

THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMAN'S OPPRESSION THROUGH A FEMALE MAIN CHARACTER IN SUZANNE COLLINS' CATCHING FIRE

THESIS

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THESIS

A thesis presented to the English Department,
Faculty of Letters, Jember University,
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in English Studies

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- My beloved parents, Sugiyanto and Sugirah, for never ending prayers, affection, support, sacrifice, patience and becoming role models.
- My dear sister, Fitri Fidayanti, who always remind me to write my thesis and give me support.
- My Almamater, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.



MOTTO

History is herstory too. (Author Unknown)



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled "The Representation of Woman's Oppression through A Female Main Character in Suzanne Collins' Catching Fire" is an original work, except the quotation. I certify that the analysis and research described in this thesis have never been submitted for any other degree or any publication. I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged. I do make this statement truly, and there are no pressures from other people or groups.

Jember, May 2016 The Writer

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APPROVAL SHEET

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SUMMARY

The Representation of Woman's Oppression through A Female Main Character in Suzanne Collins' *Catching Fire;* Farid Esti Khoma; 110110101082; 2016; English Department, Faculty of Letters; Jember University; 53 pages.

This study analyzes Suzanne Collins's Catching Fire using theory of representation by Stuart Hall. This theory analyzes the discourse of woman's oppression of the female main character, Katniss Everdeen by applying discursive approach. Patriarchal ideology also used to find domination power of man in oppressing the female main character. As a woman who lives as the working class in society, she gets oppression from authoritarian government that is led by man named President Snow. The oppression is not only getting from President but also people behind President's authority. People behind President's authority oppress her by using her as a tool and a bait to bring down President's government. Media also take a role in oppressing her life. Media use her as a tool to distort reality of President's authority by showing her personal life in public through television show. The oppressions that experienced by Katniss Everdeen are physical and mental oppression. It is because they are not only oppressing Katniss through violence and discrimination but also through terror along her life. Physical and mental oppression that are given by President Snow are not only happening outside the arena of Games but also inside the arena of Games. Even though she destroys the arena of Games as her rebel action to bring down the system, the oppression toward her life does not end yet. In the end, President still oppresses her life with more fears and terrors by bombing district 12 where her lovers live. She also realizes that she only used as a scapegoat by people who reject President's authority. This research uses qualitative research. This research is divided into two kinds of data. The first is primary data, which are taken from narrative and descriptive dialogues in Catching Fire. The second is secondary data, which are taken from literature journals, essays, articles, relevant books and e-sources. As the result of discussion, it can be concluded that woman's oppression happens in the female main character because of the social condition. The woman's oppression itself that experienced by the female main character reveal that it is caused by domination power of man where she lives in. In the last discussion it will be revealed that the main reason Suzanne Collins use her work Catching Fire is to shows that she is under the domination of patriarchy. It can be said that she belong to patriarchy where put woman in the subordinate position.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general description on the present research as the background of study, research topic, problem to discuss, research questions and purposes or the goals of the study.

1.1 The Background of Study

In its development, there are many kinds of literary forms. One of many kinds of literary forms is novel. Novel describes the phenomena of life. According to the book entitled *Theory of Literature*, Wellek and Warren (1949:223) stated that novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. Literature such as novel is explanation or reflection of what the authors feel, imagine and think or what the authors experience in their life such as their environment or their society.

Generally, literary works like novel portrays many situations of life. It means that literary works is the situation of social phenomena. Many literary forms such as novel show issues of slavery, woman's oppression and woman's struggle in social and economic structure. Related to the issues or social problems, dominant class becomes the interesting thing to know if the object of the slavery is women who work for their life. Actually, gender will become a problem when there were inequalities. In several novels there are some works that represent woman's oppression. The majority point of view is about socio-cultural system between the powerful and the powerless people or rich and poor. People have basic trust that man have to be strong, powerful, and think rationally while woman is powerless, emotional, and weaker than man. It happens because most of people think that woman cannot be equal with a man. It is because they think that women are different from men. For instance, women are more emotional or sensitive in making a decision while men are more rational. This situation cause some unfair treatments for woman such as violence, oppression, and so on.

In this case I choose Catching Fire written by Suzanne Collins to be the object of the analysis in this thesis. Suzanne Collins writes trilogy novel entitled The Hunger Games (2008), Catching Fire (2009), and Mockingjay (2010). In this thesis, I only focus on Collin's novel entitled Catching Fire. Catching Fire is the second novel in The Hunger Games Trilogy novels. Catching Fire novel tells detail the aftermath of the 74th Annual Hunger Games in the dystopian world of the future. This story tells about the female main character, Katniss Everdeen who becomes the victor in the Hunger Games. She as the victor of the previous game become the favorite victor in the Capitol. Capitol is a central government in Panem which consist of thirteen district. Capitol as the central government take all the rules in the whole districts in Panem. Each district got oppression from the Capitol. Capitol use a deadly game to make the people in the whole districts have fear. There are two kinds of the game that are the Hunger Games and Quarter Quell. The game has been held for almost 75 years. In this second novel tells about the third Quarter Quell in 75th years of the Hunger Games. In the third Quarter Quell, President Snow as the leader of the Panem government is making life hard for Katniss Everdeen because he makes her become the participant in that deadly game again. In fact, she as the winner of the previous game does not get her freedom as already promised by Snow. A female main character in the novel, Katniss, is described as a woman who lives in the oppressed condition in her life. She is a woman who is oppressed by Snow, an authoritarian man from dominant class. The domination of man toward woman in every single aspect of life is used as a chance to oppress woman in order that man takes the profit through it.

Catching Fire is interesting to analyze because Collins uses the female main character that represent woman's oppression in the novel. Based on the meaning of the literal word, woman's oppression mean a woman who is treated in a continually cruel way. The oppression of woman is not only happen in the family but also happen in the work place. The kinds of oppression can be physical, psychological, social, and others. Capitalism is viewed as both sexually and

economically exploitative; capitalist patriarchy is seen as the source of women's oppression: their alienation from labour, the patriarchal ownership of the means of production and reproduction, the construction of women as class of passive consumers, and the exploitation of women's work (Madsen, 2000:65). Walby also defines that patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (1990:20). It means that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. The oppression is caused by subordinate position of women. Woman's subordination refers to the inferior position of women (Sultana, 2010:7). Furthermore, woman's subordination means the inferior position of women to men. In another explanation, women's subordination means the situation in which women are forced to stay under the control of men. In this case, the role of men is to dominate and control means of production and take the profit from women.

Catching Fire is interesting to analyze because it represents the main female character, Katniss Everdeen who becomes the favorite victor and primadona in the Capitol but she still get oppression in her life. Snow already knows that Katniss is the favorite female winner from district 12 and he wants that Katniss back into deadly game again. As the victor, she should get a freedom but in reality she gets more oppression in her life. This novel shows that man named President Snow represent the bourgeoisie people who the own of the means of production, and exploit the proletariat by buying their labor power, and Katniss Everdeen as the main female character represent the proletariat, people who sell her labor power because she does not own the means of production. Madsen argues that the dominance of the masculine side of each dichotomy and the corresponding devaluation of the female is a powerful characteristic of patriarchy (Madsen, 2000:66). In this case, President Snow is a man that has authoritarian background. Snow dominates over the citizen in its story. Snow's dominates the citizen through two ways, leadership and violence. He controls the economic structure in the whole districts. As the woman who has a poor condition, Katniss

Everdeen describes as a woman who is oppressed and controlled along her life by man from dominant class.

De Bonald in Wellek and Warren states that literary work is an expression of society (1942:90). It means that literary work cannot be separated from the influence of the environment. This study is needed to understand the social problem including gender oppression that brought by literary work. I analyze the social problems through Suzanne Collins's work. Collins begin to use the interpretation of the modern culture and evaluates the society in this era. From that presumption I will analyze the Suzanne Collins' view related to social condition and ideology that represented in the novel. It becomes important to ask how literary work contributes to the solution of social problem such as woman's oppression. Thus, I analyze the social context of the novel as well as background of the author that effect on her work which lead the ideological construction in the novel. This study describes woman of working class in getting oppression. The female main character in the novel is described as a woman who is oppressed by men. She is also described as a woman lives in the oppressed condition along her life. That is why I am interested in doing the research related to woman's oppression in Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins. Thus, this research is entitled "The Representation of Woman's Oppression through a Female Main Character in Suzanne Collins's Catching Fire".

1.2 Research Problems

Catching Fire is a novel that tells about female main character's oppression in her life. Concerning with the female main character's condition in her life, this research then discuses several problems, including the condition that causes the female main character getting oppression. She does not get her right when she lives in the district where she wants to belong because her life is controlling by an authoritarian man named Snow. The problem that will be discussed is the representation of woman's oppression issues that are created by the author to criticize the social condition of woman. Collins tries to show that woman's oppression make woman becomes the victim in social life.

1.3 Research Questions

In this research, there are two questions that will be described and each of the research question is a representative of research problems. Then, I formulate the research question as follows:

- 1) How is woman's oppression represented in the novel?
- 2) How is the ideological positions of the author?

1.4 The Goals of The Study

There are some goals of writing this thesis:

- 1) First, to elaborate woman's oppression that is represented in the novel *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins.
- 2) Second, to explain how the ideological positions of the author.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Research

Literature review is the text that includes the current knowledge including substantive findings such as theoretical and methodological.

The first, this research was inspired from 'Social Disparity and Class Struggle against Dictatorship in Suzanne Collins' Mockingjay' written by Dita Purwitasari. She is a student of English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University and she was graduated in the year 2015. She chooses Mockingjay novel because it tells about the rebellion to gain the freedom and revolution between districts as working class and Capitol as dominant class. Mockingjay is the third novel of *Hunger Games* Trilogy. This thesis mainly talked about social disparity between dominant class and working class. She uses Marxist principle because this study describe the effects of social disparity and the class struggle. Marxism theory also applied to analyze how the societies go through the process of change. She analyses that Collins begins to use the interpretation of the modern culture and evaluate the society in this era through this novel. Her research wants to resolve the social and political problem through the story of the novel and she applies William's theories. As the result of this thesis, she shows some problems of social and political condition in the novel including oppression, dictatorship and class disparity. By reading this previous research, I use similar background of the story because it helps to clarify the oppression toward the working class as well as the female main character that exist in the novel. The differences is that this previous research only focus on the third novel of Hunger Games Trilogy. Whereas, I only focus on second novel Catching Fire and also focus on social problem about woman's oppression.

The second, this research was initiated from 'The Representation of Proletarian French Woman's Oppressions in the Nineteenth Century in Victor Hugo's Les Miserables' written by Elok Darojatin, she is a student of English

Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University and she was graduated in the year 2015. She chooses *Les Miserables* novel than other because it has a fascinating topic to comprehend and to analyze. The novel tells about oppressed proletarian people in nineteenth century in French because of the social and political conflict at that time. She uses Simone de Beauvoir's perspective about woman oppression and the relation between literary work and the social life written in *The Second Sex*. With the Simon de Beauvoir's perspective, she concluded that Victor Hugo represents the proletarian French woman's oppression in the nineteenth century. The major problem of her study is to explain the representation of proletarian French woman's oppressions that are represented in the novel that connects in three parts: oppression in love relationship, oppression of bourgeois towards the proletarian class and oppression in work place. She explained that Hugo describes it through the female character, Fatine who lives in the miserable condition along her life.

"Through *Les Miserables* he breaks the mystery of common people life and protest the executive government about the arbitrarily toward common people."

(Darojatin, 2015: ix)

The result of her research, she explained that Hugo's ideology is criticizing the government about the social condition especially woman's oppression. In this case, I use the similar topic about woman's oppression. This previous research guides us to know the description of woman's oppression. It also helps us to understand kinds of oppression toward woman.

The third research from 'The Death of Victorian Morality and The Emergence of Post-Victorian Morality Female Subject in D.H. Lawrence's The Virgin and The Gipsy' written by Fitri Aningsih, a student of English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University, graduated in the year 2015. The major problem of her study is to explain the Victorian Morality and Post-Victorian morality in England that are represented in the novella which concerns in four elements: fashion, marriage, human relationship, and sexuality.

"Post-Victorian is the opposite of the Victorian morality which conveys liberalism value. The liberalism value is considered as a belief that contains of the basic change, growth, progress, and revolution toward the civilization of human being."

(Aningsih, 2015:41)

In her research, she concluded that D. H. Lawrence agrees toward Post-Victorian morality. In her research, she uses Stuart Hall's theory of representation from the book entitled: "Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practice". She uses this theory to provide some descriptions about Victorian morality and post-Victorian morality in England and to find out what beyond the ideology of Victorian morality and post-Victorian morality in England. By reading the last previous research, I use the same theory about theory of representation. This previous research helps us to understand how to use discursive approach in theory of representation to find the discourse of woman's oppression in the novel.

By reviewing those researches, this thesis is designed to discuss and analyze the similar topic, background and theory. Then, this thesis discusses the topic about woman's oppression in the novel entitled *Catching Fire* novel. This thesis focuses on woman's oppression that experienced by the female main character in the novel. Besides, this thesis also wants to discuss how woman's oppression represented in the novel *Catching Fire*. Catching Fire novel is used as the object to analysis because it is categorized as popular dystopian novel that is widely known by the society. This thesis will use theory of representation by Stuart Hall to find the discourse of woman's oppression by applying discursive approach. Patriarchal ideology also applied to find the domination power of man toward woman. This theory will explain the representation of woman's oppression in the *Catching Fire* novel through the female main character. Then, the ideology beyond woman's oppression can be known by applying this concept.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approaches are presented briefly in this chapter. It discusses and explains some important theories and concepts related to the topic discussion. The theories are used to analyze the problems in the next chapter. It is also used to make the discussion clearer. This chapter is important to give the other clarification related to the theory, in order to make the appropriate application in this analysis. Furthermore, the descriptions of the theory will be employed based on dictionaries, books, and expert opinions in literature and references.

2.2.1 Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary in seventh edition, the meaning of representation is the act of presenting somebody or something in a particular way; something that shows or describes something (2005: 1239). There are two relevant meanings of representation in Hall's book (1997:16) that are:

- To represent something is two describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses;
- 2. To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for;

It means that representation is not only represents verbal language or text but also non-verbal language. As Hall explains:

"Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people...It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things"

(Hall, 1997:15)

In this case, the use of language is a media to say something or meaning. The importance of language is to inform other people about our feel, desire and so on. Hall explains that language is one of the media through which through, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central the process by which meaning is produced (1997:1).

According to Hall, there are two systems of representation (1997:17). First is mental representation. Second is language. Mental representation system is the system about concept. Both system are important to transform the meaning. Through language and concept, make us more understand the meaning of something. It is because language and concept are related to each other. Without language, the meaning cannot be informed. For instance, we know the concept and the meaning of 'a pen'. Thus, we cannot inform the meaning of 'a pen' (a thing that used to write) if we are not able to explain it in language that can be accepted by others.

Besides, there are three important approaches in theory of representation. Hall states there are the reflective approach, the intentional approach and the constructional approach (1997: 15). First, in the reflective approach language has a function as a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world (Hall, 1997:15). This approach means that language is reflect the meaning of something. The meaning is inside the object or things that is already there. It can be called as mimetic because language works by reflecting the truth of object or things that is already there. Thus, people create a meaning by using language through media, symbol, idea, and so on. Then, in the second approach is intentional approach. Through this approach, language is used for represent what the speaker or the author's purpose. Hall argues that words mean what the author intends they should mean (Hall, 1997:25). It means that the use of language is to present or to describe the meaning toward the object or the things. The meaning itself is based on the speaker's individually intended meaning. As Hall states in his book (1997:25), "the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language."

However, we cannot be the single or unique source of meanings in language. Our private intended meanings, however personal to us, have to enter into the rules, codes and conventions of language to be shared and understood (Hall, 1997:25). Then, the third approach is *constructionist approach*. This approach is different from reflective and intentional approach. This approach does

not relate to both approaches because constructionist approach has own perspective toward the meaning of object or things. As Hall explains in his book about the constructive approach below:

"Things don't *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational system-concepts and signs....we must not confuse the *material* world, where things and people exist, and the *symbolic* practice and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate."

(Hall, 1997:25)

It means that the meaning does not depend on the material quality but on symbolic function. Hall describes it is because a particular sound or word stands for, symbolizes or represents a concept that it can function, in language, as a sign and convey meaning – or, as the constructions say, signify (1997: 26). In this case, the meaning is constructed through the language to deliver our concepts. Aningsih states that this approached combined the relation between thing in the world, our concept in thought and language (2015:12). It means that the meaning is constructed in and through language in representational systems.

In this case, I choose the third approach that is constructive approach. I use this approach because the object that will be analyzed is Katniss, the main female character in the novel entitled *Catching Fire* and also bourgeois men who were oppressed the female main character. Collins tries to represent woman's oppression through the novel. She uses the text in the novel as the media to represent her critical perspective.

Hall explains that there are two major variants or models of the constructionist approach that are semiotic approach by Ferdinand de Saussure and discursive approach by Michael Foucault. In this case, I use discursive approach by Michael Foucault. Foucault mentions that there are three ideas in discursive approach to representation, which are: concept of discourse, the issue of power and knowledge, and the questions of the subject (Hall, 1997: 43). As Foucault explains in Hall's book that representation is not only used language to construct

meaning but also use discourse as a system of representation to analyze the meaning by using knowledge.

"By 'discourse', Foucault meant a group of statements which provide a language for talking about — a way of representing the knowledge about — a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language."

(Hall, 1997: 44)

In this case, the concept of discourse is about language and practice. It is to overcome the distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice). Foucault also argues that discourse constructs topic. It defines and produces the object of our knowledge to make a topic can be meaningfully and talked about and reasoned about (Hall, 1997:44). Foucault says that discourse never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source but it appears across a range of text, and as forms of conduct, at number of a different institutional sites within society. Thus, the similarity occurred in discourse is included in *discursive practice*.

Foucault states that he was concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning, not through language but through discourse (Hall, 1997:44). As has been explained before, it means that the construction of meaning is concerned through the discourse. Foucault also argues that we have a knowledge of things if it has a meaning, it is discourse-not the things in itself-which produces knowledge (Hall, 1997:45). It means that discourse produces a knowledge

Thus, the use of discursive practice is to analyze the representation because it uses discourse as a system of representation. Therefore, I use this approach in this research in order to confront the representation of woman's oppression through a female main character in Suzanne Collins's *Catching Fire* and the ideology of the author.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Types of Research

In conducting this study, the researcher uses qualitative research in which the data are based on primary data from the novel *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins. While secondary data are taken from references, journal articles and materials related to study and also taken from books, dictionaries and internet. Based on the novel, it shows that Collins tries to illustrate how woman represent the oppression people in the society. Thus, this research is to describe the representation of woman's oppression in Suzanne Collins's *Catching Fire*. The theory of representation is used for analyzing woman's oppression which influences female main character's daily activity and behavior toward life that represented in the novel. The sources are primary data source is the novel Suzanne Collins's *Catching Fire*, which was published at 2009. The primary data in this research are in the form of text data such as narration, quotations, dialogues, description or sentence that taken from Suzanne Collins's novel. Thus, I use discursive approach of representation theory to show how the discourse represented in the novel and to understand the ideology of the author.

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection is the most important step in conducting a research (source: www.vbtutor.net/research/research_chp7.htm). Data can be divided into two types that are quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data are mostly non-numerical and usually descriptive. It means the data collected are in the form of words and sentences. Generally we can collect data from two sources, primary sources and secondary sources. The main data source is the novel Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins related to the representation of woman's oppression through the female main character. The secondary data of this research is taken from another book which related to system of patriarchy and woman's oppression. The written sources are obtained from reports, books, journals, documents, the web and more.

The process of collecting data very useful to get a better interpretation of the researcher. After get the material and the related sources of the data, I read both of primary and secondary data to understand the text fully. After reading the data, I take an important note of some text or dialogue or narration of the novel itself and also from the reference of some experts.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

Processing and analyzing data is the next step to do after collecting the data. The data processing is a part of a research where all of the data are categorized. Data processing is started from categorizing data taken from the novel. The first category is the data of oppression towards female main character that represented in the novel and the second category is the data which related to system of patriarchy and woman subordination. Therefore, there are three steps in order to achieve the subject matters of this research.

The first step, according to Stuart Hall's theory of representation, discursive approach is used as the system of representation. Hall states Foucault has mentioned that there are three ideas in discursive approach to representation, which are: concept of discourse, the issue of power and knowledge, and the questions of the subject (Hall, 1997:43). By using discursive approach, all of the collected data related to woman's oppression issues are classified into two categories. The first category is the data of oppression towards female main character that represented in the novel and the second category is the data which related to system of patriarchy and woman subordination. Those data are described and analyzed in order to answer the first question in the research.

The second step is explain about how the ideological positions of the author represented in the novel. Furthermore, I analyze the social context of the novel as well as background of the author that lead the ideological construction in the novel. This explanation aims to answer the second question of this research.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Catching Fire novel is second novel of Suzanne Collins' trilogy. Catching Fire is analyzed using theory of representation by Stuart Hall which emphasizes to find the discourse of woman's oppression and its effects through the female main character's life and social condition in the story. Patriarchal ideology is applied in order to find the domination power of man that causes some impacts for the female main character's condition and makes her to let herself to be controlled and oppressed. By reading this novel, Collins represents the social condition of the lower class society especially woman's worker. Collins portrayed the way of life of women in United States and how the women were oppressed by government and political condition.

The representation of woman's oppression in the novel is experienced by the female main character, Katniss Everdeen. There are two kinds of oppression. Those are physical oppression and mental oppression. The physical oppression is done by President Snow and people behind President Snow's authority. According to the analysis, I conclude that the representation of woman's oppression can be seen in female main character, Katniss Everdeen mainly. It begins from President Snow who controls her life entirely including her personal relationship. Then, Katniss gets more oppressions from Plutarch Heavensbee and Cinna who exploit and use her as a bait or scapegoat to bring down President's authority. Media also take a role in oppressing Katnis' life. Media use her as a tool to distort reality about President's authority by showing her personal life in public through television show. The second oppression is mental oppression. The mental oppression is experienced outside the arena and inside the arena. Katniss' oppressed life is added by President Snow outside and inside the arena of the Games. Discussing the problems in the novel, it is necessary to discuss the contextual background of the novel and the condition of woman's worker.

The contextual background of the novel, especially the social and political condition, gives a big influence to Suzanne Collins's writing. The society's perspectives toward woman position and condition also gives the impacts to woman's life. The existence of woman in social life causes the problem that is woman's oppression. Woman still experienced the miserable condition in the daily life, society and work place.

The last discussion is the ideological position of the author. *Catching Fire* is a literary work that represent the author's purpose, Suzanne Collins. The ideological position of the author is under the domination of patriarchy. Collins as a woman who works in the media really know how women are described in the media. Media described woman as a weak figure who stays under the control of man. She belong to the patriarchy where accepts the subordinated position of woman. Finally, this thesis show how woman's oppression that is represented by Suzanne Collins in her novel, *Catching Fire*. The oppression toward woman in the novel represented woman's oppression in United States that is caused by authoritarian government, economical condition of the women themselves and the social class in society.

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