them. This analysis explores some dramatic elements such as character, plot/conflict and setting to revealing the meaning in this playscript. Moreover, it aims to reveal the act of men superiority.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This analysis about men superiority is related to the feminist concept by Simone de Beauvoir. According to Beauvoir (1974), men view women as fundamentally different from themselves, women are reduced to the status of the second sex and hence subordinate. The term 'women's subordination' refers to the inferior position of women, their lack of access to resources and decision making etc. and to the patriarchal domination that women are subjected to in most societies. So, women's subordination means the inferior position of women to men. As Sultana says in his journal (2011)

Subordination is the situation in which one is forced to stay under the control of other. So, women's subordination means the social situation in which women are forced to stay under the control of men. In this way to keep women under men's control, patriarchy operates some social customs, traditions and social roles by socialization process. P.7

From statement above, we can conclude that power and strength that the man have can be a tool to subjugate the women. The women have lack of power, get discrimination and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence cooperatively come up to the inferiority of women. It can be concluded that the women's subordination is a situation, where a power relationship exists and men superiority into women. It appears such as discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, and violence. The female character in this play face the inferiority that affect their condition became worse. They experience the practice of men superiority that give bad impact into their condition mentally and physically.

In addition, according to American Psychiatric Association (2000), women suffer more often from fears of specific situation. The fear that caused from worse situation such violence lead to their problematic feelings. They feel sadness and loss, feeling guilt and experience a great loss of energy and motivation. In this play script, the women have mental condition that affect their mind, mood and feeling. They have traumatic feeling, anger and frustrated with their own lives.

The process of analyzing the play script uses dramatic elements such as; character, plot, and setting of the story to reveal the meaning of the playscript. First, character become the crucial thing that we need in revealing the meaning. Conforming to Abrams (1999):

“Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action.” (P.32)

From the statement above, it can be concluded that the way to analyze the character should focus on character’s action, thought, conversation and reaction toward conflict. It also gives the readers ability to know the qualities of the characters. In this play, there are two characters that lead the story, Shopie and Salima. The characters have been trough the harsh in their life. They have traumatic feeling and bad memories are haunted them. Their body get control in the bar. It can be seen through their actions, mind and thought that experience men superiority.

Next, the dramatic element used in analyzing this playscript is plot/conflict. According to Abrams (1999:224), the plot (which Aristotle termed the *mythos*) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects. This description is deceptively simple, because the actions (including verbal discourse as well as physical actions) are performed by particular characters in a work and are the means by which they exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities. While, the plot structure of a play including the exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution (or *denouement*). With the purpose of analyzing this playscript, the identification to plot/conflict is useful to find character actions to experience the horror of male domination in the conflict area. In this analysis, the plot/conflict comes through the internal caused by external. The external conflict is the pride of the strength and fearlessness of men makes them to torment and victimize women. Then, the internal comes from the suffering of women in Congo.

Another dramatic element that also gives contribution to reveal the meaning of this playscript is setting. According to Lynch (2003:284), setting consists of works' natural, manufactured, political, cultural and temporal environment, including everything the character knows and owns. Setting is not only about time and place taken in the story, however it is explaining the situation and the problems facing by character. It affects every action and decision taken by the character which greatly influences the storyline. In

this analysis, this story takes place in Congo where the domination of male is strong because of the country condition. There are armies and rebellions near the place that the women lived.

The process of analyzing the playscript is done by text and context-based interpretation. As claimed by Guerin (2005):

“Text-based interpretation is the approach that based on the analysis and interpretation of the text itself, which nothing more than what is whole text about. Meanwhile, context-based interpretation is the approach that considers the historical period during which work was written including the circumstances of culture, history, political, and social.”

From the statement above, it can be concluded that text-based interpretation takes the meaning of the story only in the text itself. Meanwhile, context based interpretation involves the phenomenon that happen in the world that connect with the story. This study is not only focus on the text itself but also incriminates the circumstances of culture, history, and social related to gender roles between women and men.

1.10 Methodology

The analysis of the play script *Ruined* (2009) by Lynn Nottage is done through text and context-based interpretation. Fictional devices such as character, plot and setting are used to analyze this play script. These devices are related each other. Character is used to reveal the men superiority by analyzing character belief, attitude, and behavior or action. Plot is used to acknowledge the conflicts the character faced. Setting has a function to show

the situation, atmosphere, and condition face by the character in order to reveal the suffering of the women which face the horror of men behavior. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on feminist concept by Simone de Beauvoir.