

**UTILIZING WOMEN IN *THE BUDDHA IN THE ATTIC* (2011) BY JULIE
OTSUKA**

Thesis

***Submitted as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement to Obtain
the Strata One (S1) Degree in English Department***



By:

Ulfa Rimadini

15019081/2015

Advisors:

Dra. An Fauzia Rozani S, M.A

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

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HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi
Program Studi Sastra Inggris Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang
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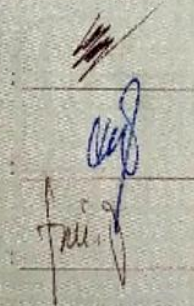
Nama : Ulfa Rimadini
NIM : 15019081/2015
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Desember 2019

Tim Penguji

Tanda Tangan

1. Ketua : 1.Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D :
2. Sekretaris : Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A. :
3. Anggota : Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A. :



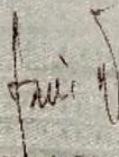
HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul : Utilizing Women in *The Buddha In The Attic*
(2011) by Julie Otsuka
Nama : Ulfa Rimadini
NIM : 15019081/2015
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, Desember 2019

Disetujui oleh,

Pembimbing



Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A.
NIP. 19660424.199002.2.001

Mengetahui

Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D
NIP. 19710525.199802.7.002



UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG
FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI
JURUSAN BAHASA DAN SASTRA INGGRIS
Jl. Belibis. Air Tawar Barat. Kampus Selatan FBS UNP. Padang. Telp/Fax: (0751) 447347

SURAT PERNYATAAN TIDAK PLAGIAT

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:


Nama : Ulfa Rimadini
NIM/TM : 15019081/2015
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : FBS UNP

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Diketahui oleh,

Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris


Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D
NIP. 19710525.199802.7.002

Saya yang menyatakan


Ulfa Rimadini
15019081/2015

ABSTRAK

Rimadini, Ulfa. 2019. Utilizing Women In The Novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) By Julie Otsuka. Skripsi. Universitas Negeri Padang

Pembimbing: Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A

Isu tentang pemanfaatan perempuan dapat di ungkapkan di novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) oleh Julie Otsuka. Perangkat fiksi seperti *character*, *setting* dan *plot* berkontribusi dalam mengungkapkan makna dibalik novel. Intrepretasi dari *Text-based* dan *context-based* memiliki peran penting dalam mengungkap isu tentang pemanfaatan perempuan. Analisa ini juga berhubungan dengan konsep *exploitation* dan *subordination* dari Kamla Bhasin. Pemanfaatan perempuan mengacu pada bagaimana perempuan di kendalikan dan di gunakan secara menguntungkan oleh laki - laki. Pemanfaatan perempuan dapat dilihat dari dua bentuk, eksploitasi dan pelecehan seksual.

Kata kunci: eksploitasi, subordinasi, pemanfaatan.

ABSTRACT

Rimadini, Ulfa. 2019. Utilizing Women In The Novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) By Julie Otsuka. Thesis. Universitas Negeri Padang

Advisor: Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A

The issue utilizing women can be revealed in novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) by Julia Otsuka. The fictional devices such as character, setting and plot contribute in uncovering the meaning beyond the novel. Text-based and context-based interpretations also have the important role in discovering the issue utilizing women. This analysis also deals with the concept of exploitation and subordination by Kamla Bhasin. Utilizing women refers to how women are controlled and profitably used by men. Utilizing women is reflected through two forms, exploitation and sexual harassment.

Key words: exploitation, subordination, utilizing.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the problem

From time to time, society takes over the concept of gender roles which relates to culture. Society creates some norms generally consider acceptable, appropriate, and desirable for people. For example, men are the highest authority while women must obey and submit to decisions of men. This idea that gender differences is socially constructed. It tends to separate men and women which are perceived differently from another. This concept makes men to have control in every movement of women in every aspect of life.

Substantively, man and woman are equal. They have the same opportunity and right to participate in all kinds of social activities. However, in reality society believes that man is powerful and woman is powerless. In other words, men hold power in all of the important institutions of society and they have full control of women. While, women have no power and are marginalized in all aspects of life. Woman's duty is to take care of the household and children. For instance, in early 1900 Japanese women are restricted to pursue education. They are only taught about how to farm, cook and clean the house. It can be said that woman's role is only in domestic area. Even worse, marriage and motherhood have been made as tools of oppression. However, they do not rebel to man because they adhere patriarchy system. Hence, they suffer most both in society and in family. The above condition relates to Walby (1990) states:

“In this system women’s labor power, women’s reproduction, women’s sexuality, women’s mobility and property and other economic resources—are under patriarchal control that explains the movement of women have been limited the amount or growth by men from time to time to keep them subordinate and cannot make something new or changes in society. (p.20)”

The quotation above shows that men have power in every aspect of life. They make some kinds of chains to restrict women. Hence, women are subordinated. Men believe that they have power to make decisions in all important aspect, even to be controller. It means that men have more power to control women. This restraint can affect women’s mindset and action to obey man.

Moreover, men have unlimited access to any important aspect. They can pursue their dreams. They are allowed to contribute in politics, economics, laws, academic works and many more. In other word, men are the leader who make decision and can changes in society.

As time goes by, women are allowed to work in public area. However, men still take control of women. Their job in public area tends to reflect woman's role in domestic area. Their job is limited such as being maid. Other jobs that’s allowed for woman relates to household work; their role are being nurse or taking care of someone, cleaner, waitress, labor. Even worse, they get abused at work. It relates to Kate Hodal’s report in The Guardian News which entitled *Abuse is daily reality for female garment workers for Gap and H&M* (June:2018):

“H&M and Gap’s fast fashion supply chain model creates unreasonable production targets and underbid contracts. H&M lists 235 Indian garment factories

among its suppliers, the report says. In one dispute last month in a Bangalore factory over wages and working conditions, a female tailor said to researchers that she was grabbed by the hair and punched, then told: “You whore, your caste people should be kept where the slippers are kept.””

The quotation above shows that companies make target which result women work quickly. Besides, they are under extreme pressure. In the other words, they are exploited by companies. Even worse, they get threat and violence at work. They get verbal and physical violence. This harassment is related to the case experienced by Nene Nwayo. She is an actress in Nigerian film industry, known as Nollywood. In her interview with *BBC News* on September 4, 2019, she said:

“I was asked for sex 10-15 times in exchange for roles in films. I also have been told to lighten my skin, something else I refuses to do.”

The quotation above shows that she is subordinated by man in film production. In order to get roles in film, she is utilized by man as tool for sex. In the other words, she gets sexual harassment at workplace. She is not only utilized at behind film production but also the role played in the film. She is selected to become actress. Moreover, she is chosen based on the standards of beauty in the patriarchal system.

This phenomenon also occurs in this era. Several women are utilized by man. One of the phenomenons occurs in Indonesia, many women are recruited to work as sales promotion girl. They are selected by beauty standard of patriarchal system. It can be seen from their appearances are arranged by man to persuade purchaser. This practice gives profit to man. The reflection of this practice can also

be found in fiction works. One of them is a novel of Julie Otsuka entitled *The Buddha In The Attic*, which is reflected the issue of utilizing women. In this analysis, utilizing women refers to how women are controlled and profitably used by men. The novels show the real condition of women who are subordinated by men. They get exploitation and sexual harassment. However, women cannot run away from system which men have higher position to control them.

1.2 Utilizing women

This is the key word to form the terminology of this study, which is utilizing. Utilizing in Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary of English (2018) is defined as to put to use; make practical or profitable use of. While in the Cambridge English Dictionary (2018), utilizing means to make use of something.

In this study, utilizing women refers to how women are controlled and profitably used by men. In this novel, utilizing women is shown in two forms, labor exploitation and sexual harassment.

1.3 A Brief Description of the Author's Biography

Otsuka was born in Palo Alto, California, in 1962. Her parents were Japanese descent, her father was an issei. Issei is a generation of Japanese who was born in Japan and the first generation to immigrate to America. Her mother was a nisei. Nisei is the second generation and the grandchildren. When she was nine years old, she and her family moved to Palos Verdes, California. She has two brothers, one of whom is Michael Otsuka. He is currently teaching at the London School of Economics. While, Otsuka attended Yale University, and graduated with a

Bachelor of Arts degree in 1984. She graduated from Columbia University with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1999.

Her first novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (2002), is about the incarceration of a Japanese-American family during World War II. It has been translated into eleven languages and was a New York Times Notable Book, a San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year, a Barnes & Noble Discover GreatNew Writers finalist, and was recently added to the National Endowment for the Arts' 'The Big Read' Library. The book is based on Otsuka's own family history: her grandfather was arrested by the FBI as a suspected spy for Japan the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed. While, her mother, uncle and grandmother spent three years in a prison camp in Topaz, Utah.

Her second novel, *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011), is a winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award, France's Prix Femina Étranger, the Langum Prize for American Historical Fiction, and was a finalist for the National Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and The International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. A New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle and Los Angeles Times bestseller, this novel has been translated into 22 languages. It was selected as a New York Times Notable Book, a San Francisco Chronicle and Boston Globe Best Book the Year, and was named a Top Ten Book by Library Journal and Vogue. In the interview with Granta 114 on 2011, Julia Otsuka said:

“they expected to marry handsome, wealthy young men (as ‘advertised’ by their future spouses in their photographs and letters) and live a life of leisure. Or, if they expected to work, then they thought that after several years they’d be able to save up enough money to sail back home to Japan and live out the rest of their

days ‘with a cat in their lap and a fan in their hand’. But life in America was not what they expected. It was one deceit after another. Some of them were deceived by their husbands, who had lied about their age and financial status. Within days of their arrival, many of the women found themselves picking strawberries in the fields, living in migrant labour camps or working as maids for white women in the city.”

The quotation above shows that women want to get better life. In order to change their status, they have willpower to move to America. However, they do not have knowledge and more experience about America. Hence, they are not aware that they have been deceived by men. Even worse, they are subordinated by men. They are utilized as maids and agricultural laborers.

Moreover, most of Julie Otsuka’s works reveal the issue about Japanese immigrant in America. Her works are inspired by her own family experience and she won many awards from her works such as the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Langum Prize for American Historical Fiction and many more.

1.4 *The Buddha In The Attic*

The Buddha In The Attic, a novel written by Julie Otsuka, discusses the issue about utilizing women. In this analysis, utilizing women refers to how women are controlled and profitably used by men. These women come from Japan. They are young girls who are fourteen years old. They are daughters of a fisherman and a farmer. They are diligent, obedient, tolerant and skillful. Their family train them to work hard. They are trained for cooking, sewing, cleaning and farming. Moreover, they are educated to be good wives. They are taught to have good behavior and attitude, serve and nurse someone. In order to get better life, they come to America. Furthermore, they are forced by their parents to marry American. In this condition,

women are not aware that man subordinates them. They are regarded as the complement for men. They are taught to obey every command given by men. These women are confined by rules and restrictions. Utilizing women is reflected through two forms, exploitation and sexual harassment.

In term of exploitation, woman's movement and freedom are limited by men. It refers to women who are forced to work hard. They work from one camp to the next plantations. Even they do a lot of work in several places. They do not get standard of living, security and health insurance. They are under extreme pressure. Furthermore, they will be threatened if they do not obey the rules. They work in every single day but they are paid less.

In term of sexual harassment, woman is used by man as sex tools. Men tend to persecute women in two places, at home as wife and workplace as labor. Women get raped and violence experience. Even worse, they are forced into sexual slavery. However, their genital area gets damaged. They cannot control their reproduction capacities. They can not decide whether to use contraception or do abortion.

1.5 Problem of the Study

Utilizing women appeared as an important issue in Julie Otsuka's novel, *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) to reveal the issue about utilizing women, research questions are formulated below:

1. How does the whole novel expose the issue of utilizing women in *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011)?
2. To what extent do characters, setting and plot sustain the meaning of utilizing women in *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011)?

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out how far the characters reflect the issue about utilizing women in novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) by Julie Otsuka. This study is going to investigate character, setting and plot in the novel in revealing the issue about utilizing women.

1.7 Previous Study

The analysis of *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) focuses on analyzing about man in utilizing women has two studies related. In this analysis, there are two articles that give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel. First, the study by Olusola Oso, in her article which entitled *The Treatment of Patriarchy in Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood and Sefi Atta's Everything Good Will Come* (2017), and the second study by Helen Macnaughtan, in her article which entitled *Female Labour and the Occupation Period in Japan: the Case of the Cotton Textile Industry* (2005).

The first study is done by Olusola Oso, entitled *The Treatment of Patriarchy in Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood and Sefi Atta's Everything Good Will Come* (2017). It discusses about the African women who are oppressed, marginalized and tortured by men in family and society. This analysis is done based on the textual analysis; involves the fictional devices (character, plot and setting). The main character is Nigerian woman who struggle to survive in her own country dealing with the strong principle of patriarchy. This analysis is done based on the concept of patriarchy system from Simone de Beavoir. The result of this study

reflects that the main characters, the women, have to survive in a family and society which are strong with patriarchy system

The second study is done by Helen Macnaughtan (2005), in her article which is entitled *Female Labour and the Occupation Period in Japan: the Case of the Cotton Textile Industry*, discusses about the influence the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (“SCAP”) had on labour conditions and employment practices in the cotton textile industry. This study deals with the feminist concept by Simone De Beauvoir. It focuses on the system of employment of female workers that had taken shape in the industry during the prewar period, how this was viewed by SCAP during the Occupation period, and the effects this had on the industry’s employment of women in the postwar period.

The above studies give contribution and inspiration in analyzing the novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) by Julie Otsuka. The first study discusses about the African women who are oppressed, marginalized and tortured by men in family and society. Meanwhile, the second study discusses the influence the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (“SCAP”) had on labour conditions and employment practices in the cotton textile industry. Unlike the previous studies, this analysis focuses on utilizing women. Furthermore, this study uses fictional devices such as character, setting and plot as those related studies above in order to reveal the meaning of utilizing women from the text.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The analysis about utilizing women in this novel is related to the concept of patriarchy proposed by Kamla Bhasin. She is an Indian developmental feminist activist, poet, author and social scientist. Kamla in her book mentions about how patriarchy dominates women in domestic and public area. Men have the dominant roles however women have the subordinate roles. Patriarchy is an ideology or belief system and social structure which men are superior.

There are two terms which relates to this issue, exploitation and subordination. According to Kamla Bhasin in her book which on entitled *Understanding Gender* (2000), she states:

“The term exploitation is now normally used in a Marxian sense, and it means economic exploitation or extraction of surplus. Women’s exploitation thus means that they are made to provide economic services at low or no rates at all, and the exploiters derive economic or material benefits from this exploitative relationship.” (p.47)

The quotation above shows that how woman is used by men. It can be seen through this phrase *to provide economic services* in the quotation above means that woman is person to complement economic growth. In the other words, they fulfill the finances of man. Even worse, in the workplace women are exploited by man. They are forced to work under production targets and underbid contracts. However, they are paid less and work without day off. On contrary, men tend to take huge advantages from woman.

The women are always treated as secondary person. In the other words, they are discriminated, disregarded and subordinated by man. According to Kamla Bhasin in her book which on entitled *Understanding Gender* (2000) said:

“Subordination means being placed below or ranked in an inferior position to someone else, or being subject to the control or authority of another. 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.” (p.47)

The quotation above shows that how the position of women are subordinated. People tend to assume that women are inferior and powerless. Moreover, women have no access to any important aspect. Hence, they cannot pursue their dreams. Even, they can not to contribute in education, laws, politics and economics. This cause women are often controlled and subordinated by men.

Men can get approval from whom they suppress. Millett (1977) states that man can do that through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women’s subordination to men. It implies that patriarchy system is characterized by power, dominance and hierarchy. Hence, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

It is also supported by Christine Delphy (1981) who said that marriage is a labor contract that gives men the right to exploit women. It means that marriage becomes slavery for women. The wife becomes slave for the husband without salary. This actions and behavior have been accepted for a long time in society. In

fact, this has been considered a normal thing even though they are bad. Flintan (2003) states that in patriarchal cultures men have the largest role in decision-making about resources at both the household and community level, meaning women have disproportionately fewer rights to land and property.

In this analysis, concept of patriarchy refers to man who is represented by the character to utilize women. They hold power and have dominant roles. Through a social organization or an institution, it makes easy for man rule over women. They exploit women to be labor or maid.

The analysis of this novel uses fictional devices such as; character, plot, and setting to reveal the meaning. First, character is important element to reveal the meaning of novel. According to Abrams (1999):

“Characters are the person represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by 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 mean that the way to analyze the character should focus on character's action, thought, dialogue and reaction toward conflict. It also gives the readers ability to know the qualities of the characters. In this novel, there are two characters, man and woman. It represents man who utilizes woman. The first character uses their power to take control and force women to work for them. The reaction of the second character is facing oppression and subordination.

Women become dependent. They have to survive and endure all the pain and suffering.

The second device is used in this analysis is plot. Plot is an important element to reveal the meaning of this novel. According to Guerin (2005:8) stated that conflict can be divided into internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is the conflict within a character itself. Meanwhile, the external conflict is the struggle between character and an outside force such as nature, other character and environment. In this analysis, the characters confront the internal and the external conflicts. The external conflict can be seen from men who act inhuman treatment, such as abuse and do violence to woman. Then, internal conflict occurs when woman struggle to work as a laborer. The restriction of society and family that makes the emphasis and the obstacle, however they have to be self-governed.

Setting is another fictional device of the play. Setting also gives the contribution in analyzing the play. The setting is not only about the time and place but it is also about the situation. According to Abrams (2005:330), setting is the general place, historical time and social circumstances that occur in the work. In this analysis, the story takes place in America on the early 1900s where many foreign immigrants came to America. Many foreign immigrants came to America, one of them was Japanese. They were farmers. They came as laborers in a large factory in America. Their arrival benefited America to recruit them as the cheapest laborers. In particular, young female farmers were easily dominated by men. It shows how woman was being oppressed and tortured by man.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text and context based interpretation in order to bring out the issue about utilizing women. According to Guerin (2005), text-based interpretation means the approach that based on the analysis and interpretation of the text itself. It means that the meaning of this novel found by correlation among some element such as characters, plot, and setting. These elements give big contribution in revealing the issue about utilizing women in the novel. Meanwhile, context based interpretation means that the analysis of the novel is not only focused on the text itself, but also involved the real phenomenon that occurs in the real world.

1.9 Methodology

The analysis of novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) by Julia Otsuka is going through text and context-based interpretation. The fictional devices such as character, setting and plot are needed during the process of analyzing. These devices are related to each other. The character is used to reveal the transforming self by analyzing character belief, attitude, and behavior or action. The plot is used to acknowledge the conflicts character faced. Furthermore, the setting is also a crucial device as it is situation and condition that exist in the novel in order to reveal character way to utilize woman. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of exploitation and subordination from Kamla Bhasin and several experts such as Flintan, Lerner and many more.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The issue utilizing women can be revealed in novel *The Buddha In The Attic* (2011) by Julia Otsuka. The fictional devices such as character, setting and plot contribute in uncovering the meaning beyond the novel. Text-based and context-based interpretations also have the important role in discovering the issue utilizing women. This analysis also deals with the concept of exploitation and subordination by Kamla Bhasin (2003). Utilizing women refers to how women are controlled and profitably used by men. Utilizing women is reflected through two forms, exploitation and sexual harassment.

Exploitation is the main point to show the issue of utilizing women that takes in two places; at home and workplace. At home, women get tormented by their husband. They often get intimidation and threat from their husband. However, they cannot run away from man's control. They get threat if they break the rules. At workplace, women are forced to work. They also get unfair treatment during they work. They do a lot works without day off. They also do not get standard of living, welfare and security.

Sexual harassment is the second point to show the issue of utilizing women that takes in two places; at home and workplace. At home, women tend to get more physical abuse from their husband. They are forced to serve man's desire. While in the workplace, a woman is used as sex tools. They often get unwelcome touching when they work. Even worse, they are raped by man. Men take more advantages by working them into sexual slavery.

Overall, this novel shows how men get more advantages from women. This case can make hard for women to stand up. The cause of the utilizing women is from the lack of knowledge and courage of the woman to rebel. However, many factors that women cannot rebel because of the family and society. They are not only exploited by their husband but also from other men in the workplace. However, they still obey with men's rules. They do every command that men force to do. This reality is related to the concept from Kamla Bhasin in her book about exploitation and subordination. It is able to open our minds that a power ease man to get more benefits. They have an authority to control and make decisions in all important aspects. While women are dominated and controlled by man's treatment. This treatment is shown through the way they exploit and harass women.

Substantively, women have to show their intellectual and ability. They have to pursue their dreams and upgrade their knowledge and experience to compete with the patriarchal system. They also have to work hard to prove that they are worth as human. Women deserve respect because they are able to contribute based on their intellectual. They can be proud because they can be a leader. This is what women must have in order to stand up and against the patriarchy system.

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