

**OPPRESSION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MARTHA
HALL KELLY'S *LILAC GIRLS***

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

2024

**OPPRESSION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MARTHA
HALL KELLY'S *LILAC GIRLS***

THESIS

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Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
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2024

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I state that the thesis entitled “**Oppression of Female Characters in Martha Hall Kelly's *Lilac Girls*** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those people that cited as references and written in the bibliography. Thus, if there is an objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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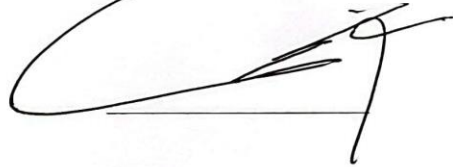
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iii

MOTTO

”What is not gambled on, Will not be won”

—**Sutan Sjahrir**

“Success in life is not when you never fail, But when you fail you still have the
enthusiasm to get up”

— **Nelson Mandela**

DEDICATION

I will dedicate my thesis to my parents, Rudi Hartono and Riski, who always pray for me and also never stop giving me encouragement and support.

To my partner Muhammad Sultan Mu'afa who is always there when I'm down and ready to help me with my difficulties in working on this thesis.

To my friends, who also provided motivation to encourage me to complete this thesis.

to all my extended family, who also always provide support.

Thank you for everything, I love you

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Alhamdulillahirabbil 'alamin, without God Almighty I would definitely not have been able to complete my thesis entitled: "Oppression of Female Characters in Martha Hall Kelly *Lilac Girls*" to obtain a degree in the Department of English Literature at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

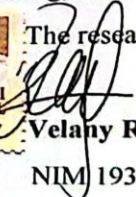
I would like to express my sincere thanks to the parties who have contributed greatly to their involvement and support so that I can complete this thesis. I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin M.Pd. for his help, advice and guidance in completing this thesis. Then for all lectures at the Department of English Literature, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, thank you for your useful knowledge while teaching me at the university.

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Lastly, if there are errors and shortcomings in this thesis, I expect all constructive criticism and suggestions from all parties, for the sake of further progress. I hope this thesis can provide inspiration for readers and future researchers.

Malang, November 11th, 2024

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ABSTRACT

Velany Rizqiyana (2024) *Oppression of Female Characters in Martha Hall Kelly's Lilac Girls*. Thesis. Department of English Literature, Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang. Supervisor Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd.

Keywords: Oppression, Feminism

This study analyzes and discusses the issues of oppression and justice that occur in the novel entitled *Lilac Girls*. Young (2014), oppression means the implementation carried out by a group of rulers. Oppression is when certain people have power over others and feel entitled to treat others unfairly and cruelly. Oppression can happen anywhere including anyone or a group. This study aims to answer the research questions which are divided into two: 1) What are the forms of oppression experienced by female characters in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly? 2) How do women fight against oppression that occurs in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly?

To conduct this research, the researcher used the theory of oppression and justice by Iris Marion Young to find out the forms of oppression experienced by female characters and how women struggle in the novel. The five types of oppression can be seen through dialogue, narrative, actions, thoughts, and physical appearance of the characters. In addition, this study uses Irish Marion Young's theory of struggle which focuses on the struggle of female characters to fight the oppression experienced by women.

The results of this study are, there are five forms of oppression experienced by female characters in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly. The forms of oppression in the novel are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence (verbal and physical), and cultural imperialism experienced by Kasia, Caroline and Herta. These five forms of oppression aim to show the oppression that occurs to women in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly. Kasia, Caroline and Herta also fight for their lives, and the struggle of the main female role against oppression is very visible from the data. The female characters fight to get women's rights to be protected and they fight in everyday life.

مستخلص البحث

اضطهاد الشخصيات النسائية في فيلم فتيات الليلك للمخرجة مارثا هول كيلبي. (2022) (فيلاني رزقيانا أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف الدكتور مزكي عفيف الدين الماجستير

النسوية، القمع

، يتناول هذا البحث بالتحليل والمناقشة قضايا الظلم والعدالة التي تحدث في رواية فتيات الليلك. يونغ (2014) القمع يعني التنفيذ الذي تقوم به مجموعة من الأشخاص في السلطة. يحدث التتمر عندما يكون لدى بعض الأشخاص سلطة على الآخرين ويشعرون بأنه يحق لهم معاملة الآخرين بشكل غير عادل وقسوة. يمكن أن يحدث الاضطهاد في أي مكان، بما في ذلك أي شخص أو مجموعة، ويهدف هذا البحث إلى الإجابة على أسئلة البحث التي تنقسم إلى قسمين: (1) ما هي أشكال الاضطهاد التي تعاني منها الشخصيات النسائية في رواية فتيات الليلك للكاتبة مارثا هول كيلبي؟ (2) كيف يحدث نضال المرأة ضد الظلم في رواية فتيات الليلك للكاتبة مارثا هول كيلبي؟

ولإجراء هذا البحث استخدم الباحثون نظرية القمع والعدالة للكاتبة إيريس ماريون يونغ لمعرفة أشكال القمع التي تعيشها الشخصيات النسائية وكيفية نضال المرأة في الرواية. يمكن رؤية هذه الأنواع الخمسة من الاضطهاد من خلال الحوار والسرد والأفعال والأفكار والمظهر الجسدي للشخصيات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يستخدم هذا البحث نظرية النضال للأيرلندية ماريون يونغ والتي تركز على نضال الشخصيات النسائية لمحاربة الاضطهاد الذي تتعرض له المرأة.

ومن نتائج هذا البحث أن هناك خمسة أشكال من الاضطهاد تعاني منها الشخصيات النسائية في رواية فتيات الليلك للكاتبة مارثا هول كيلبي، وأشكال الاضطهاد في الرواية هي الاستغلال، والتهميش، والعجز، والعنف (اللفظي والجسدي)، والثقافي الإمبريالية التي عاشتها كاسيا وكارولين وهيرتا. تهدف هذه الاضطهادات الخمسة للكاتبة مارثا هول كيلبي. تقابل كاسيا Lilac Girls إلى إظهار الاضطهاد الذي يحدث للنساء في رواية وكارولين وهيرتا أيضاً من أجل حياتهم، ونضال الأدوار القيادية للنساء ضد الاضطهاد واضح جداً من خلال البيانات. تكافح الشخصيات النسائية من أجل حماية حقوق المرأة وتناضل في الحياة اليومية.

ABSTRAK

Velany Rizqiyana (2024) Penindasan Terhadap Karakter Wanita di *Lilac Girls* Martha Hall Kelly. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd.

Kata kunci: Penindasan, Feminisme

Penelitian ini menganalisis dan membahas isu penindasan dan keadilan yang terjadi dalam novel berjudul *Lilac Girls*. Young (2014), penindasan berarti pelaksanaan yang dilakukan oleh sekelompok penguasa. Penindasan adalah ketika orang-orang tertentu memiliki kekuasaan atas orang lain dan merasa berhak untuk memperlakukan orang lain secara tidak adil dan kejam. Penindasan bisa terjadi dimana saja termasuk siapa saja atau kelompok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian yang terbagi menjadi dua: 1) Apa saja bentuk-bentuk penindasan yang dialami oleh tokoh perempuan dalam novel *Lilac Girls* karya Martha Hall Kelly? 2) Bagaimana perjuangan perempuan melawan penindasan yang terjadi dalam novel *Lilac Girls* karya Martha Hall Kelly?

Untuk melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan teori penindasan dan keadilan oleh Iris Marion Young untuk mengetahui bentuk-bentuk penindasan yang dialami oleh tokoh perempuan dan bagaimana perjuangan para perempuan di dalam novel tersebut. Kelima jenis penindasan tersebut dapat dilihat melalui dialog, narasi, tindakan, pemikiran, dan penampilan fisik dari para tokoh. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggunakan teori perjuangan Irish Marion Young yang berfokus pada perjuangan karakter perempuan untuk melawan penindasan yang dialami perempuan.

Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah, terdapat lima bentuk penindasan yang dialami oleh tokoh perempuan dalam novel *Lilac Girls* karya Martha Hall Kelly. Bentuk-bentuk penindasan dalam novel tersebut adalah eksploitasi, marginalisasi, ketidakberdayaan, kekerasan (verbal dan fisik), dan imperialisme budaya yang dialami oleh Kasia, Caroline dan Herta. Kelima penindasan ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan tentang penindasan yang terjadi pada perempuan di dalam novel *Lilac Girls* karya Martha Hall Kelly. Kasia, Caroline dan Herta juga berjuang untuk hidup mereka, dan perjuangan peran utama perempuan melawan penindasan sangat terlihat dari data. Tokoh-tokoh perempuan berjuang untuk mendapatkan hak perempuan untuk dilindungi dan mereka berjuang dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS COVER	
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIPS	i
APPROVAL SHEET	ii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iii
MOTTO	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ABSTRAK	vii
مستخلص البحث.....	viii
ABSTRAK	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of the study	1
B. Problem of the study	5
C. Significance of the study	5
D. Scope and Limitation	5
E. Definiton of Key Terms	6
CHAPTER II REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE	7
A. Feminist Literaly Criticism	7
B. Oppression	10
1. Violence	11
2. Cultural imperialism.....	13
3. Powerlessness.....	14
4. Marginalization	15
5. Exploitation	16

C. Struggle	17
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	19
A. Research Design	19
B. Data source	20
C. Data Collection.....	20
D. Data Analysis	20
CHAPTER IV FINDIS AND DISCUSSION	21
A. The Forms of Oppression Faced by Female Characters in The Novel Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly	21
1. Violence	22
A. Physical Violence.....	22
B. Psychological Violence.....	23
2. Cultural Imperialism	25
3. Powerlessness.....	28
4. Marginalization	32
5. Exploitation	38
B. The Way Female Characters Struggle Against Oppression	45
1. Direct Action.....	45
2. Solidarity	52
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	60
A. Conlusion	60
B. Suggestion.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY	62

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five parts: background of the study, research questions, scope and limitation, the definition of key terms, Significance of the Study.

A. Background of the Study

Many research are currently debating the topic of women's oppression in order to learn more about instances of oppression against women worldwide. Suppression has been discussed in relation to many nations, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Ali, 2010). This problem stems from a unique society that views males as superior and women as inferior. One of the issues this woman faces is oppression resulting from a dominant and subservient view of gender roles between men and women. Women face oppression and feel inferior as a result of being viewed as second-class in practically every sphere, including politics, education, culture, and the economy (Kusumaningrum, 2006).

Talking about women's issues is very interesting. When discussing women's issues, we can see that there are differences in physical attributes between men and women in terms of equal opportunities, such as access to health services, education and the legal system for a decent and dignified life. Unfortunately, women are often treated unfairly in society. This can take the form of harassment, exclusion, and difficulties in achieving gender emancipation and freedom (Rahma, 2017). Discussing this problem, this research focuses on oppression of women. Women have often been dominated by patriarchal culture which makes them feel

marginalized (Young, 2014). Therefore, most women oppose oppression and fight for their right to live. Women's problems can be separated from the patriarchal environment where women are always considered less important than men in society (Abrams, 2009). The most important thing is that researchers want to study the influence of gender inequality on the main female characters in the book *Lilac Girls*.

The numerous injustices against women that have been perpetrated over the years serve as proof that they are disadvantaged in society. Women were consequently viewed as second class (Muthali, 2001). In addition, women's roles in society are not very significant. Because men must play the primary role in all spheres and domains. Certain women in this world can be dealing with social issues. The oppressive gender inequity that women experience is the issue. The fact that this topic is similar to gender issues and represents a persistent type of oppression and subordination in society makes it interesting to talk about. Women who are subjugated to men become objects of their desire (De Beauvoir, 2011). Oppression is always the root of the issues faced by women. When women face discrimination and exclusion, it is evident. Young (2014) claims that oppression is an example of injustice. Some women desire to relocate and seek the same rights as men in order to live just lives as a result of the oppression they endure. Due to their freedom of movement and rights, women are able to fight for their rights in situations involving racism and class conflict, particularly when it comes to gender. As an illustration, consider the book *The Lilac Girls*. Because of the gender imbalance that exists in the narrative, women in the book experience a range of emotions and situations,

including happiness, despair, sobbing, rage, sadness, and longing. According to Ross (2008), discrimination against certain people can occur in life and can take various forms. Based on these events, it can be concluded that women have historically faced injustices that result in social oppression. Women do many things to gain freedom and receive recognition. Certain women facing unfair treatment in society are able to advocate for their rights. Feminism is against any disrespect towards women in society and politics, such as not valuing women's culture and economic contributions (Ratna, 2011). Women fight for equal rights for women, which is the core of feminism. According to Hooks (2015), feminism aims to end sexist oppression, discrimination, and exploitation. According to Paludi (2010), feminism believes that there are inequalities in social, political, economic, and legal situations based on certain principles that are against oppression. We found that cultural traits affect and shape bullying actions. In a society where men hold power, the importance of having a son is clear. The basic idea of feminism is that both men and women should have the freedom to make their own choices (Gamble, 2010). Feminism is important for improving women's lives significantly.

Feminism is the study of women in literary studies that expresses opinions as criticism of male dominance in giving priority to female identity. Feminism theory, as a social movement, emphasizes some of the ways that people have oppressed, repressed, and suppressed people—especially women (Bressleer, 2003). Feminism devolves into a protracted gender inequality stereotype, prompting certain feminist movements to confront issues like oppression and the consequences

of inequality. As a result, the author decides to conduct research on a particular oppression-related topic.

Researchers also discovered a number of earlier studies that were relevant to this one, including one that used Marion Young's theory of feminism and Irish oppression. These studies are all published as journal articles. This study was authored by Silvi Oktaviana. Azizatul Rahma (2017), Luky Ardiyani (2017), Widiatmi (2013), Darmawati (2018), Astuti et al (2018), Rahmayanti et al (2021), Nurfajriani, N. (2021), Annisa Qothrine (2021), Ika Handayani (2018), and Muh Jumadil (2022).

The researcher will examine "Oppression of Female Characters in *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly" based on earlier research. Feminism combines the belief that women's rights are undervalued in society with the idea that men should have the upper hand. Fighting gender stereotypes and working to provide men with equal access to professional and educational opportunities are two ways to try and change this. In addition, feminists work to protect women from sexual assault, rape, and domestic abuse, as well as to guarantee access to social integration and legal abortion. The researcher's choice of *Lilac Girls* as the study subject distinguishes this study from the one mentioned above.

B. Problems of the Study

From the background of the study above, the researcher focuses to answer the question as follows:

- 1.) What are the forms of oppression experienced by female characters in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly?
- 2.) How do the female characters struggle facing oppression in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly?

C. Significance of the Study

The goal of this research is to significantly advance theory and practice. The study's theoretical goals are to advance and deepen feminist literary criticism-based theories, particularly as they relate to the theme of women's oppression as it is presented in the book *Lilac Girls*. The practical goal of this research is to raise readers' awareness of forms of oppression such as violence, Cultural Imperialism, powerlessness, Marginalization and exploitation; moreover, it aims to empower oppressed women in particular to think more critically about feminist theory and to fight against oppression at all times. hope that this study will serve as a useful resource for guiding and educating upcoming researchers on related subjects.

D. Scope and Limitation

The discussion of female characters' oppression in Martha Hall Kelly's novel *Lilac Girls* is the main goal of this study. The researcher talks about Kasia's struggles and the oppression she faces, focusing primarily on Caroline, Herta, and other characters who are connected to her.

E. Definition of Key Terms

The researchers define words that are frequently used in this study in order to help readers avoid ambiguity and gain a better understanding.

1. **Feminism:** Credibility that women should be permitted the rights with men, have a power, have a chance as amen. It is also about women's movement to change the violence such as oppression and discrimination that happened by women (Paludi, 2010).
2. **Oppression:** Cruel or unjust treatment done by people or groups who have power over the other group. the unjust treatment of power that often under the governmental, cultural opprobrium, or authority (Young, 2014).
3. **Struggle:** An effort to resist injustice or unequal treatment (Tong,2013).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter describes a literature review related to this research theory. This chapter will provide some explanations of matters relating to the oppression of women.

A. Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism presents a criticism that relates with literature in the existence of sex associated with human life, literature, and culture (Clayhills, 1991). The Feminist literary criticism looks at the unfair treatment of women. Feminist literary criticism examines how women are portrayed in literature and challenges the beliefs of male dominance in society that have influenced many readers and writers. Feminists study how women have been portrayed in the work of male writers in the past. Male writers often portray women in ways that show them as undervalued, oppressed, misunderstood, and silenced by the dominant patriarchal society. This chapter discusses a review of the literature on the theory being studied in this research.

Feminist literary criticism aims to reinterpret or analyze literature from the perspective of women. Some feminist critics analyze male writers' works to shed light on female characters. This helps understand the moral, social constraints, and political challenges women often encountered due to gender inequality (Barber, 2015). Feminist literary criticism aims to analyze and critique how culture influences the portrayal of women in literature. Feminist literary criticism interprets male writers' works to understand female characters and the social boundaries

women may encounter.

Literature can be used to express feminist beliefs. A female writer often writes stories in different literary styles that depict the challenges faced by feminists. Discrimination and the oppression of women is a common theme in literature because it reflects real life experiences. Thompson (2002) says that in the 21st century, feminism needs to recognize the groundbreaking work of today's writers on sexual violence. In literature, gender identity, sexual differences, and culture are important topics to consider. According to Ruthven (2003), language and literature are elements of culture, and Women's studies are seen as part of the feminist political movement. According to feminist literary critics, all interpretations are political. Hellwig (2003) states that feminist readers play a role in changing gender relations. It is seen as an important part of the fight for making changes. Hellwig (2003) also mentions that feminist critics analyze the way women are portrayed in a text, as well as how it discusses gender relationships and variances. Looking at literature from a feminist point of view means considering its context and culture.

Feminist critics to contribute by designing gender as the main criterion and how women speak and write. A literary text invites the readers to understand what it means to be female or male and encourages them to oppose or agree with prevailing cultural norms.

Women's studies are considered as part of the feminist political agenda. Thus, for feminist literary critics, all interpretations are political, as expressed by Hellwig (2003) that feminist readers participate in the process of changing gender relations. It is considered as one of the areas in the struggle for some changes. Furthermore,

Hellwig (2003) states that feminist critics examine how women are presented, how a text discussed gender relations and gender differences. From a feminist perspective, literature should not be isolated from its context or culture.

Women can develop their characteristics by reading novels, watching movies, and learning poetry to achieve an ideal figure (Furaida & Islahiyah, 2019). Studying literature can help women develop strong characteristics. They can find meaning in life, inspiration, and embrace feminism through literary works. According to Vallury (2008), any text promoting feminism requires a type of reading politics that recognizes differences and the power of affirmations. Literature requires different ethical perspectives for interpretation. Put simply, we need the freedom to interpret the text. Feminism can bring renewed optimism to literature. Women are receiving more attention and support from both individuals and organizations. Protecting women involves more than just making statements; it also requires demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviors towards them. A piece of writing prompts readers to think about being a woman or a man, and decide if they want to support or challenge common cultural beliefs.

B. Oppression

Oppression is when certain people have power over other people and feel entitled to treat other people unfairly and with cruelty. Oppression can happen everywhere include anyone or groups. It comes often in certain groups of people that are different from one to another. Oppression is builed by those groups or individuals who feel they have more power, wealth, and authority.

Feminist literary criticism aims to interpret literature from the perspective of

women. Some feminist critics analyze male authors' writings to show how female characters are portrayed, shedding light on the gender inequality issues they faced in terms of morals, social norms, and politics (Barber, 2015). Feminist literary criticism looks at male authors' writings to understand how female characters are portrayed and the social limitations they may encounter.

Individuals are placed into a system of control and subjugation. Being part of a group is based on characteristics like gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, abilities, age, and more. Characteristics of a group are categorized as attributes, norms, and stereotypes. Men are seen as strong individuals and superior (Husna, 2013). Gender perspective recognizes that women are often oppressed under male-dominated systems worldwide. Women do not have equal rights and face injustice compared to men. Male domination involves the belief that women are weaker and less important than men.

Oppression is based on the new left social movement. The concept of Oppression stems from the modern left social movement. The idea of oppression was changed by the new left social movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Young, 2014). Oppression means restrictions placed on a group that may not always be caused by a tyrant's intentions. In this case, oppression is a form of structural injustice experienced by various groups due to norms, media, stereotypes, habits, advertising, and market mechanisms. Moreover, it differs from the usual idea of oppression. The idea of oppression cannot be eliminated by changing rules or creating new laws. Systematic oppression continues in politics, cultural institutions, and the economy.

Speaking about the forms of oppression, the novel *Lilac Girls* describes the oppression suffered by female characters. To know about the forms of oppression, this research will use Iris Marion Young's theory. Based on Iris Marion Young (2014), there are forms or faces of oppression. There are Powerlessness, Cultural Imperialism, violence, Marginalization and Exploitation that will discuss further below:

1. Violence

Violence is the most visible face of oppression (Young, 2014). Violence gives negative impacts that relate to the victim that can cause trauma to people who experienced it and they suffer because of it (Yusuf, 2016). According to Young (2014), violence is a result of xenophobia, irrational and intense fear of people, habits, or ideas that seem odd or strange. Some women experience and suffered because of violence in society, the violence might be verbal, physical violence, psychological violence. Verbal violence is an act of violence in the form of speech. Physical violence is an act of violence when someone tries to hurt someone such as (slapping, beating, and so on). Then, psychological violence is related to the person that relates to mental, moral, spiritual, and social harm.

Violence against women is a widespread issue that has been present throughout human history, particularly affecting women who have been victims of violence. Women have been victims of violence from men, whether through verbal abuse or physical harm. Physical violence is when someone hurts another person's body, like hitting or pinching them. Emotional violence is when someone tries to harm someone else's feelings or emotions, like pressuring them into having sex

(Sugihastuti, 2007). Emotional or psychological violence refers to when someone harms another person's mental well-being. The actions of the person causing the harm can damage the victim's mental state or cause emotional distress.

There are even some cases of women being carried out by their people (women). Even until now, there is still a lot of violence that occurs in society, both in the public sphere and in the public sphere. Since time immemorial, the female gender has been the object of oppression from the male gender. Until in this millennial era, there are still people who commit acts of violence against women as in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly.

2. Cultural imperialism

According to Young (2014), cultural imperialism is the process by which a dominant power in society is assimilated by the culture and adopted as a standard that the rest of society adheres to. To form a society, people group together into sociocultural units. Culture is created, nurtured, and developed by human society. Humans cannot exist without their culture, and vice versa. There is a society without culture, a culture without people, and a culture without society. Cultural imperialism involving the culture of the dominant group is what the norms are alluding to. Consequently, a particular group is exposed to the experiences, values, accomplishments, and aspirations of the dominant culture.

According to Kuper (1991), culture in society refers to how people organize and interact in groups based on their beliefs, values, and ways of thinking. Both cultural and human rights are significant aspects of men's and women's cultural lives, and they are crucial to guaranteeing everyone's right to free speech. Gender

relationships and their identities are significant cultural elements because they influence how people live in their families, the larger community, and the workplace. As culture dominates society, cultural imperialism is a type of oppression. . It establishes what people can and cannot accomplish. For instance, the king who has the authority to demonstrate the disparities in identities in society can exert control over the populace by deciding how to order them.

3. Powerlessness

Being powerless is a type of oppression. The ruling class unfairly treats people with no power, especially based on their social class, race, and gender, controlling their choices in life. It separates people into groups based on their level of power. The powerless are governed by authorities to follow rules (Young, 2014). When women are oppressed, men have more power and privilege. Women are less privileged because of the patriarchal system that creates a hierarchy between men and women. Powerless women face challenges in being unable to speak up. In society, people without power are not involved in democratic processes. Women are not allowed to be part of decision-making processes. The authority believes that women are unable to participate and do not contribute. Hinson & Bradley (2013) state that when people feel powerless, they may oppress others. They experience hardship because people think they are not strong or capable. Some people don't realize they are being oppressed when they are treated unfairly, which can leave them feeling powerless. Some traits of unfairness include feeling powerless and unable to reach one's full potential.

The idea of a culture of not have a voice or silence is a common example of

powerlessness (Freire, 1993). Women who officially suffer because of injustice or unfair treatment that they got from society may unconsciously experience oppression. Meanwhile, for instance, the wives who know that they are never able to speak or have no voice to speak up their powerless even though they want to do it. They are frightening to speak up because they are forbidden to talk about how to suffer they experience oppression. They are forced to be silent even they want to reveal the truth of the suffering or not, there is an opportunity to find the possibility of changing this nature. Thus, the awareness of the existence in the world should have the strength and a function to free themselves from several negatives doctrines and should effort to free the oppression (Hill, 2009). Based on this problem, women should against the oppression for having the joy of their life

4. Marginalization

The system of labor cannot or will not use. It is the most dangerous form of oppression because marginalization often impacts the unjust, unfair treatments a society where others have plenty. Marginalization is an action to limit or reduce groups or individuals to be the peripheral society (Young, 2014). In the United States, oppression happens in the shape of marginalization than exploitation. Marginalization often occurs in Third World capitalist countries but also in all most Western capitalist societies that are confined to live social marginal underclass of people dominant, in East Indian, North Africans in Europe, and Eastern Europeans (Heldke and O'Connor, 2004). The men who have a high position in the society or are dominant in the society can cause marginalization to the group that doesn't dominant and they haven't the justice.

In terms of gender, marginalization can restrict women's ability to control their own lives. Certain women might experience oppression within their own homes. Women are under the control of men both politically and domestically because men hold power in making political decisions (Rahayu, 2010). In the last forty years, the economic significance of traditional families has decreased. This is because women are now getting married and working outside the home, rather than solely focusing on childcare and household duties. In the past, women were expected to stay at home to take care of their husbands and children. The oppression is connected to the marginalization of women. Most women are oppressed because society assigns them roles that cause suffering and marginalization.

Using Irish Marian Young's theory about oppression, this research wants to figure out about the forms of oppression that is marginalization that also well describes in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly using the evidence that exists in the novel and of course, it relates with the oppression in marginalization as a portrayal of the social phenomenon or social condition that relates with the era which the novel tells.

5. Exploitation

Exploitation is the acting of using people's labor to have profit as much as it can while not looking to the fairly (Bowles, 1981). This is about an act of treating someone unfairly, of course, it has a purpose to benefit from someone. Exploitation, as defined by Young (2014), is when income, wealth, and resources are unequally distributed among certain groups in a persistent structural manner. Redistributing goods will not end exploitation if institutional practices and structures stay the

same, as the unequal distribution of benefits will continue. When we talk about justice, we need to reorganize decisions that change how cultural shifts and work are divided to prevent exploitation.

Exploitation, as defined by Young (2014), is when inequality and power are used to keep one group in a position of subordination. Exploitation involves unpredictable, basic, poorly paid, simple, and controlled work. Sexist oppression involves women experiencing exploitation in two ways: transferring the results of their work to men, and providing men with sexuality and nurturing energy. Exploitation in domestic work happens when women do household chores for their husbands who are the breadwinners. Women are taken advantage of because of their gender. Their efforts and abilities are often used without recognition to benefit men and sometimes even the same women. They may be assigned more significant or creative tasks, while others are expected to offer sexual or emotional services. According to Hinson & Bradley (2013), women are responsible for providing emotional care to their husbands and children, as well as satisfying men sexually in bed. This is when someone unfairly takes advantage of their husband. Exploitation has been seen in feminist theories that connect to political discussions and are also present in everyday moral issues.

On the other hand, this research is to figure out that the novel entitled *Lilac Girls* is one of the novels that describe about exploitation in society. Thus, the real condition of social phenomena representation of the real condition in society. It is really interesting to discuss and find out this form of women's oppression named exploitation in literary work.

C. Struggle

During these dark times, laws and social norms defined rights, responsibilities, and privileges differently for various groups, based on factors like sex, class, religion, and so forth. The rule used the argument that people have different natures and that some natures are superior to others to justify social inequality. Therefore, all racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual differences should be treated fairly and with rights under the law. Treating everyone with the same rules, standards, and principles is the simplest way to practice justice (Young, 2014). Women should therefore fight, and there is a movement to end the injustice and inequality that women face. According to feminism, women should endure unjust or inequitable treatment before fighting to accomplish their objectives in a variety of.

The assimilation ideal's strength has motivated oppressed groups and their supporters to fight against their marginalization and denigration, and it still motivates a lot of people today. The American Indian Movement, along with additional extreme The American Indian organization disapproved of the dominance in society. However, because it necessitates playing by rules created by men and applied against women, feminism rejected the partially male-dominated goal of entering the world (Young, 2014). Women's empowerment through self-organization, the establishment of a women's movement, and the ability for women to express their rage and suffering, play together, form bonds, and create new and better lives.

Struggle aims to fight oppression and discrimination because of inequality (Young, 2014). Some women struggle to against oppression that experienced by them. Struggle refers to several identities and the factors that across at one point that creates oppression and discrimination. Indeed, the theory of struggle intended to give a lot of individual's movement, requiring the struggle to one form oppression take others. Struggle to fight inequality would requiring examining other forms of oppression. The struggle in this research effort is intended for women to defend the rights and dignity of women who are oppressed due to arbitrary injustice from a culture that is quite developed in society.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes some of the writer's steps while conducting the analysis. Some systematic steps assist the writer in determining the purpose of the study. The sections that follow describe how the author conducts the study.

A. Research Design

This study was designed as a literary criticism using feminist literary theory. It also analyzes forms of oppression such as powerlessness, violence, Cultural Imperialism, Marginalization and exploitation (Young, 2014). Feminism is a theory to discover women's inequality and gender discrimination that cause them suffering. Feminism theory helps this research to analyze female characters who are oppressed in the novel *Lilac Girls*. Therefore, the researcher conducted this research to find out the forms of oppression in literary works. The research methodology is literary criticism. This study aims to determine the forms of oppression experienced by female characters and the struggles of women against oppression in Martha Hall Kelly's *Lilac Girls*. The researcher uses the theory of oppression by Iris Marion Young to find out the forms of oppression in the novel to find out the main female character in dealing with oppression and the researcher only focuses on events related to the oppression experienced by the female characters taken from activities such as reading and interpreting novels. Then, the researcher underlines and combines sentences related to the theory.

B. Data Source

In this research, the main source of the data is the novel titled novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly. All of the data from sentences, dialogues, phrases, and words inside the novel. From the data, the researcher decided to take data sources from the novel and tries to search the research problem. Novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly was published in 2016 by Ballantne Books with 512 pages.

C. Data Collection

To conduct the research, the researcher is doing several steps. First, reading a novel titled *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly to understand the story and finding out the sentence that relates to this research. Second, underlining the important dialogs, phrases, and sentences as evidence-based on Iris Marion Young's theory. Third, determining the characters that will be analyzed. Fourth, collecting the support data from other references that related to the topic. Last, evaluating the appropriate data and determining it related with the theory to the data.

D. Data Analysis

In conducting the data, the researcher focuses to analyze the forms of oppression that are suffered by female characters in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly using oppression theory by Iris Marion Young. Not to mention, the researcher also discusses the theory of social movement by Irish Marion Young to know how main female characters in against oppression in the novel. The researcher analyzes the data use some steps. First, classify the form of oppression suffered by female characters and underlining the evidence that shows about women that face oppression to know their existence. Second, analyze and interpret the data based on

Iris Marion Young's theory. The last, make a conclusion based on the finding in this research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the forms of oppression faced by the female characters in the novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly and how the female characters struggle against oppression. By using the theory of forms of oppression by Iris Marion Young, the researcher analyzes the forms of oppression that occur to female characters due to their unequal roles as women in society. Not to mention, the struggle that presents how the main female character fights gender oppression. All issues are discussed clearly in this chapter. These problems will be analyzed using the theory of Iris Marion Young.

A. Forms of Oppression Faced by Female Characters In The Novel *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly

Martha Hall Kelly's *Lilac Girl* tells the story of three women named Caroline, Kasia, and Herta during the period leading up to World War II. These women come from different backgrounds: Caroline Ferriday works at the French consulate and is portrayed as hardworking, independent, and caring towards orphaned children, Kasia is a young woman struggling with the harsh realities of ideological doctrines during Nazi Germany, and Herta is a medical student. The novel also addresses various sensitive issues faced by women at that time. It delves into their personal lives, work, love, and trauma, highlighting the extent of oppression they faced, which was often undeserved. The novel illustrates the helplessness of women during that era.

1. **Violence**

In Martha Hall Kelly's *Lilac Girl*, inspired by true events, the character Kasia is depicted as a woman fighting against the harshness of life during the Nazi German era. Nazi soldiers were indiscriminate in their brutality, targeting both children and women. Kasia is portrayed as one of the survivors of Nazi atrocities.

a) **Physical Violence**

Daily Life at Ravensbruck In the concentration camp, women are subjected to severe cruelty by the guards, including beatings, torture, and rape. The harsh living conditions, lack of food, inadequate clothing, and forced labor are forms of oppression faced by female prisoners every day.

Datum 1

"The guards dragged me out of the cell, kicking and screaming, as they shoved me into the cold corridor" (p.17)

This sentence directly illustrates the physical torture Kasia endures, causing deep trauma. The act of being forcibly dragged and shoved into a cold corridor symbolizes the dehumanizing and brutal treatment that prisoners like Kasia faced daily. The use of "kicking and screaming" highlights her desperate resistance and the violence inflicted upon her. This moment captures the pervasive fear and helplessness experienced by the women in the camp, as they are subjected to arbitrary acts of cruelty by the guards. The cold corridor serves as a metaphor for the harsh and unforgiving environment of Ravensbruck, where compassion is absent, and survival is a constant struggle. Such oppression and torture occur

repeatedly in the camp, leaving lasting psychological and physical scars on the victims.

Datum 2

"They cut into my leg without any anesthesia, and the pain was like fire consuming my flesh.(p.25)

This passage depicts extreme torture inflicted by Nazi soldiers, showing a complete disregard for human feelings or pain. The vivid imagery of pain "like fire consuming my flesh" emphasizes the excruciating suffering endured by Kasia during the medical experiments. The absence of anesthesia not only intensifies the physical agony but also underscores the inhumanity of the experiments, treating the prisoners as mere objects for study. This moment reflects the broader theme of dehumanization and the violation of basic human rights experienced by the women in Ravensbrück. The physical violence depicted in *Lilac Girls* serves as a powerful testament to the resilience of the human spirit, as the characters strive to maintain their dignity and hope amidst unimaginable suffering. These texts vividly portray the physical suffering endured by women during these dark times, shedding light on the atrocities committed and the enduring impact on the survivors.

b) Psychological Violence

Although Herta is a woman, she also becomes an oppressor of fellow women in the camp. As a doctor at Ravensbrück, Herta conducted brutal experiments on women and participated in a system of oppression that institutionalized violence against women. The dehumanization in this camp

represents one of the most profound forms of psychological oppression, where women were treated not as individuals with dignity but as objects to be exploited.

Datum 3

"I stood over her, scalpel in hand, ignoring her pleas. In that moment, she was not a person but a subject, a vessel for my research.(p.22)

This fictional datum illustrates Herta Oberheuser's role in the brutal medical experiments conducted at Ravensbruck. The act of standing over a patient with a scalpel signifies the power dynamics and the control Herta wielded over the prisoners. Her deliberate choice to ignore the pleas of the woman beneath her highlights the dehumanization and objectification inherent in the experiments. By viewing the prisoner as "not a person but a subject," Herta embodies the institutionalized violence and oppression that defined the camp's operations. This perspective allowed her to justify the inhumane treatment and suffering inflicted upon the women, as they were reduced to mere vessels for scientific inquiry rather than individuals with rights and dignity.

Herta's participation in these experiments underscores a complex dimension of oppression, where a woman becomes an agent of a patriarchal and violent system, perpetuating the cycle of abuse against her own gender. Her actions reflect a profound psychological oppression, not only on the victims but also on herself, as she navigates her identity and moral compass within a regime that demands compliance and cruelty. This duality highlights the broader themes of complicity and moral corruption within oppressive systems, where individuals can become both victims and perpetrators.

2. Cultural Imperialism

In *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly, the mention of the Nazis taking younger men for a construction project to build a new labor camp called Majdanek serves as a stark illustration of cultural imperialism during the Holocaust. This moment encapsulates the broader themes of oppression, domination, and the erasure of local identities under the weight of Nazi ideology. The quote not only highlights the practical implications of such actions but also reflects the psychological and cultural ramifications for the Polish people.

Datum 4

But since the Germans came, crossing into the ghetto, one felt a terrible, sad mood. Lublin Castle, which loomed over the area, had been requisitioned by the Nazis as their main prison, and it peered into the twisting cobblestone streets below, streets no longer full of shoppers and children playing. The Nazis had taken most of the younger men away for a construction project, clearing land to build what they said was a new labor camp called Majdanek on the outskirts of Lublin, south of the city. As a result, many of the shops were shuttered, and the few peddlers who opened their doors offered little. SS men patrolled here and there and the teenagers of working age who hadn't been marched off to work for the Nazis stood in groups with a worried air. I saw women crowded around a tray of meat scraps on the ground, and a young boy was selling white armbands he kept on his arm, each stenciled with a Star of David. The synagogue was boarded up, signs in German nailed to the doors, and the baths stood quiet, no longer breathing steam into the air. (p.99)

Cultural imperialism refers to the imposition of one culture over another, often resulting in the subjugation and marginalization of the dominated culture. In this context, the Nazis sought to assert their authority over occupied territories, particularly in Poland, where they aimed to erase local identities and replace them with a Germanic narrative. The act of forcibly removing young men from their communities to construct a labor camp exemplifies this imposition. It reflects the Nazis' utilitarian view of human life, reducing individuals to mere tools for their expansionist ambitions. The men taken away were not just laborers; they were

fathers, sons, and brothers, integral to their families and communities. Their removal disrupted social structures and inflicted deep emotional wounds on those left behind.

The reference to "clearing land" further underscores the violent nature of cultural imperialism. Land is not merely a physical space; it holds cultural significance, historical memories, and a sense of belonging for the local population. By taking control of the land for their own purposes, the Nazis were not only asserting their dominance but also erasing the cultural heritage of the Polish people. This act of clearing land for a labor camp symbolizes a broader strategy of cultural erasure, where the Nazis aimed to reshape the landscape to reflect their own ideology and goals.

Moreover, the construction of Majdanek as a labor camp speaks to the systematic dehumanization that characterized the Nazi regime. Labor camps were sites of exploitation, where individuals were forced to work under inhumane conditions, stripped of their dignity and autonomy. The very existence of such camps was a manifestation of the Nazis' belief in their racial superiority and the inferiority of those they oppressed. This ideology justified the use of violence and coercion against entire populations, reinforcing a hierarchy based on ethnicity and nationality.

The psychological impact of these actions on the Polish population cannot be understated. The removal of young men created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, as families were left to grapple with the absence of their loved ones. This disruption instilled a sense of powerlessness, as communities realized that their

lives were subject to the whims of an oppressive regime. The knowledge that their culture, identity, and very existence could be so easily dismantled led to a profound sense of despair and hopelessness.

Furthermore, the construction of Majdanek and similar camps was part of a larger strategy to normalize violence and oppression. By framing these labor camps as necessary for the war effort or as part of a civilizational mission, the Nazis sought to legitimize their actions in the eyes of both the local population and the international community. This manipulation of narrative is a hallmark of cultural imperialism, where the oppressor seeks to redefine reality to justify their actions.

The quote regarding the Nazis taking younger men for the construction of Majdanek encapsulates the essence of cultural imperialism during the Holocaust. It highlights the violent imposition of German authority over Polish lives, the erasure of cultural identity, and the dehumanization inherent in the regime's actions. By examining this moment in the context of the broader narrative, we gain insight into the profound psychological and cultural impacts of oppression, underscoring the enduring scars left by such historical atrocities. The legacy of cultural imperialism continues to resonate, reminding us of the importance of preserving and honoring diverse identities in the face of domination and violence.

3. Powerlessness

The novel vividly depicts the oppression of women through various events and experiences, allowing readers to feel the harshness of the persecution women faced at that time. This section explains some instances of oppression against women in the novel

Kasia Kuzmerick and the "Rabbits", One of the most tangible forms of oppression occurs at the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where female prisoners, including Kasia, are forced to undergo brutal medical experiments. They are referred to as "rabbits" because they are treated like laboratory animals. These experiments are excruciating and often result in permanent physical disabilities or even death. This oppression is both physical and psychological, as the women are treated as objects rather than human beings.

Datum 5

"The doctors came for us in the middle of the night, their footsteps echoing in the silence. We knew what awaited us—more cuts, more pain. We were nothing but rabbits to them.(p,18)

This quote vividly captures the horrific experiences of Kasia and her fellow prisoners at Ravensbrück. The arrival of the doctors in the dead of night underscores the terror and helplessness felt by the women, as they are subjected to inhumane medical experiments without consent. Being referred to as "rabbits" dehumanizes them, reducing their identities to mere test subjects. The physical pain of the experiments is compounded by the psychological trauma of being stripped of their dignity and autonomy. This moment highlights the brutal reality of the camp, where the women's suffering is normalized and their humanity is disregarded. The

oppressive environment at Ravensbrück serves as a stark reminder of the atrocities committed during this dark period in history, illustrating the profound impact of such cruelty on the victims' lives.

Female Prisoners Many women in Ravensbrück were forced to work under extremely harsh and dangerous conditions, such as working in munitions factories or on deadly construction projects. This represents another form of oppression where women were compelled to work until exhaustion, with inadequate medical care and human rights.

Datum 6

"We were forced to march to the factory at dawn, where we labored under the watchful eyes of the guards, every misstep met with a blow or a shout.(p,30)

This sentence vividly describes the coercion and harsh conditions female prisoners faced as they were forced into labor at the factory. The early morning march symbolizes the relentless and unforgiving nature of their daily routine, stripping them of any semblance of personal freedom or agency. Working under the constant surveillance of the guards, the women endured an environment of fear and intimidation. The phrase "every misstep met with a blow or a shout" highlights the oppressive atmosphere, where even the slightest mistake was met with immediate and often violent repercussions. This environment not only subjected the women to physical exhaustion but also instilled a deep psychological burden, as they were continuously dehumanized and treated as expendable labor. The lack of adequate medical care further exacerbated their suffering, leaving them vulnerable to injury and illness without any hope of relief or compassion.

Datum 7

"They made us work in the fields from sunrise to sunset, the relentless sun and the constant threat of the whip pushing us beyond our limits.(p,35)

This sentence illustrates the grueling forced labor endured by the prisoners in the camp, where they were compelled to work incessantly under harsh military pressure. The imagery of working "from sunrise to sunset" emphasizes the long hours and the relentless nature of their toil, with no respite or consideration for their well-being. The "relentless sun" serves as a metaphor for the oppressive conditions, highlighting the physical toll of working in extreme weather without proper protection or rest. The "constant threat of the whip" underscores the brutal enforcement of discipline and the ever-present danger of physical punishment. This environment fostered a sense of hopelessness and despair, as the women were pushed beyond their physical and emotional limits. The forced labor not only exploited their bodies but also stripped them of their dignity and humanity, reducing them to mere tools in the machinery of war. Despite these hardships, the resilience and solidarity among the prisoners often provided a glimmer of hope and resistance against the oppressive regime.

While Caroline did not experience physical oppression like Kasia and the women in Ravensbrück, she faced societal limitations on women's roles. As a woman in the United States at that time, she was expected to focus on "light" social activities and not become too involved in political or wartime issues. However, Caroline defied these norms and took an active role in aiding war victims, demonstrating how women often had to challenge societal expectations that constrained their roles.

Datum 8

"At the charity luncheon, whispers followed me as I spoke about the plight of the women overseas. 'Why concern yourself with such grim matters?' they asked, urging me to focus on more suitable pursuits.(p,12)

This fictional datum illustrates the societal pressures Caroline Ferriday faced as she navigated her role in aiding war victims. The setting of a "charity luncheon" highlights the expectations placed on women of her social standing to engage in socially acceptable, non-controversial activities. The "whispers" and questions she encounters underscore the societal norms that discouraged women from engaging in serious political or humanitarian efforts, especially those related to the grim realities of war.

Despite these pressures, Caroline's determination to speak about the "plight of the women overseas" demonstrates her courage and commitment to challenging these constraints. Her willingness to address uncomfortable truths in a setting that preferred to ignore them highlights her role as a trailblazer, using her privilege and resources to make a meaningful impact. Caroline's actions reflect a broader theme of resistance against societal expectations, showcasing how women of the time had to navigate and often defy the limitations imposed upon them to pursue their passions and convictions.

Caroline's involvement in aiding war victims, particularly the women of Ravensbrück, exemplifies her defiance of traditional gender roles and her dedication to humanitarian causes. Her story serves as an inspiration, illustrating how individual courage and empathy can drive change, even in the face of societal opposition.

After the war, despite being free, Kasia continued to face oppression in the form of psychological trauma and social stigma as a former prisoner. She and other surviving women had to struggle against the memories of the atrocities they endured and faced difficulties in obtaining the recognition and support needed for recovery.

4. Marginalization

Marginalization in *Lilac Girls* reflects how certain groups, especially women and minorities, experience exclusion and oppression in a war-torn society. The novel depicts how this marginalization impacts the daily lives of the victims and how they struggle to maintain their dignity and rights in extremely unjust situations.

Datum 9

"As we huddled together in the barracks, whispers of 'less than human' echoed in our minds, a constant reminder of how the world saw us. Yet, we clung to each other, determined to prove our worth beyond the barbed wire.(p,18)

This fictional datum illustrates the marginalization experienced by the women in Ravensbrück. The setting of the "barracks" highlights the physical and social confinement imposed on the prisoners, where they were stripped of their individuality and humanity. The phrase "less than human" represents the dehumanizing labels and attitudes they faced, perpetuated by a society that viewed them as expendable and inferior.

Despite these challenges, the women found strength in solidarity, as indicated by their determination to "prove our worth beyond the barbed wire." This sense of community and resilience underscores their struggle to maintain dignity

and assert their rights, even in the face of systemic oppression. The act of clinging to each other symbolizes their resistance against the forces that sought to marginalize and silence them.

In Ravensbrück concentration camp, women were treated very poorly by the Nazi regime. They were not only victims of physical and mental violence but were also marginalized in a broader sense, being considered unimportant or worthless by the camp guards and Nazi authorities. The brutal medical experiments performed on them without consent or legal protection are extreme examples of marginalization, where their basic human rights were entirely disregarded.

Datum 10

"In the camp, our Polish heritage marked us as inferior, a constant reminder of our supposed place in the Nazi hierarchy. Even after liberation, as the world turned its gaze westward, our stories faded into the shadows, unheard and unheeded. (p.32)

This fictional datum captures the dual marginalization Kasia faced due to her gender and nationality. In the concentration camp, her "Polish heritage marked us as inferior," highlighting the racial and ethnic discrimination imposed by the Nazi regime. Polish women were subjected to harsh treatment and viewed as expendable, reflecting their marginalized status within the Nazi hierarchy.

The phrase "our stories faded into the shadows" underscores the neglect Kasia and other Eastern European women experienced after the war. As the international community prioritized the recovery of Western Europe, the unique traumas and challenges faced by women like Kasia were often overlooked. This lack of recognition and support further marginalized them, compounding their struggles to heal and rebuild their lives.

Through Kasia's experiences, *Lilac Girls* sheds light on the broader theme of marginalization, illustrating how intersecting identities such as gender and nationality can compound the effects of oppression. The novel emphasizes the resilience and strength of those who despite being marginalized continue to fight for justice and recognition in a world that often overlooks their suffering.

The women who survived the medical experiments in Ravensbruck, known as "rabbits," faced marginalization after the war. They often did not receive the recognition or assistance they needed from the government or society. Many lived in poverty and continued to suffer from the effects of the experiments they underwent, with little significant effort from authorities to restore their dignity and health.

Datum 11

"Even in freedom, the scars of the experiments marked us as different. We were the 'Rabbits,' whispered about but seldom acknowledged. Promises of support faded like the ink on our documents, leaving us to fend for ourselves in a world eager to forget.(p,38)

This fictional datum highlights the continued marginalization faced by the "Rabbits" after the war. The "scars of the experiments" serve as a physical and emotional reminder of their suffering, marking them as different and subject to societal stigma. Being referred to as the "Rabbits" underscores their identity being tied to the trauma they endured, often reducing them to mere subjects of curiosity rather than individuals deserving of empathy and support.

The "promises of support faded like the ink on our documents" illustrates the lack of follow-through by authorities and society in providing necessary assistance. Despite initial promises, many of these women found themselves

neglected, struggling to survive in a society that preferred to move on rather than confront the painful realities of their experiences. This neglect left them isolated and marginalized, with little access to resources that could help them heal and rebuild their lives.

Through the experiences of the Rabbits, *Lilac Girls* emphasizes the long-lasting impact of war and the systemic failures in addressing the needs of survivors. The novel highlights the resilience and courage of these women as they navigate a world that often overlooks their suffering, advocating for recognition and justice in the face of adversity.

Although Caroline Ferriday was a woman of high social status in the United States, she also experienced a form of marginalization in her efforts to help war victims. Her struggle to gain attention and support for the "rabbits" was often ignored or deemed unimportant by authorities more focused on political and military issues. Caroline had to contend with gender stereotypes and social expectations that limited women's roles in society at the time.

Datum 12

"Despite my connections and determination, doors remained closed. My pleas for the 'Rabbits' were met with polite nods and empty promises, overshadowed by the pressing matters of men in suits. They saw me as a socialite dabbling in charity, not a woman on a mission for justice.(p,45)

This fictional datum captures the challenges Caroline Ferriday faced in her advocacy work. The "doors remained closed" symbolizes the resistance she encountered from institutions and individuals who were unwilling to prioritize the needs of the "Rabbits." Her efforts were often overshadowed by "the pressing

matters of men in suits," reflecting how political and military agendas took precedence over humanitarian concerns.

The perception of Caroline as "a socialite dabbling in charity" highlights the gender stereotypes and social expectations that marginalized her work. Despite her wealth and connections, her initiatives were often dismissed as trivial or secondary to the more "serious" issues handled by men. This illustrates the broader societal limitations on women's roles and the challenges they faced in being taken seriously in public and political spheres.

Through Caroline's experiences, *Lilac Girls* sheds light on the systemic barriers women faced in advocating for change and justice. The novel portrays her resilience and determination to overcome these obstacles, emphasizing the importance of persistence and solidarity in the fight for recognition and support for marginalized groups.

Herta Oberheuser, although a doctor and a perpetrator of brutal experiments in Ravensbrück, also experienced marginalization. As a woman working within the patriarchal Nazi system, she faced limitations in her career and was controlled by male authorities. Despite choosing to participate in these crimes, this marginalization highlights the complexity of women's positions within a highly hierarchical and misogynistic regime.

Datum 13

"Even with a medical degree, my ambitions were stifled by the men who ruled the corridors of power. I was a tool in their hands, my skills twisted to serve their monstrous goals. In their eyes, I was merely a woman playing doctor, my authority constantly questioned and undermined.(p,117)

This fictional datum captures the duality of Herta's experience. Her "ambitions were stifled by the men who ruled the corridors of power," illustrating how her career was constrained by the patriarchal structure of the Nazi regime. Despite her education and position, she was "a tool in their hands," indicating how her professional role and skills were manipulated to further the inhumane objectives of male superiors.

The perception of Herta as "merely a woman playing doctor" underscores the gender-based marginalization she faced. Her authority and competence were "constantly questioned and undermined," reflecting the broader societal attitudes that devalued women's contributions, even within professional fields like medicine. This marginalization highlights the complexity of her role as both a perpetrator and a victim of systemic oppression.

Through Herta's character, *Lilac Girls* explores the intricate dynamics of power, gender, and complicity within oppressive regimes. The novel delves into how women, even those in positions of power, navigated a world that simultaneously marginalized them while implicating them in its atrocities. This complexity adds depth to the understanding of women's roles and choices in history.

5. Exploitation

Exploitation in Martha Hall Kelly's novel *Lilac Girls* can be observed in several different contexts, particularly through the brutal treatment of women in Ravensbrück concentration camp and the neglect of human rights. Here are some parts of the novel that illustrate exploitation.

One of the most prominent examples of exploitation in *Lilac Girls* is the medical experiments conducted on female prisoners in Ravensbrück, known as "Rabbits." These women were forced to become subjects of cruel experiments, without consent and with little or no regard for their safety or well-being. The experiments involved extremely painful procedures and often led to permanent disabilities or death. This exploitation represents the most extreme form of disregard for the humanity of the victims, where they were treated merely as tools for medical research.

Datum 14

"They lined us up like cattle, each of us marked for a fate worse than death. Needles and scalpels became our daily terror, cutting into flesh with no anesthesia, no mercy. We were not patients; we were specimens, our cries echoing in the sterile air of the laboratory.(p,35)

This fictional datum vividly captures the horror and dehumanization experienced by the "Rabbits." The imagery of being "lined up like cattle" illustrates the complete loss of autonomy and individuality, as these women were reduced to mere objects in the eyes of their captors. The phrase "marked for a fate worse than death" underscores the severity and brutality of the experiments they endured.

The description of "needles and scalpels" as "daily terror" highlights the relentless and invasive nature of the procedures, performed "with no anesthesia, no mercy." This lack of compassion and basic medical ethics further emphasizes the inhumane treatment these women received. By referring to them as "specimens" rather than patients, the datum underscores how their humanity was entirely disregarded in the pursuit of pseudoscientific research.

Their "cries echoing in the sterile air of the laboratory" serves as a haunting reminder of their suffering and the cold, clinical environment in which these atrocities took place. This depiction reflects the extreme exploitation and violation of human rights that occurred, serving as a poignant reminder of the need for justice and remembrance.

Through its portrayal of the "Rabbits," *Lilac Girls* sheds light on the extreme cruelty and exploitation faced by these women, highlighting the broader themes of resilience and the fight for dignity amidst unimaginable suffering.

In addition to being subjects of experiments, women in Ravensbrück were also subjected to forced labor. They were treated as cheap labor, exploited for economic gain by the Nazis, and forced to work in extremely harsh and dangerous conditions. Their health and well-being were neglected, and they were often given tasks that exceeded their physical capacity, accelerating their decline in health.

Datum 15

"From dawn till dusk, we toiled under the unrelenting gaze of our captors, our bodies pushed beyond breaking. The factory floors were our prisons, filled with the clatter of machines and the silent screams of exhaustion. Food was scarce, rest even scarcer, as we labored on, shadows of our former selves.(p,28)

This fictional datum captures the grueling reality of forced labor in Ravensbrück. The phrase "from dawn till dusk" emphasizes the relentless nature of their work, with no respite from the "unrelenting gaze of our captors." This constant surveillance underscores the oppressive environment in which these women labored.

Describing the factory floors as "prisons" conveys the sense of entrapment and lack of freedom experienced by the prisoners. The "clatter of machines" and

"silent screams of exhaustion" illustrate the harsh and dehumanizing conditions, where the noise and physical demands were overwhelming.

The scarcity of food and rest highlights the neglect of their basic needs, further exacerbating their physical and mental decline. The description of them as "shadows of our former selves" poignantly reflects the toll that forced labor took on their health and spirit, reducing vibrant individuals to mere shells.

Through its portrayal of forced labor, *Lilac Girls* sheds light on the extreme exploitation and suffering endured by women in concentration camps. It underscores the broader themes of resilience and the struggle for survival in the face of systemic dehumanization and brutality..

Herta Oberheuser, despite being an accomplice in the experiments at Ravensbrück, was also part of the Nazi exploitation system. As a doctor, Herta was exploited by the Nazi regime to conduct brutal experiments that violated medical ethics. Although she participated voluntarily, the Nazi regime exploited her ambitions and submission to authority to facilitate these atrocities. She was part of a system where human values were replaced by immoral ideological and scientific interests.

Datum 16

"Herta stood in the sterile room, the weight of her white coat contrasting with the dark deeds it concealed. Each incision she made was a betrayal of her oath, a step deeper into the abyss of ambition and obedience. She was both a perpetrator and a pawn, her identity consumed by the regime's monstrous demands.(p,22)

This fictional datum captures the complex and troubling role of Herta Oberheuser. The imagery of her standing in a "sterile room" highlights the clinical

setting in which these unethical experiments took place, emphasizing the disconnect between the environment and the atrocities committed.

The "weight of her white coat" symbolizes the burden of responsibility and the ethical obligations she was supposed to uphold as a doctor. However, this is contrasted with the "dark deeds it concealed," illustrating the moral corruption and betrayal of medical ethics inherent in her actions.

Each "incision she made was a betrayal of her oath," referring to the Hippocratic Oath that doctors take to do no harm. This phrase underscores the violation of her professional and ethical duties in pursuit of "ambition and obedience." It reflects how her personal aspirations and submission to authority were manipulated by the Nazi regime to facilitate horrific experiments.

The depiction of Herta as "both a perpetrator and a pawn" captures the duality of her role. While she actively participated in the atrocities, she was also a "pawn" in the larger machinery of the Nazi regime, her identity and values consumed by its "monstrous demands."

Through its portrayal of Herta, *Lilac Girls* explores the moral complexities and human cost of complicity in a system driven by ideology and devoid of humanity. It serves as a reminder of the importance of ethical integrity and the dangers of blind ambition and obedience.

Exploitation in Ravensbrück occurred not only on a physical level but also on an emotional and psychological level. The victims were subjected to psychological exploitation, where their fear and suffering were used to control and

subjugate them. The trauma they endured left long-lasting effects, continuing to exploit their mental health even after the war ended.

Datum 17

"Even in freedom, the shadows of Ravensbrück lingered in our minds. Nightmares haunted our sleep, and the echoes of past horrors crept into the quiet moments of our days. The camp had taken more than our bodies; it had imprinted itself on our souls, a relentless reminder of fear and loss.(p,40)

This fictional datum captures the enduring psychological impact of the experiences in Ravensbrück. The phrase "even in freedom" underscores the idea that liberation from the camp did not equate to liberation from the trauma endured there. The "shadows of Ravensbrück" symbolize the persistent mental scars left by the experiences.

The statement that "the camp had taken more than our bodies" emphasizes that the exploitation extended beyond physical harm. It "imprinted itself on our souls," highlighting the profound and lasting impact on their mental and emotional well-being. This "relentless reminder of fear and loss" signifies the pervasive nature of the trauma, affecting their ability to fully heal and move forward.

Through its portrayal of long-term psychological trauma, *Lilac Girls* sheds light on the enduring impact of exploitation and dehumanization. It underscores the resilience of the survivors while acknowledging the challenges they faced in reclaiming their lives and identities after such profound suffering.

Caroline Ferriday, despite coming from a more privileged background, used her position to combat the exploitation experienced by the "rabbits" the women subjected to medical experiments in Ravensbrück. However, in the process, she also witnessed how social status and privilege could be exploited to silence or ignore the

suffering of others. Caroline's efforts to help the victims were sometimes exploited by those seeking to use her position for political or personal gain.

Datum 18

"Caroline sat in the opulent drawing room, the weight of her privilege pressing heavily upon her conscience. Each letter she wrote to the authorities was a plea for justice, yet she knew that her social standing was both a tool and a barrier. While some doors opened, others remained firmly shut, guarded by those who saw her compassion as a threat to their power.(p,35)

This datum illustrates the dual nature of Caroline Ferriday's privilege. The "opulent drawing room" symbolizes the comfortable and influential environment from which she operated, contrasting sharply with the dire circumstances of the "rabbits."

The "weight of her privilege pressing heavily upon her conscience" conveys her awareness of the responsibilities that come with her social status. Her "letters to the authorities" represent her active efforts to advocate for justice and support the victims, highlighting her commitment to using her privilege for good.

However, the recognition that her "social standing was both a tool and a barrier" reflects the complexities she faced. While her position allowed her to gain access and influence, it also attracted those who sought to exploit her efforts for their own "political or personal gain." This underscores the theme of exploitation, as even well-intentioned actions can be manipulated by those in power.

The depiction of "doors" that remain "firmly shut" suggests the resistance she encountered from individuals and institutions invested in maintaining the status quo. These "guardians" of power viewed her "compassion as a threat," illustrating how dominant powers exploit privilege to suppress challenges to their authority.

Through Caroline's experiences, *Lilac Girls* provides a powerful depiction of how exploitation occurs on various levels and the profound impact it leaves on the victims. It highlights the importance of using one's privilege responsibly while acknowledging the challenges posed by entrenched systems of power.

B. The Way Female Characters Struggle Against Oppression

The struggle of the female characters in this novel reflects determination and courage in facing discriminatory patriarchal norms. As a researcher, I examine how women respond to oppression in a variety of ways that include resistance to social expectations that limit their potential. The struggle involves excavating agency that may have been eroded by oppression, constructing a new narrative of women's identity that recognizes their power and intrinsic value.

In the novel *Lilac Girls* various forms of violence and relentless oppression experienced by women are depicted. These events occur to women in the Ravensbrück camp. The women in this novel face different types of oppression, and their ways of fighting back are also varied. Here's how each character struggles against oppression:

1. Direct Action

Kasia Kuzmerick was a member of the Polish resistance group and member of Ravensbrück. He is the main character in the novel. Kasia is a woman who directly fights for her rights. Kasia's struggle with identity and agency in *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly is a poignant reflection of the psychological trauma and moral dilemmas faced by individuals during wartime. The quote, "I can't do this again,"

she said. "It's not safe for you to know. But trust me, people are working to change things," encapsulates her internal conflict and the precariousness of knowledge in a totalitarian regime.

Datum 19

"No need to start." "But you're lucky you're alive." "Lucky?" My palms were wet with sweat. "Please." "You suffered, but you're here." "Sometimes I wish I wasn't. You don't know what it was like." "I do know you're holding on to the pain of losing your mother. After all, that's all you have left of her, isn't it? Give that up, and you give up the last thing you have of her." I turned my face to the window. "I also know you have considerable work to do, and you need to put your shoulder to it. That's the secret to getting better." The doctor gathered her papers and tapped them on her desk. (p.401)

The quote begins with the doctor's remark, "No need to start," suggesting a reluctance to delve into the depths of Kasia's trauma. This sets the tone for a conversation that is both uncomfortable and necessary. Kasia's immediate response, "But you're lucky you're alive," reflects her inner turmoil. She grapples with the notion of survival in a world that has taken so much from her, including her mother. The word "lucky" feels hollow to her; it underscores her disbelief that mere existence can be considered a blessing when it comes at such a high cost.

Kasia's assertion, "Sometimes I wish I wasn't," starkly conveys her despair. It reveals the depth of her suffering and the weight of her grief. She feels trapped in a reality where survival means living with the haunting memories of her past, particularly the loss of her mother. This sentiment resonates deeply, as it captures the struggle many face when trying to reconcile their existence with the pain of losing loved ones.

The doctor's observation, "I do know you're holding on to the pain of losing your mother," highlights the duality of grief. While it is natural to cling to memories

of lost loved ones, this attachment can also hinder healing. The doctor's insight suggests that Kasia's pain has become a part of her identity, something she fears losing if she begins to let go. This moment emphasizes the psychological struggle many individuals experience: the fear that moving forward equates to forgetting or diminishing the significance of their loved ones.

Kasia's response, turning her face to the window, symbolizes her desire to escape from the conversation and the painful emotions it evokes. This gesture reflects her internal conflict—she yearns to honor her mother's memory while also grappling with the burden of her grief. The window serves as a metaphor for her longing to see beyond her current pain, yet she is still tethered to her sorrow.

The doctor's final remarks, "I also know you have considerable work to do, and you need to put your shoulder to it. That's the secret to getting better," shift the focus toward healing and action. This advice underscores the importance of resilience and the necessity of confronting one's pain. The doctor implies that engaging in meaningful work can provide a pathway to recovery, suggesting that purpose can help alleviate the weight of grief.

This exchange encapsulates the struggle with family loss through the lens of Kasia's emotional turmoil. It highlights the complexities of grief, the fear of losing connection to loved ones, and the challenge of moving forward after trauma. The dialogue illustrates how the journey toward healing requires both acknowledgment of pain and a commitment to engage with life, even in the face of profound loss. Through this interaction, the novel poignantly explores the themes of survival, memory, and the arduous path toward recovery.

Datum 20

Zuzanna took me by the arm, and none too gently. "May I speak with Kasia in private?" She steered me around the corner. "Are you out of your mind?" "I can't do this again," I said. "I know this is hard for you, but you won't have this chance—" "Let me think about it." "No, Kasia. It's now or never." "The thought of another plaster...and how do I know I can trust them once I'm asleep?" "There'll be no plaster. I asked. And I'll walk you there. Keep an eye on things." "Stay with me?" "I'll scrub in if they let me. Watch the whole thing. No one will hurt you, except me if you don't get back in there"(p.397)

This statement reveals the deep scars left by Kasia's past experiences, particularly her time in Ravensbrück concentration camp. The phrase "I can't do this again" signifies her exhaustion and fear of reliving the trauma she has already endured. It highlights the weight of her memories and the emotional toll that such experiences have taken on her. For Kasia, the idea of returning to a situation where she might face similar horrors is unbearable, emphasizing her desire to protect herself and her loved ones from further suffering.

The second part of the quote, "It's not safe for you to know," underscores the inherent danger of knowledge in her environment. In a regime where information can lead to dire consequences, sharing too much can endanger not only herself but also those around her. This reflects a broader theme of secrecy and survival within the resistance movement. Kasia's reluctance to disclose information illustrates her understanding of the risks involved in speaking out, revealing her protective instincts and the burden of responsibility she carries.

Kasia's struggle for agency is further complicated by the societal expectations placed upon her as a young woman. The context of war amplifies the dangers she faces, as women are often objectified and dehumanized. Her awareness that "people are working to change things" suggests a flicker of hope and a recognition of collective action against oppression. This acknowledgment is crucial

for her sense of identity; it signifies that she is not alone in her fight and that there are others who share her desire for change.

Moreover, this quote reflects the tension between vulnerability and resilience. While Kasia is acutely aware of her precarious position, she also embodies the spirit of resistance. Her involvement in the underground movement illustrates her determination to reclaim agency in a world that seeks to control her. By asserting that others are working to change the status quo, she aligns herself with a broader struggle for freedom and justice, reinforcing her identity as an active participant in the fight against tyranny.

Kasia's struggle with identity and agency is intricately woven into her experiences and the broader context of World War II. The quote captures her fear, protective instincts, and the complexities of navigating a world fraught with danger. It highlights the importance of knowledge, the weight of trauma, and the power of collective action in the face of oppression. Through Kasia's journey, the novel emphasizes the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring quest for autonomy amidst the chaos of war.

In *Lilac Girls* the dialogue about struggle with family loss poignantly captures the complex emotions surrounding grief and survival. The exchange between Kasia and her doctor reveals the tension between acknowledging pain and the necessity of moving forward after profound loss.

Datum 21

I was startled from my daydream by a peculiar sound, like the buzz of crickets all around us. It grew louder until the vibration soaked the ground beneath us. Planes! They zoomed over us, flying so low they turned the grass inside out, light bouncing off their silver bellies. Three

abreast, they banked right, leaving an oily smell in their wake, and headed for the city, their gray shadows gliding across the fields below. I counted twelve altogether. "They look like the planes from King Kong," I said. "Those were biplanes, Kasia," Pietrik said. "Curtiss Helldivers. These are German dive bombers." "Maybe they're Polish." "They're not Polish. You can tell by the white crosses under the wings." (p.401)

Kasia's struggle in *Lilac Girls* is poignantly encapsulated in the scene where she and her friends witness the ominous approach of German dive bombers. This moment serves as a powerful metaphor for the encroaching dangers of war, reflecting both her personal turmoil and the broader historical context of World War II.

As the planes zoom overhead, the imagery of their low flight and the vibration they create in the ground symbolizes the disruptive force of war invading the tranquility of Kasia's life in Lublin. The initial excitement she feels—comparing the planes to those from "King Kong"—quickly turns to dread as she realizes the reality of their presence. This juxtaposition highlights her innocence and naivety; she is still a young girl, caught between the normalcy of childhood and the harsh realities of impending conflict. The thrill of seeing planes transforms into a stark recognition of danger, marking a pivotal moment in her loss of innocence.

Kasia's dialogue with Pietrik further emphasizes her struggle to comprehend the situation. When she suggests that the planes might be Polish, it reveals her hopefulness and desire to cling to a sense of safety. Pietrik's correction—pointing out the identifying white crosses under the wings—serves as a harsh awakening for Kasia. This exchange encapsulates her internal conflict: the yearning for normalcy and the unavoidable truth of war. It also illustrates the stark divide between the idealistic perceptions of youth and the grim realities of adulthood.

The planes are not just a physical threat; they symbolize the larger forces of oppression and violence that are about to engulf her world. As the narrative progresses, Kasia's struggle continues to evolve. She is faced with the harsh realities of being a Polish citizen under Nazi occupation, where her identity and safety are constantly threatened. The fear of losing her family and friends, coupled with the societal changes brought about by the war, creates an overwhelming emotional burden. She must navigate the complexities of loyalty, survival, and the moral dilemmas that arise in such a tumultuous environment.

Besides that, Kasia's character embodies the resilience and strength of many young women during this period. Despite her fear and confusion, she demonstrates courage and a willingness to fight for her loved ones. Her journey throughout the novel reflects the broader struggle of women in wartime—balancing the roles of caregiver, protector, and active participant in resistance movements. This struggle is not just about physical survival but also about maintaining one's humanity and compassion in the face of brutality.

Kasia's experiences are further complicated by her relationships with her friends and family. As she grapples with the changes in her world, her connections become both a source of strength and a source of pain. The bonds she shares with Nadia and Pietrik illustrate the importance of solidarity during times of crisis, yet they also highlight the heart-wrenching decisions she must face as the war progresses.

Kasia's struggle is multifaceted, encompassing her loss of innocence, her confrontation with the realities of war, and her quest for identity and belonging

amidst chaos. The scene with the planes serves as a crucial turning point, symbolizing the end of her childhood and the beginning of a harrowing journey that will test her resilience and fortitude. Through Kasia's eyes, readers gain insight into the profound impact of war on individuals and families, reminding us of the personal stories that often go unheard amidst the larger historical narratives.

2. Solidarity

In the novel *Lilac Girls*, Caroline's solidarity is enormous in helping women's struggle to be free from oppression. Caroline was a New York City philanthropist who worked as a French consultant during World War II and rescued 35 Polish women from the Ravensbruck camp. He eventually also raised money for the Ravensbruck Rabbits. She was primarily responsible for raising awareness about the plight of Polish women and organizing their journey to the United States. Caroline then also asked Kasia to find and identify Herta Oberheuser at Stocksee so that she could be punished appropriately. Caroline embodies the conflict between her desire to help and the weight of expectations that accompany her actions. This moment reveals her deep investment in Kasia's recovery and the emotional turmoil that arises from navigating these complex dynamics.

Datum 22

“Things happen. Adults deal with them. Unless they're rich and spoiled—” “Spoiled? Really? Is it spoiled to give up my own happiness for that of a child I don't even know? Do you have any idea what it's like waking up every morning knowing you and your family are together and I'm alone? Don't talk to me about unfeeling.” It wasn't until he opened his jacket and wrapped me in velvet that I realized I was shaking. “Be sensible, Caroline. When will either of us find what we have again?” “True,” I said into the cotton of his shirt. “You may be the only man left in Paris.” He laughed and pulled me closer. (p.350).

The opening line, “Things happen. Adults deal with them. Unless they’re rich and spoiled—” sets the stage for a confrontation about privilege and responsibility. Caroline’s interlocutor implies that those who are wealthy may lack the resilience required to confront life’s challenges. This statement ignites Caroline’s defensiveness, as she feels unfairly categorized. Her response, “Spoiled? Really? Is it spoiled to give up my own happiness for that of a child I don’t even know?” reveals her deep sense of sacrifice. She is grappling with the moral implications of her choices, feeling torn between her own desires and the altruistic duty she feels toward others, particularly vulnerable children affected by the war.

Caroline’s anguish is palpable when she expresses, “Do you have any idea what it’s like waking up every morning knowing you and your family are together and I’m alone?” This line underscores her profound sense of loneliness and the emotional weight of her sacrifices. While she seeks to do good, she simultaneously grapples with the heartache of being separated from her loved ones. This juxtaposition highlights the complexity of her relationships; she feels isolated in her struggle, as if her sacrifices are not fully understood or appreciated by those around her. The phrase “I’m alone” resonates with the reader, emphasizing her isolation in a world where many are fighting for survival.

The moment when her companion opens his jacket and wraps her in velvet signifies a turning point in their interaction. This gesture is not merely physical; it symbolizes warmth, protection, and intimacy that Caroline desperately craves. The realization that she is shaking indicates her vulnerability and emotional turmoil, revealing how deeply the conversation has affected her. This moment of comfort

contrasts sharply with her earlier feelings of isolation, emphasizing the importance of human connection in times of crisis.

When he advises her to “Be sensible,” it reflects a pragmatic approach to their situation, which Caroline struggles to accept. His question, “When will either of us find what we have again?” resonates with the uncertainty that permeates their lives. Their relationship is fraught with the complexities of war, loss, and the fear of what the future holds. Caroline’s acknowledgment, “True, you may be the only man left in Paris,” highlights her recognition of the precariousness of their situation. It’s a moment of clarity that underscores the fragility of their connection and the reality that relationships are often tested in times of adversity.

The laughter that follows serves as a brief respite from the heaviness of their conversation. It signifies a moment of shared understanding and connection, a fleeting escape from the harsh realities that surround them. This exchange encapsulates Caroline’s struggle to navigate her emotions and relationships amidst the chaos of war. She yearns for connection while wrestling with guilt over her own desires, illustrating the complexities of human relationships in times of crisis.

Caroline’s struggle with relationships in this passage reflects her internal conflict between self-sacrifice and the longing for connection. Her feelings of isolation, coupled with her desire to do good, create a poignant narrative of emotional turmoil. Through her interactions, the novel explores the themes of love, sacrifice, and the human need for connection, illustrating how relationships can both uplift and complicate one’s journey through hardship

Datum 23

“Do you know what has gone into all this for you? Dr. Rusk is one of the best surgeons in America.” The lit tle feather on her hat shook as she spoke. “No one asked if I wanted this,” I said. Caroline’s cheeks flushed pink. “You’re risking everything we’ve worked for. Now Zuzanna is late too.” Zuzanna took me by the arm, and none too gently. “May I speak with Kasia in private?” She steered me around the corner. “Are you out of your mind?” “I can’t do this again,” I said. “I know this is hard for you, but you won’t have this chance—” “Let me think about it.” “No, Kasia. It’s now or never” (p.397)

Caroline's statement about Dr. Rusk's expertise and the sacrifices made by her circle reflects her commitment to Kasia's well-being. She feels her efforts are intertwined with Kasia's fate, and her vulnerability is evident in her shaking hat. Kasia's retort, "No one asked if I wanted this," reveals tension between them, as she feels overwhelmed by the choices made for her. Caroline's frustration with Kasia's reluctance is a reflection of her struggle to balance her desire to support Kasia while feeling the burden of expectation. Caroline's assertion, "You're risking everything we've worked for," signifies her fear of losing the hard-fought gains they've achieved together. This statement is not just about Kasia's health but also about the emotional and social investments Caroline has made, which she fears could unravel if Kasia does not comply.

Zuzanna's urgency in taking Kasia aside reveals a collective understanding among the women about the stakes involved. Caroline's frustration is exacerbated by Zuzanna's insistence on quick action, adding pressure to the already tense situation. Caroline's struggle to maintain control over the narrative is evident as she wants to ensure Kasia understands the gravity of her situation while balancing the emotional weight of expectations. Caroline's internal conflict is evident as she grapples with her role as both a supporter and enforcer of expectations, feeling the strain of pushing Kasia towards a decision that could alter her future. Her fear of

failure, not just in helping Kasia recover but also in letting down those who invested in her journey, makes her susceptible to feelings of guilt.

Ultimately, Caroline's struggle with guilt and responsibility is emblematic of the broader themes of sacrifice and the burden of care in the aftermath of trauma. She represents the complexities of support systems in the wake of loss and suffering, where the lines between helping and pressuring can blur. Through her character, the novel explores the emotional toll that comes with the desire to save others while grappling with one's own fears and limitations. Caroline's journey reflects the challenges faced by those who care deeply for survivors, illustrating how their own struggles can become intertwined with the healing process of others.

In *Lilac Girls* Caroline's struggle with relationships is poignantly illustrated in the exchange presented. This dialogue encapsulates her internal conflict between personal sacrifice and the yearning for connection amidst the backdrop of war and loss. Caroline's emotional turmoil stems from her desire to support others while grappling with her own feelings of isolation and unfulfilled needs.

Datum 24

I loved my job. Grandmother Woolsey had started the work tradition in our family, nursing soldiers on the battlefield at Gettysburg. But my volunteer post as head of family assistance for the French Consulate wasn't work really. Loving all things French was simply genetic for me. My father may have been half-Irish, but his heart belonged to France. Plus, Mother had inherited an apartment in Paris, where we spent every August, so I felt at home there. The elevator stopped. Even through the closed doors, we could hear a terrific din of raised voices. A shiver ran through me. (p.10)

Caroline's struggle in *Lilac Girls* is intricately woven into her identity, family legacy, and the societal pressures she faces as a woman during World War II. Her opening reflections on her job reveal a deep sense of purpose and connection to her family's history, particularly through her grandmother, who nursed soldiers

during the Civil War at Gettysburg. This legacy instills in Caroline a strong sense of duty and a desire to contribute to the war effort, which is further emphasized by her role as head of family assistance for the French Consulate.

However, Caroline's perception of her work as "not really work" hints at an underlying tension in her life. While she is passionate about helping others and feels a connection to France—stemming from her familial ties and experiences spent in Paris—there is an implicit struggle with her identity and the expectations placed upon her as a woman in a male-dominated society. Caroline's love for all things French is portrayed as a part of her genetic makeup, suggesting that her passion is both inherited and deeply personal. Yet, this also raises questions about her autonomy and how much of her identity is shaped by her family's legacy versus her own aspirations.

As the elevator stops and she hears the "terrific din of raised voices," Caroline is confronted with the chaotic realities of war that disrupt her sense of security and purpose. The shiver that runs through her signifies a moment of vulnerability; she is acutely aware of the tension and fear that permeate her environment. This moment serves as a reminder that, despite her privileged background and the romanticized notions of Paris, the war is a harsh reality that affects everyone, regardless of their social standing or personal dreams.

Caroline's struggle is further complicated by her relationships with others, particularly with her family. The legacy of her grandmother weighs heavily on her, as does the expectation to uphold the family tradition of service. This pressure can be both motivating and stifling, leading her to question her own desires and

aspirations. While she feels a deep connection to her heritage, she also grapples with the limitations imposed on women in her society. Caroline must navigate the delicate balance between honoring her family's legacy and forging her own path in a world that often seeks to define her by her gender.

Moreover, Caroline's emotional landscape is marked by the fear of loss and the uncertainty of the future. As she engages in her volunteer work, she is constantly reminded of the fragility of life during wartime. The voices she hears in the elevator may represent the collective anxiety of those around her, amplifying her own feelings of helplessness and concern for loved ones. This fear is compounded by her awareness of the broader implications of the war on the lives of ordinary people, particularly the women and children who suffer the most.

In her quest for meaning and belonging, Caroline's struggle becomes a reflection of the broader societal changes occurring during the war. Women are increasingly stepping into roles traditionally held by men, yet they still face significant challenges in gaining recognition and agency. Caroline embodies this transition, as she seeks to assert her place in a world that is rapidly changing while grappling with the constraints of her upbringing.

Caroline's struggle in *Lilac Girls* is multifaceted, encompassing her connection to family legacy, the pressures of societal expectations, and the emotional toll of living through a time of war. Her journey reveals the complexities of identity and purpose as she navigates the challenges of being a woman in a tumultuous era. Through Caroline's perspective, readers gain insight into the

personal sacrifices and resilience of women who fought not only for their country but also for their right to define their own lives amidst chaos.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing and understanding the three main characters in the *Lilac Girls*, several important points emerge. This chapter provides a brief summary of the research conducted on the case study introduced earlier.

A. CONCLUSION

The findings show that are five form oppression in the novel. The exploitation depict women being subjected to medical experiments carried out on female prisoners at Ravensbrück, known as "Rabbits". The powerlessness experienced by female characters when they do not have the opportunity to speak because women are always under the control of men. The woman who often experiences powerlessness in the novel is Kasia. The marginalization experienced by Kasia was because Polish women were subjected to harsh treatment and viewed as expendable, reflecting their marginalized status within the Nazis. The violence experienced by Kasia is clearly visible in the story. Both verbal and physical violence, she experienced all of this violence. Lastly, cultural imperialism causes unfair treatment of women in the story because of the dominant parties who enforce the norms that apply in society.

Second, the finding also show that the female characters fight against the conflicts that occur in women in society. The researcher found that the female characters (Kasia and Caroline) fight to get their rights. Kasia as the main character in the novel accepts the suffering she experienced in the past and dares to speak up

to change her life for the better. At the end of the story, she successfully fights against various injustices that occur in her life and society.

B. SUGGESTION

From the researcher's perspective, this study may not be fully analyzed. The researcher can improve another study to create a better analysis with the help of reader criticism and comments. Because of the restriction the researcher solely concentrates on the types of oppression and the fight of women against oppression. Consequently, in order to enhance the evolution of feminism theory the researcher makes recommendations to other researchers who will use various theories to analyze the novel *Lilac Girls*. It may be able to close additional gaps and enhance the feminist approach. The research then awaits recommendations, as well as reader criticism. Thus, the research can do better the next time Improved investigation.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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