

ABSTRACT

SIHOTANG, MELANIE HOTARINA MARGARET. (2026). **Silent Resistance Against the Religious-Patriarchal System by the Women Subaltern in Sarah Polley's *Women Talking***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Patriarchal system has been rooted in our society. Women are often placed more inferior than men, their voices are silenced by the dominant powers. This condition can also describe as what Spivak (1988) called the Subaltern. The film *Women Talking* (2022) by Sarah Polley, portray the lives of the subaltern women through its women characters. The film is based on true story in Mennonite Bolivian colony, where women of the colony experienced sexual violence and oppression. Due to their religious belief, the men of the colony sometimes use their religious belief to justify the oppression. The women characters practice a form of silent resistance to challenge the system. The present study focuses on analyzing the women characters as the women subaltern and how they practice the silent resistance. Moreover, the present study also examines how the women characters experienced what Daly (1978) called as Metapatriarchal journey, the journey of women from being oppressed by the patriarchal system to finally achieve their freedom.

The present study has two objectives of the study that have been formulated to guide the analysis. The first objective is to identify how the women characters, in general, can be defined as subaltern figures in Sarah Polley's *Women Talking*. Moreover, this present study also aimed to reveal how the women characters practice forms of silent resistance as a response to their oppression.

Qualitative approach is employed to this present study to explore how the *Women Talking* (2022) film portrays the women characters as the women subaltern and how they are practiced a form of silent resistance. Moreover, this present study also employs the library research to support a deeper analysis of women subalternity and the practice of silent resistance. The primary data, the *Women Talking* (2022) film, is supported by relevant books and journal articles. There are two main theories used in this present study, which are the subaltern theory by Spivak and Daly's radical feminism. *Mise-en-scène* theory also used to support the visual analysis.

The findings show that the women characters of *Women Talking* (2022) can be defined as the women subaltern. The women characters experienced what Spivak described as epistemic violence. Their voices constantly silenced by the religious-patriarchal system. Without direct speeches or dramatic confrontation to the men of the colony, they are challenged the system. Overall, the film conveys message that despite all of the violence experienced by the women characters, how the system has excluded their power and voices, they remain powerful. The film also captures how their religious belief plays important roles within the lives of the Mennonite colony, which shaped the way they think and act.

Keywords: *Mennonite, Religious-Patriarchal, Silent Resistance, Women Subaltern, Women Talking*

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Sistem patriarki telah mengakar dalam kehidupan kita. Sistem ini seringkali menempatkan perempuan pada posisi lebih rendah dibanding laki-laki, dimana suara mereka dibungkam oleh kekuasaan yang dominan. Kondisi ini sejalan dengan konsep *subaltern* yang dikemukakan oleh Spivak (1988). Film *Women Talking* (2022) karya Sarah Polley merepresentasikan kehidupan perempuan subaltern dalam sebuah koloni Mennonite di Bolivia. Mereka mendapat kekerasan seksual dan penindasan yang dibenarkan melalui keyakinan religious yang dianutnya. Dalam film ini, para tokoh perempuan melakukan perlawanan dalam diam, sebagai strategi untuk melawan sistem penindasan tersebut. Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis tokoh perempuan sebagai subaltern dan bagaimana mereka melakukan perlawanan dalam diam. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga akan mengkaji bagaimana para tokoh perempuan melalui apa yang Daly (1978) sebut sebagai perjalanan metapatriarkal, yaitu perjalanan perempuan dari kondisi tertindas hingga akhirnya meraih kebebasan.

Penelitian ini memiliki dua tujuan utama. Pertama, mengidentifikasi bagaimana tokoh-tokoh perempuan dalam *Women Talking* karya Sarah Polley direpresentasikan sebagai figur subaltern. Kedua, mengkaji bagaimana tokoh-tokoh perempuan mempraktikkan perlawanan diam sebagai respons terhadap penindasan yang mereka alami.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka. Data utama berupa film *Women Talking* (2022) didukung oleh buku dan artikel jurnal yang relevan. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori subaltern oleh Spivak dan teori feminisme radikal oleh Daly, serta teori *mise-en-scène* untuk mendukung analisis visual film.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh-tokoh perempuan dalam *Women Talking* dapat dikategorikan sebagai perempuan subaltern yang mengalami kekerasan epistemik, di mana suara dan pengalaman mereka dibungkam oleh sistem religius-patriarkal. Melalui perlawanan diam, para perempuan tersebut menantang sistem tanpa konfrontasi langsung dan menunjukkan bahwa keheningan tidak selalu mencerminkan kelemahan, melainkan dapat menjadi bentuk perlawanan yang kuat dan strategis.

Kata kunci: *Mennonite, Religious-Patriarchal, Silent Resistance, Women Subaltern, Women Talking*