



The Construction of Discursive Authority of Female War Survivor Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

Dianita Atika Putri¹, Karina Hanum Luthfia²

^{1,2}English Literature, Universitas Negeri Semarang

Article Info

Received: 2026-05-21

Revised: 2026-05-31

Accepted: 2026-06-01

Keywords:

Discursive authority;
Feminist Narratology;
Narrative voice;
Voice;
War survivor

DOI:

10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10739

Corresponding Author:

Dianita Atika Putri
dianitaatika@students.unnes.ac.id
English Literature, Universitas
Negeri Semarang

Abstract

*This paper analyzes the attainment of discursive authority of war survivors portrayed in Ruta Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea*. One of the main characters, Emilia, is constructed by the narrator as a resilient young Polish woman who experiences sexual violence during World War II. However, the narrative concludes with her death in the sinking of *Wilhelm Gustloff*, raising questions about the limitations of female agency in war narratives. Through Susan Lanser's feminist narratology, this study first analyzes the narrative voices employed by the war survivor. It further examines how these voices contribute to the construction of discursive authority within the novel. Furthermore, the paper explores the limitations of female discursive authority, particularly through the portrayal of Emilia's death. Using qualitative methods, the primary data consist of narrations or utterances that represent experiences of oppression, forms of resistance, and the construction of female identity within patriarchal wartime structures. The findings reveal that Emilia's character achieves discursive authority through personal and communal voices. However, this authority remains constrained by larger social and power structures. Emilia's death demonstrates that obtaining voice does not necessarily guarantee complete freedom from patriarchal silencing. Therefore, this study contributes to feminist narratology by foregrounding the limitations of discursive authority in war narratives.*

1. Introduction

In various armed conflicts, women are the gender that suffers the most. Aside from general crises such as poverty and instability, women must face specific threats directly related to their gender (Mishra & Khan, 2025). In conflict situations, sexual violence becomes a *gender-based* tactic systematically planned by the military to create fear and divide communities, as well as destroy the self-esteem of the opposing side (Kalanj, 2025). Sexual violence is a manifestation of patriarchal power structures that inherently destroy safe spaces, basic rights, and women's self-sovereignty, which are influenced by unequal *power relations* in terms of *gender* and *sexuality* (Kreft, 2019). This condition positions women as vulnerable targets of political interests during war.

Oppressive conditions do not entirely eliminate women's ability to survive and defend themselves. Such resistances are reflected in various efforts women make to fight to preserve their lives and assert their rights in the face of social pressures and adversities. However, this struggle is often limited by broader social and political structures. Women must constantly fight against patriarchal constructs just to prove their identity, rights, or even the truth about the violence they have experienced (Hamid, 2021).

In the novel *Salt to the Sea*, Sepetys (2016) depicts the resilience of war survivors through the narrative of Emilia, a 15-year-old Polish girl struggling amid World War II between Germany and Russia. The rape perpetrated by Soviet soldiers caused Emilia to become pregnant, further intensifying her struggle for survival during the war. Throughout her journey, Emilia experienced various hardships from her pregnancy and her efforts to conceal her identity as a Polish, whom Adolf Hitler considered subhuman. Her experience represents Polish female civilians whose bodies are in a vulnerable position amid the violence of war. The Red Army's invasion of the Third Reich was followed by mass rapes of the women they encountered, including members of ethnic minority groups such as Polish women, also female victims of forced labor from Poland and *Ostarbeiterinnen* (Galeziowski, 2022).

Emilia's character building depicts a woman affected by the injustice of the existing social system, yet remains resilient in confronting it to the end. Emilia continues to survive amid pregnancy, displacement, and identity concealment. Her experience reflects how war survivors negotiate oppressive wartime structures while struggling to preserve their existence and dignity. This portrayal aligns with the statement proposed by Bharti (2025) that the role of women in World War II narratives should not be dismissed:

They fought not only political battle but social and emotional battle too. Hence, they deserve a place in war narratives not just as mere dependents but as warriors and survivors ... They very subtly challenged the existing dominating powers, raising voice as and when required.

However, the narrative ending of Emilia's persevering character is her death during her rescue from the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff ship. This contradiction in the characterization and storyline raises questions about the representation of female agency in war survivors in the novel. The authority of the narrator's voice also conflicts with the storyline that eliminates the character.

In analyzing this research, Susan Lanser's views on feminist narratology serve as a framework for examining the tension between the narrative voices and the narrative structure of a war survivor's story. Feminist narratology integrates *narrative technique* with a *gender-political perspective* (Yuan & Dong, 2018). Through textual analysis, feminist narratology dissects the social and historical context of a work to discover the feminine perspective reflected in the author's views (Manfeng, 2022). This approach views women's experiences not merely as personal stories but also as reflections of broader social structures.

Lanser (1992), in her book *Fictions of Authority*, introduces three modes of narratives: *authorial voice*, *personal voice*, and *communal voice*, which play roles in constructing *discursive authority*, the sovereignty of a voice to gain recognition and trust from readers. Therefore, this framework is suitable for interpreting issues in Emilia's narrative, particularly for examining the broader social context underlying her story.

A number of previous studies relevant to this research have been conducted. Kozaczka (2021) explores the representation of sexual violence against Polish women in novels about World War II, distinguishing two main narrative patterns: third-person narratives, which often treat rape scenes as brief episodes, and first-person narratives that position the victim's experience at the center of the story. Additionally, by employing feminist narratology, Laila, Kanwal, & Saba (2025) conclude that language and narrative strategies in war-themed novels tend to weaken women's agency and reinforce patriarchal ideology through certain silences in storytelling, thereby framing women as victims.

On the other hand, the construction of discourse authority through female voices is examined by Ziyang (2023) and Song (2022), emphasizing the use of various narrative strategies and certain narrative voices to maintain the sovereignty of the feminist voice and challenge patriarchal dominance within the text.

While previous studies have discussed the representation of sexual violence and the use of narrative strategies in war-themed novels, such studies have not comprehensively framed these phenomena within the concept of discursive authority. Furthermore, previous research has analyzed only the attainment of discourse authority, without linking it to the limitations of narrative structure, particularly the deaths of female characters. This study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the narrative voices of a war survivor and their attainment of discursive authority, as well as the limits or sustainability of that authority within a single, comprehensive analysis.

This study will explore the construction of discursive authority of a war survivor as depicted in Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea*. The focus of this study is to examine the narrative voices of war survivors depicted in *Salt to the Sea* as well as the construction and limitations of discursive authority within the narrative structure. By highlighting the contradiction between the power of female voices and the deaths of their characters, this study offers a new perspective on understanding how the experiences of war survivors are both narrated and constrained within the text, as well as suggesting that female discursive authority is not entirely sustainable.

2. Method

In analyzing the discursive authority within the voices of war survivors, this study will employ qualitative methods. According to Taherdoost (2022), qualitative research is a *naturalistic* and *interpretive* method used to analyze various topics in order to find solutions to scientific and practical problems in social life. This research will provide insight into real-world issues while exploring people's experiences, standpoints, and attitudes. The nature of qualitative research, which focuses on the specificity of context and individuals, makes it ideal for *idiographic analysis* (Gerring, 2017).

This analysis focused on Ruta Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea* as the object of the study. The narrative constructed on Emilia's character as a strong war survivor whose story ends tragically serves as the subject of this study, given that her authority on the female voice needs to be questioned. The theoretical framework employed is Susan Lanser's feminist narratology to assist in exploring the discursive authority of the female voice in relation to the narrative of her death.

The primary data for this study are from the novel *Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys. The data will be collected in the form of narrations or utterances from characters in the novel that represent experiences of oppression, forms of resistance, and the construction of female identity within patriarchal wartime structures. Particular passages were given greater attention when they explicitly reflected women's attempts to express, defend, or negotiate their voices under patriarchal oppression.

All quotations and page references in this study are taken from the 2016 Penguin Books publication of Ruta Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea*. This research also draws on secondary data from journal articles, book theory, and other internet sources. The data used consist of materials that support an understanding of Lanser's theoretical concepts in feminist narratology and of previous research related to this topic.

In analyzing the data, several steps are involved. First, the characters' voices are categorized into modes of narrative voices according to their point of view, the narrative form used, the availability of narrative self-reference, and the orientation of private or public voice. The modes include authorial voice (heterodiegetic),

personal voice (autodiegetic), and communal voice. Second, data from each type of narrative voice are identified to show how experiences of oppression, forms of resistance, and identity construction reflect women's efforts to gain legitimacy for their voices in war narratives. Finally, the results of this analysis are linked to the construction of discursive authority by considering the character's social background and rhetorical skills within narratives, which illustrate how female characters gain authority in conveying war experiences and criticizing existing patriarchal structures. Furthermore, the limitations of discursive authority are examined, particularly in relation to the portrayal of female characters' deaths in war narratives.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Narrative Voice in Feminist Narratology

In feminist narratology, Lanser integrates elements of *classical narratology* with *feminist criticism* by using the concept of "voice" as the point of intersection between the two disciplines (Yuan & Dong, 2018). According to Lanser (1992, p. 5), "voice" serves as a narratological function while also playing a political role in relating literary analysis to historical reality. It serves as a symbol of strength and affirmation of identity for *subjugated subjects* (Lanser, 1992, p. 3).

Narrative voice refers to the way a story is conveyed in the text and the position of the voice speaking in the narrative. The identification of narrative voice begins with determining the *point of view*, which includes the narrator's identity, their involvement in the plot, their level of knowledge of the events, and the psychological depth of the characters (Sarnou, 2016). In *Fictions of Authority*, Lanser (1992, p. 15) distinguishes three modes of narrative voices, in which *authorial voice*, *personal voice*, and *communal voice*.

Authorial voice is a third-person (*heterodiegetic*) narrative that exists outside the fictional world and is typically public and authoritative. Personal voice is a first-person (*autodiegetic*) narrative in which the narrator is the main character recounting their own story. Meanwhile, communal voice refers to narrative practices that represent the voice of a group.

In these three modes, *the distinction between private and public voices*, as well as *the presence or absence of self-reference in the narrative*, are key factors in shaping textual authority, where *gender conventions* in these aspects determine the extent to which women can attain discursive authority (Lanser, 1992, p. 15). In *Salt to the Sea*, there is no evidence for the use of authorial voice. Instead, Sepetys utilizes personal voice and communal voice in Emilia's narrative to establish her authority as a war survivor.

3.1.1 Personal Voice Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

According to Lanser (1992, p. 18), personal voice refers to first-person (autodiegetic) narration in which the narrator acts as the protagonist recounting their own life story. The authority of this voice is more limited and *contingent*, as

the narrator claims only the right of a single person to interpret their own experiences (Lanser, 1992, p. 19). The use of women's personal voices serves as a crucial narrative tool for articulating the author's intentions in depth within texts that prioritize testimony and authenticity (Meškova, 2024).

In *Salt to the Sea*, the narrator uses first-person narration and employs interior monologue. Although Lanser (1992, p. 19) excludes *interior monologue* from personal voice because it lacks narrative awareness and self-reference, Emilia's narrative still demonstrates a process of searching for a personal voice.

After her pregnancy became known among the refugees, Emilia created a fictional story that the baby she was carrying belonged to the boy she loved, August. However, this illusion gradually entered her subconscious until she could no longer distinguish between fantasy and reality.

I became good at pretending. I became so good that after a while the lines blurred between my truth and fiction. And sometimes, when I did a really good job of pretending, I even fooled myself. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 147)

The blurring lines between reality and fiction reflect Emilia's psychological fragmentation following the violence she endured during the war. The stories she creates serve as a survival strategy to cope with traumatic experiences she is unable to completely confront. Caruth (1996) argues that trauma does not simply reside in the violent event itself, but in the unconscious inability to assimilate that experience, causing it to recur as a haunting image that continues to burden the victim in the future.

Beneath the overlapping realms, Emilia urged herself to acknowledge the reality she had suppressed. "*You must tell, Emilia. Clear your conscience. Free your soul.*" (Sepetys, 2016, p. 233). These narrative episodes show how Emilia grapples with "the fictions that have constructed her" (Lanser, 1992, p. 211) and strives to unravel the fictions she has created to survive. This reflects "the process of coming to know one's own language," as defined by Bakhtin, in which a character learns to distinguish the identity of their own voice from the influence of other voices around them (Lanser, 1992, p. 211).

After admitting the harsh truth behind her pregnancy, Emilia begins to accept both her reality and the presence of her baby.

I looked down at Halinka. I could actually feel her. She was mine. I was hers. Her perfect cheeks and fingers were pink, just like my hat ... She was part of me, my family, and Poland. I had to consider the possibility. Maybe the storm was finally behind me. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 301)

This process reflects an attempt to create a personal voice within the novel, in which a war survivor consciously tries to unravel her own fictional narrative to reclaim her identity. Emilia is also aware of the reality of her experience and the story she wishes to construct, demonstrating elements of self-conscious narrative and narrative self-reference. Emilia's unstable and fragmented voices depict how narrative authority can also emerge from traumatic and conflicting experiences, offering a broader perspective on the representation of marginalized women's efforts to assert their agency in adverse circumstances.

In addition to finding her own voice, Emilia uses her personal voice to resist systems that oppress war survivors. In the story, when the passenger ship Wilhelm Gustloff was hit by torpedoes, Emilia responded with great intuition.

Was anyone listening? Did they understand me? Didn't they realize that we had to get out of the metal container? ... No one was moving fast enough. I ran around the area, swatting at them like pigeons. Joana wanted to wait for instructions. No. We had to move. Now. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 321)

In this scene, Emilia expands the representation of war survivors by demonstrating women not merely as passive victims of violence, but also as subjects capable of agency in wartime structures.

Moreover, at the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff, Emilia manages to board the raft alongside Alfred, a Nazi sailor who views Poles as an inferior race. In front of him, Emilia reveals her true identity, having previously pretended to be Lithuanian to board the ship and speak up, "*I am Polish!*" (Sepetys, 2016, p. 361). In this line, Emilia resists the labels that attempt to erase her existence as a Polish woman and affirms her autonomous existence.

Through Emilia's personal voice, Sepetys provides space for war survivors to assert authority through female voices within a complex narrative structure, while also showcasing women's forms of resistance and self-awareness in the face of patriarchal power dynamics.

3.1.2 Communal Voice Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

Communal voice is a voice that represents a collective identity or a *definable community*. There are three main forms of communal voice: *singular*, *simultaneous*, and *sequential*. Singular voice involves a single narrator speaking on behalf of the entire group. Simultaneous voice involves a group of people speaking in unison using the pronoun "we." Meanwhile, the mode in which group members take turns telling the story to build collective authority is called the sequential mode. Communal mode is typically used by *marginalized or oppressed communities* to demonstrate solidarity and group agency (Lanser, 1992, p. 21).

There is greater *political potential* in narratives that carry the group's collective vision, especially when such forms are able to accommodate the pluralities within them (Lanser, 1992, p. 279). The novel *Salt to the Sea*

demonstrates the application of the three modes of communal voice within its narrative.

3.1.2.1 Sequential Communal Voice Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

Sequential communal voice forms the identity of “we” through a series of “I” voices presented alternately and collaboratively (Lanser, 1992, p. 256). Through this sequential narrative structure, each narrator maintains their individual uniqueness and authority while collectively contributing to the construction of a coherent group identity (Lanser, 1992, p. 264).

In *Salt to the Sea*, this sequential structure is realized through three of the four narrators, including Emilia, Florian, and Joana, whose alternating chapters build what Lanser (1992, p. 21) calls a “mutually authorizing voice” within a textually defined community. The fascist narrator Alfred operates outside this communal structure as he holds a conflicting perspective that is not mutually legitimizing with the other characters.

Emilia’s involvement within the youth refugee group allows her voice to move beyond an isolated personal experience into a collective testimony of war survivors. The sequential structure of these three narrators operates through a mechanism of mutual authorization distributed across each character’s chapters. During the childbirth process, the revelation of Emilia’s experience as a victim of sexual violence occurs through Joana’s chapter, which decodes Emilia’s fragmented utterances, “*No August. Russians. Frau Kleist. Take her. She prettier.*” (Sepetys, 2016, p. 244). Joana’s acknowledgment of this fact is then returned to Emilia’s section.

Joana then whispered the words I had waited so long to hear. I knew Mama would say them if she could. But Joana spoke them, slowly and deliberately, clutching my hands between hers. “Emilia, I am so very sorry.” (Sepetys, 2016, p. 246)

On the other hand, Emilia recognizes Florian’s humanity beneath the burden of his secrets.

The knight was beautiful, handsome when he smiled. He didn’t want anyone to see it. He didn’t want to acknowledge it himself. But for a brief moment, I saw him. The real man inside of him, not the one tortured by secrets and pain. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 155)

Florian later acknowledges Emilia’s resilience by saying, “*That kid. She’s a warrior.*” (Sepetys, 2016, p. 260).

The distribution of narrative segments that allows narrators to complement and reinforce each other’s experiences serves as the primary mechanism in sequential communal voice. Although their initial motivations differed, the sequential narratives of the three characters gradually converge into a shared communal vision centered on survival, protection, and humanity amid war.

3.1.2.2 Simultaneous Communal Voice Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

In simultaneous communal voice, the narrative presents voices and perspectives that merge into a collective entity, in which “we” act as a unified subject, *both as the perceivers of events and as the narrators of those events* (Lanser, 1992, p. 257). The word “we” is also effective in breaking down the barrier between the narrator and the reader, making it easier to internalize ideas in the novel (Liu, 2025). In the novel, Emilia’s voice occasionally shifts from the individual “I” to a collective expression.

Adolf Hitler had declared that Polish people were subhuman. We were to be destroyed so the Germans could have the land they needed for their empire. Hitler said Germans were superior and would not live among Poles. We were not Germanizable. But our soil was. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 11)

The use of the words “we” and “our” in the passage represents the Polish community that was targeted for destruction by Germany. Here, her narration not only shares personal experiences within the historical context of German occupation but also gives voice to the suffering of the Polish people, who are experiencing dehumanization and displacement under Nazi occupation.

Emilia draws the collective experience of the entire community into her narrative.

Two warring nations gripped Poland like girls fighting over a doll. One held the leg, the other the arm. They pulled so hard that one day, the head popped off. The Nazis sent our people to ghettos and concentration camps. The Soviets sent our people to gulags and Siberia. (Sepetys, 2016, p. 202)

In this passage, Emilia’s voice represents the thousand voices of victims silenced by two occupying powers. It records the struggles, suffering, and existence of the Polish people amidst the atrocities of war. The metaphor of Poland as a puppet emphasizes how dictatorial rulers dehumanize a sovereign nation, treating it as a mere lifeless object to be manipulated and destroyed at will.

Through simultaneous communal voice, Sepetys positions Emilia as a female narrator who transforms collective experience into shared testimony, enabling the voices of displaced and marginalized civilians to be heard throughout the narrative.

3.1.2.3 Singular Communal Voice Portrayed in *Salt to the Sea*

Singular communal voice is a single-narrator format that positions a single narrator as the collective voice of their community (Lanser, 1992, p. 21). In *Salt to the Sea*, Emilia transcends her personal voice to become a “spokesperson” for her people, the Polish, who are threatened with extinction. The first singular mode is evident in the excerpt below.

My mental pictures of Lwów seemed to be fading, like a photograph left outside in the sun. Lwów, the city that always smiled, a place of education and culture in Poland. How much of Lwów would survive? (Sepetys, 2016, p. 46)

Although the memory appears personal, Emilia's concern extends beyond herself toward the survival of Lwów's identity. The question "How much of Lwów would survive?" reflects a communal anxiety embodied by a single individual narrator.

A similar pattern appears in the passage below.

Looking at the child, I suddenly became hungry for my country... How would she know the truths from the untruths? Would she believe that Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Armenians, and Hungarians had all coexisted peacefully in Lwów before the war? ... I wanted her to know not only Poland, but my Poland. I pulled her close and whispered in Polish: "There were no ghettos, no armbands. I often fell asleep to a breeze floating through my open window. It's true. It was like that once." (Sepetys, 2016, p. 268)

Through these narrations, Emilia preserves the collective memory of prewar coexistence among different ethnic communities in Lwów. This is in line with Halbwachs (1992) argument that although collective memory is sustained and strengthened by group solidarity, the memory itself ultimately remains stored in the minds of each individual who makes up the group.

Emilia's act of whispering to her child represents the collective voice of the Polish to ensure that the nation's collective memory is embedded in future generations, overcoming the colonizers' efforts to erase the community's legacy. Through singular communal voices, Sepetys expands individual survival roles of war survivors by presenting them as agents who safeguard cultural identity and historical remembrance.

3.2 The Construction of Discursive Authority in Salt to the Sea

Discursive authority is the legitimacy of a work or narrative subject that encompasses aspects of *intellectual credibility*, *ideological truth*, and *aesthetic quality* that are formed through the dynamic interaction between the text and the community of readers who receive it (Lanser, 1992, p. 6). Furthermore, Lanser (1992, p. 6) argues that the legitimacy of a voice or text arises from the integration of *social identity background* and *rhetorical skill* within its narrative form.

Emilia faces multiple layers of social marginalization. She is a minor refugee, belongs to an ethnic group considered inferior, and is a victim of sexual violence in a war zone. The various interrelated social factors are the root causes of oppression (Luthfia, Juliasih, & Saktiningrum, 2023). Amid a social position that stands in contrast to those in power, she is rendered an unauthorized subject by social and hegemonic forces. This lack of social authority requires the narrator to establish

her authority through textual strategies. As Lanser (1986) suggests:

... women's language becomes not simply a vehicle for constructing a more legitimate (masculine, powerful) voice but the voice through which the more global judgment of patriarchal practices is exercised.

In this context, it is achieved through her personal and communal voice.

By using her personal voice, Emilia attempts to construct authority by articulating her experiences through acts of challenging wartime oppression, while also recognizing her identity amid trauma and silence. However, this authority remains contingent, as personal voice only grants her the right to interpret her own experiences without broader social legitimacy.

Emilia's voice gains strength as she speaks for the collective voices of two communities: the youth refugee community and the Polish community. In the youth refugee group, her testimony as a war survivor is validated collectively, and the solidarity of refugees turns into a form of resistance against oppressive wartime discourse that positions them as powerless figures. In representing the Polish nation, she articulates the aspirations of the Polish by revealing the truths of the occupiers' atrocities and denouncing the oppressor's actions. Through these communal forms, Emilia's authority becomes more socially validated and politically meaningful.

As Emilia lacks the social position necessary to claim authority within the wartime structure, she relies on textual strategies to gain narrative legitimacy. Through personal and communal voices, she establishes discursive authority by voicing her condemnation of the oppressive forces that have deprived both her individual and civil rights. This aligns with Sepetys's purpose in writing the novel. In the Author's Note, Sepetys explains her intention to give voice to victims of war and forgotten refugee histories inspired by her father's experiences during World War II (Sepetys, 2016, pp. 381–383).

Nevertheless, the novel ultimately presents the limitations of this authority through Emilia's death in the Wilhelm Gustloff tragedy at the end of the story. Lanser (1992, p. 271) asserts that "all textual authority is limited". Although Emilia succeeds in resisting patriarchal domination through her voice throughout the narrative, the ending demonstrates that women's authority within oppressive systems remains fragile and confined. Similar to the findings of Laila et al. (2025), who argue that female characters in conflict narratives are often positioned as victims through narrative and linguistic structures,

Emilia's narrative ultimately returns to a position of vulnerability despite the authority she gains through personal and communal voices. Overall, Emilia's death reflects how war and patriarchal structure domination continue to exercise power over women's lives despite their resistance.

Although Emilia's death reveals the limitations of discursive authority in confronting broader patriarchal structures, her experiences and testimony remain documented in the narrative. Thus, her voice continues to serve as a testament to women's experiences during wartime and as a collective memory preservation of Polish civilians' wartime experiences.

5. Conclusion

Through Emilia's voice, *Salt to the Sea* politically critiques the discourse of war as a patriarchal system that reinforces domination over women's bodies, identities, and voices. War strips women of authority over their own lives and futures, reducing them to vulnerable subjects within a system that no longer recognizes their autonomy as important. This study examines how Emilia successfully constructs discursive authority through her personal and communal voices by sharing her witness as a war survivor and asserting her individual and community rights amid a system that seeks to silence her. However, this achievement remains overshadowed by larger social and power structures that the authority she possesses is never entirely free from limitations and suppression.

The narration of Emilia in the novel demonstrates the fact that gaining a voice does not always equate to complete freedom, as the patriarchal system continues to exert greater power over women's bodies and lives. Nevertheless, the testimonies conveyed by using these voices remain a vital form of resistance against the effort of systematic silencing. Consequently, the voice here is not portrayed as a powerful force capable of completely dismantling oppressive systems, but rather as the most fundamental form of resistance that allows victims to speak the reality of war that is at risk of being rewritten by the oppressors.

This study is limited to analyzing Emilia's character using Susan Lanser's feminist narratology. Future research could therefore expand the study by employing other approaches to examine the representation of female war survivors in other works of war literature or other female characters in *Salt to the Sea*.

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