

**SUBALTERN WOMEN IN NOVEL *SING, UNBURIED, SING* BY JESMYN
WARD**

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree



Written by:

MUHAMMAD DANDI SAPUTRA

17019094

Advisor :

Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul : Subaltern Women In Novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* By Jesmyn Ward
Nama : M Dandi Saputra
NIM : 17019094
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Februari 2023

Disetujui oleh,

Pembimbing

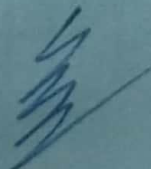


Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A

NIP. 197910062002121008

Mengetahui,

Ketua Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D

NIP. 197105251998022002

HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra
Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang dengan
judul

“Subaltern Women In Novel *Sing,Unburied,Sing* By Jesmyn Ward”

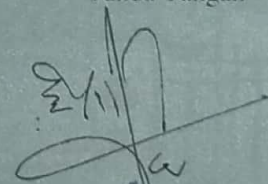

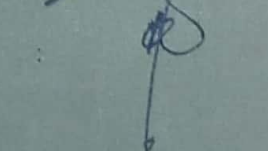
Nama : M Dandi Saputra
NIM : 17019094
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Februari 2023

Tim Penguji

Tanda Tangan

1. Ketua : Delvi Wahyuni S.S, M.A
2. Sekretaris : Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum,Ph.D
3. Anggota : Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh,S.S.,M.A

: 
: 
: 



SURAT PERNYATAAN TIDAK PLAGIAT

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : M Dandi Saputra
NIM/ TM : 17019094/2017
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

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Diketahui oleh,

Ketua Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris

Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D.
NIP.19710525.199802.2.002

saya yang menyatakan,



M Dandi Saputra
NIM. 17019094

ABSTRACT

This research is an analysis of the novel "*Sing, Unburied, Sing*" by Jasmyn Ward (2017). In this study, the author aims to reveal the issue of the subaltern woman faced by Leonie's characters as women who experience subaltern positions in their family and society. In this analysis, there are two forms of oppression as a part of subaltern women. The first is verbal oppression such as shouted, being sworn, humiliated, and threatened with harm. This action puts a woman in a subaltern position. The second is physical oppression such as being kicked, hit, pushed, scratched, or pinched. Physical oppression gives a wound or scar to the woman as a result of the act. This analysis uses the concept of "subaltern," a branch of feminism proposed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and supported by several other experts. The use of concepts based on the context of the novel and interpretation of the text. In this analysis, the elements of the novel that help reveal the subaltern toward women are character, setting, plot, and conflict.

Key words: Subaltern, Oppression, Women

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini merupakan analisis terhadap novel “sing, unburied, sing” karya Jasmyn Ward (2017). Dalam penelitian ini, penulis bertujuan untuk mengungkap persoalan subaltern perempuan yang dihadapi tokoh Leonie sebagai perempuan yang mengalami posisi subaltern dalam keluarga dan masyarakat. Dalam analisis ini, terdapat dua bentuk penindasan sebagai tindakan merendahkan perempuan dan membuat perempuan diposisi sebagai seorang subaltern. Pertama adalah penindasan verbal seperti dibentak, dimaki, dihina, dan diancam. Tindakan ini menempatkan perempuan pada posisi subaltern. Kedua adalah penindasan fisik seperti ditendang, dipukul, didorong, dicakar, atau dicubit. Penindasan fisik memberikan luka pada perempuan yang dari perbuatan tersebut. Analisis ini menggunakan konsep " subaltern, “ yang merupakan cabang feminisme yang dikemukakan oleh Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak dan didukung oleh beberapa ahli lainnya. Penggunaan konsep didasarkan pada konteks novel dan interpretasi teks. Dalam analisis ini, unsur-unsur novel yang membantu mengungkap subaltern terhadap perempuan tersebut adalah tokoh, latar, alur, dan konflik.

Kata kunci : Subaltern, penindasan, perempuan.

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Praise God Almighty, for the presence of plenty of mercy and his grace, so that the writer can complete the thesis with the title: Subaltern Women In *Sing, Unburied, Sing* Novel by Jesmyn Ward (2017). I don't forget I would like to send sholawat to prophet Muhammad SAW. Sincere thanks to my parents who always provide prayers and support for the smooth completion of this thesis. This thesis was prepared in order to fulfill the requirements to obtain a bachelor's Degree in English Literature S1 in English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research Problem

Gender and inequality issue continue to be crucial issue that must be discussed now, although the struggle for equality has been done in many places in the world. These are still happened today, because the struggle for equality such a wasted, especially for women. Women who have become an object of inequality have caused it to be inseparable from problems of social construction. This makes women's position limited to getting their rights in social life. Women have always been objects within the scope of patriarchy and are positioned as second-class humans after men. Women cannot be separated from their oppression and powerlessness to get a better life. Women are positioned as subaltern groups and also get marginalization, so they cannot articulate their sound to fight against the patriarchal system that has cornered them.

According to *Antonio Gramsci (2005)* subaltern is the inferior classes, by definition, are not bound together and can't join until they can turn into a "State": their set of experiences, subsequently, is interlaced with that of common society, and along these lines with the historical backdrop of States and gatherings of States. It's means subaltern is used to referring for the marginalized and lower class. Subaltern refers to the inferior group, namely the community group that becomes the hegemony of the ruling classes. In this case, women are positioned as an inferior class in a patriarchal society.

Furthermore, referring to *Gayatri Spivak (1988)* From the colonization era until now, women always consider in second - class in social life, and put them in subaltern group. So, women are not even able to make a voice when she fights with the signs of her culture. Its means that the position of women as inferior does not will get a chance

in social life. More, the woman loses her right to live life and is forced to follow the rules set up by society, especially by men. On the other hand, stereotypes that position women as second after men or under men make women people who are always marginalized and receive oppression from men. Men as a dominant role in their social life, always get access doing the oppression in their social life, especially to the woman as an object of oppression. Other factors for some women are the possibility of oppression occurs throughout their lives, because with changes in marital status. Therefore, this phenomenon triggers men to oppress women.

In addition, *Oakley (2001)* defines that the history of discrimination and oppression against women begins in human upbringing until period of death, in which women lost points to men due to the gender makeup that implies masculinity and femininity. It means that women are subjected to discrimination especially on the issue of masculinity factor where patriarchy as highest ranked than feminism. The interpretation of gender from the early stages is leading to discrimination as males are seen as superior creature and they tend to enjoy the freedom which caps them with later authority over families with women being at the nethermost point of social life.

According to *The Gender Knot Unraveling Our Patriarchy Legacy (2015)* Oppression is a system of social inequality one group is positioned to dominate and benefit the exploitation and subordination of another. It means oppression is an action that aims to dominate someone or control others due to gaps in life. On the other hand, oppression is an act that to seize the rights of others and positions the oppressed person to always be under or weak. Oppression also happen because there are superior and inferior individual. Then, superior individual take advantages by oppress inferior individual.

Moreover, *Ahmed, A.S. (2012)* defines oppression or abuse has two main form. First is verbally, he was defined as being shouted at, sworn at, humiliated and threatened with harm. Second is physical, he was defined as being hit, kicked, pushed, scratched or pinched. It means verbal oppression is the oppression by someone through the medium of language or speech. Physical oppression is the oppression carried out by someone through physical contact and resulting in wounds or scars on the limbs.

More so, verbal oppression is categorized into subtle oppression while physical oppression is categorized into material oppression. It is also related with the material oppression which defined by *Kotwal, S. (2019)*. He stated that Material oppression involves a tangible manifestation, occurring as a result of an individual being forced into a particular action.

On the other hand, subtle oppression is the underlying workings of society that are politically charged and shape our behaviour without us even knowing. Based on this definition, it could be understood that any form of oppression leads to the results in a real impact. That can be seen by the five human senses such as a wound, bruise, bleed or anything else that has a mark is called material oppression or physical oppression, while any form of oppression that does not have a clear mark that can be seen directly is called subtle oppression.

Subsequently, there are so many cases about women oppression. The oppression that women get from men is verbal oppression (mental) and non-verbal oppression (physical). Based on the *Forbes article publish by Bryan Robinson, (2021)* The gender discrimination is still alive and well in the workplace. He stated in February, 2021 concluded that female academic internal medicine hospitalists routinely encounter gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment. Among 18 institutions surveyed, women frequently reported inappropriate touch, sexual remarks, gestures and

suggestive looks. And female doctors, more than male doctors, reported that their gender negatively impacted their career opportunities. From this cases, it's mean women are still getting oppression by men and it's the example of verbal and physical oppression by men.

Moreover, oppression of women does not only occur in the social and work environment, but women often also get unfair treatment and oppression in the family environment. In *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, Susan Moller Okin (1989) argues that the contemporary gender-structured family unfairly distributes the benefits and burdens of family life between husbands and wives. Okin included power on his list of benefits, which he called an "important social good". As he puts it, "when we take a serious look at the distribution between husband and wife of important social goods such as work (paid and unpaid), power, prestige, self-esteem, opportunities for self-development, and physical and economic security. , we find socially constructed inequalities between them, right at the bottom of the list". This means that Okin seems to presuppose that power is an unequal and unfair resource between men and women.

The issue of women's oppression that needs to be addressed by women and becomes a public concern is not only seen in real life, but also in a literary work. There is one novel entitle *Sing-Unburied-Sing* written by Jasmyn Ward published in 2017 that also contribute to expose this issue. *Sing-Unburied-Sing* (2017) is the winner of the National Book Award for fiction. The novel is narrated through two character's point of view. First character is Jojo as a kids who representative a men and Leoni as a daughter's Pop who representative a women.

Leoni is an African-American woman living in America. He has a family with a low economic background and lives on the outskirts of America because of the social discrimination practiced by American society at that time. Even though, at that time blacks were allowed to take education and go to the same place as whites, the differences were still very clear. This is clearly seen and experienced by women.

After graduated, Leoni decided to get married and has family. Eventhough, she is black woman, Leoni has white husband. Nevertheless, Leonie still gets discrimination and oppression from white people. Leonie, is an inconsistent presence in the lives of her and her toddler brother. She is an imperfect mother in constant conflict with herself and those around her. She is Black and the father of his children is White. She wanted to be a better mother but was unable to put her children above her own needs, especially drug use. While being tortured and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which only comes to her when she is drunk, Leonie is fought in a way that reflects the brutal reality of her circumstances.

Since childhood Leoni did not get the same treatment as her brother, she was only provided with limited knowledge from school and learned general knowledge from her mother. The science taught by Leoni's mother is basic science and this knowledge is learned through general knowledge about nature, such as medicinal plants, biology and other natural sciences that Leoni can use in the future.

Based on oppression which applied to female character, we can reveal the meaning of subaltern toward women. The faced by female character who living in United States as a black female. It focuses on the difficulties caused by the low view of women, male domination, the inequalities of rights which women receive, and the perversions that women commit as a way to release the emotions they hold back as a result of such oppression. Based on the explanation above, in this research the researcher use feminism approach by Gayatri Spivak about the subaltern.

1.2 Focus of the Problem

This analysis focuses on characters women, black American who faced the subaltern in her environment and family. This study shows how the impact to the character women black in America.

This study is to identify the implied meaning from the text in the novel and focuses on the setting, character, that can be applied to use in analyzing.

1.3 Research Question

Subaltern toward women as an important issue in novel *Sing-Unburied-Sing* (2017) by Jesmyn Ward. Therefore, there are some research questions in the novel to analyze. It is can be read as follow:

1. What are part of subaltern women in Novel ?
2. How does the oppression exist in Novel ?

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The study aims to expose the issue about subaltern women in novel *Sing-Unburied-Sing* (2017) by Jesmyn Ward. It is also intended to find out how the characters, setting, plot and conflict contribute in revealing the issue of subaltern women. It is uses the qualitative method to analyze. Instrument of the research for this study is the analysis of the novel itself and the hypothesis for this study isn't necessarily needed. The data used for this study is a quotations from the novel entitled *Sing-Unburied-Sing* (2017) by Jesmyn Ward and certain books about theory that relate to the analysis. In addition, this study deals with feminism approach with concept subaltern by Gayatri Spivak.