



**AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN'S  
RULES IN JEAN SASSON'S *PRINCESS***

Written by

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LETTERS  
JEMBER UNIVERSITY  
2014**



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**THESIS**

A thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letter,  
Jember University as one of the requirements to obtain the  
award of Sarjana Degree in English studies

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## **DEDICATION**

**This thesis is proudly dedicated to:**

1. My dearest parents, Drs. Irwanto and Sri Hartati, thank you for your patience to raise me up. I thank you for being the best mom and dad in the world.
2. My Alma Mater.

**MOTTO**

“All men and women are created equal”

(Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Declaration of Sentiments*)

## DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled *American Perspective on Saudi Arabian Women's Rules in Jean Sasson's Princess* is an original piece of writing. I certify that the analysis and the research described in this thesis have never been submitted for any degree or any publications. I certainly certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2014

The examinee,

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## SUMMARY

**AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN'S RULES IN  
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*Princess*, a novel written by Jean Sasson, tells about Saudi Arabian women's condition under patriarchal system. The thesis focuses on the life of women in Saudi Arabia and their problems. They are marriage pattern, women domesticity, fashion, and education in the novel. The female characters in the novel tend to blame the rules being Saudi Arabian women. They see the regulation women as a violation on human right. Sultana, the main character in the novel, brings the voice of America. She shows and compares the differences between American and Saudi Arabian culture in women treatment.

The research discusses about first, the rules of being Saudi Arabian women and second, Sasson's perspective on the rules of being Saudi Arabian women. The data are analyzed by using Laurensen and Swingewood's *Sociology of Literature Theory*. I use sociological approach in analyzing the text. This thesis is qualitative research because it uses textual form. The thesis uses inductive method. Inductive tries to establish a general truth from the observation of fact. The technique of collecting data in this research is library research where the primary data are collected from *Princess*. The secondary data are collected from the data related to the reality of women in Saudi Arabia and American thought. The sources of evidence are taken through the females characters' experiences. There are education, women domesticity, fashion and marriage pattern.

The result of the research shows that Sultana firstly tries to see Saudi Arabia in American perspective. Sultana's reconciliation appears in the end of the novel when she looks herself as a truly Arabian woman. Sultana's reconciliation indicates that: when Jean Sasson tries to civilize the restricted culture of Saudi Arabia, she finally finds that America is different from Saudi Arabia. She shows that Sultana is Saudi Arabian woman, she cannot be American woman. Therefore, the condition of women in a particular era and place cannot globally be standardized, even by American perspective.

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6. My beloved fiancé, Wahid Habibullah, S.P with his pearl for unyielding support.
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Wishfully, this thesis may have a good contribution towards the English Students, especially those who intend to develop their knowledge on the study of literature.

Jember, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2014

**(Cahyaningtias Indriani)**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TITLE PAGE .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION PAGE.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>MOTTO .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DECLARATION PAGE.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>APPROVAL SHEET .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 The Background of Study.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 The Problem to Discuss .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 The Goals of the Study.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.1 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.2 Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingwood’s <i>Sociology and     Literature</i>.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.1 The Type of Research .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.2 Data Collection.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.3 Data Processing and Analysis .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4. AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN’S     RULES IN JEAN SASSON’S <i>PRINCESS</i>.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.1 American Women in 20<sup>th</sup> Century .....</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>4.2 American Perspective on Saudi Arabian Women’s Rules</b>	
<b>In Jean Sasson’s <i>Princess</i></b> .....	<b>17</b>
4.2.1 Education.....	17
4.2.2 Fashion .....	24
4.2.3 Mobility.....	27
4.2.4 Marriage .....	32
a. Arranged marriage.....	32
b. Polygamy.....	37
c. Divorce .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>x</b>

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of Study

Patriarchy is a social system where men inherently dominate everything, especially females (Walby, 1991:20). Women are biologically considered weaker. The biological weakness of women is considered unchangeable in the society. Millet in Salden mentions that term of patriarchy (rule of the father) is to describe the cause of women's oppression. "Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male". They are taken for granted to be fully submissive and obedient to men. They must respect and obey men's decision. Women are made inferior and the oppression has been compounded by men's belief that women are inferiors by nature (Selden, 1985:129-132).

Saudi Arabia is one of the countries applying patriarchal system. "Saudi Arabian women have not been treated as equal citizens to men" (Zuhur, 2011:218). Women and men are not in the same position. Women cannot move freely, do not have freedom to choose what they want such as choosing life partner, continuing their study, and choosing clothing style as they intend to. Saudi Arabian women are controlled by men and are expected to be submissive to men. Men guard them in any activity. Various rules and regulations restrict women's access to public procedures, courts, medical treatment, and travel based on the guardian's permission (Zuhur, 2011:225).

Patriarchal system, apparently, gets a lot of criticism in some countries. They assume that the patriarchal system violates human rights, especially women. America declared the independence on July 4 1776 said that "*all men are created equal*" (Welliman, 1991:2). The main principles of declaration of independence are the right for a good life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, therefore none can interfere the

other person's freedom. People have equal opportunities to be independent. All people are supposed to be free to do what they want to. American men and women are equal in the society. American women are able to work like men (Mulhal, 2008:12-13).

Related with the explanation above, I analyze the women's treatment in *Princess*. The novel is the portrait of Saudi Arabian women's oppression. It describes the life of Saudi Arabia Princess, Sultana, in the royal family in the twentieth century. It is all about Sultana's frustration and rebellion toward Saudi Arabian restricted culture on women. She grows up in a world of luxurious, fabulous, and uncountable wealth. She has four mansions in three continents, private jet, glittering jewel, and private dress designer. Behind her black floor-length veil, she is a prisoner, jailed by her father. She never gets her father's attention. She has no freedom, no control over her own life.

Sultana disagrees with Saudi Arabian society in treating woman unequally. She wants to be treated as a society member whose voice is heard and listened to. She feels oppressed by the rules in Saudi Arabia. She cannot choose her husband by herself, cannot continue her study, cannot leave home without her husband's permission, and must wear Abaya. Seeing the women's condition in Saudi Arabia, Sasson feels disappointed because the women under Saudi Arabian regime are oppressed.

The author, Jean Sasson, is American. She was born in United States in 1947. She moved to Saudi Arabian in 1978 and worked at The King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, Saudi Arabia. She expresses her disagreement toward Saudi Arabian restricted rules on women by creating *Princess*. She believes that the value of women's liberty and equal right that she adopts from America value are a right norm. She thinks that the rules in Saudi Arabian are considered as violence toward women's existence.

Studying Saudi Arabian culture on women's restriction, sociology of literature provides the key element of this research. Sociology is study of men's social world

and their products. Meanwhile, Sociology of literature is the study of society through literary works. According to Lauson and Swingewood's theory, "literature is reflection of the real social condition, social structure and man relationships. In describing the social condition, literature may also describe some value of life and the response to the value of life" (1998:45)

My thesis is focused to analyze Saudi Arabian women that are reflected in the novel. *Princess* is all about Saudi Arabian women's rules. The ideal women in Saudi Arabia are women who obey her male relative's order and the rules. Meanwhile, liberty and equality is the socio-cultural background of the author. American women see the Saudi Arabian rules as women's oppression. Finally, this thesis is entitled American Perspective on Saudi Arabian Women's Rules in Jean Sasson's *Princess*.

## **1.2 Problems to Discuss**

*Princess* is a novel about Sultana's frustration and rebellion facing the restricted rules in her country. Sultana, the Princess of Saudi Arabia royal, shows her rejection to the rules of being Saudi Arabian women. Studying the social life in the novel, this thesis shows the American perspective reflected in the novel. Therefore, the problems to discuss in this thesis are focused on these questions:

1. What are the rules of being Saudi Arabian women that show the patriarchal system presented in the novel?
2. How does the author's perspective toward the rules of being Saudi Arabian women?

## **1.3 The Goal of the Study**

The purpose of writing this thesis is, firstly, to know the rules of being Saudi Arabian women by revealing the phenomena that show the patriarchal system in the novel. Secondly, the female characters' rejection toward Saudi Arabian rules is analyzed in this thesis to know the author's perspective on the rules in Saudi Arabia.