

**REFUGEE VOICES IN VIET THANH NGUYEN'S SELECTED
SHORT STORIES**

SKRIPSI

By:

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ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN INDONESIA

JAKARTA

2025

REFUGEE VOICES IN VIET THANH NGUYEN'S SELECTED SHORT STORIES

SKRIPSI

Presented in partial fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* in the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Letters and Languages, Universitas Kristen Indonesia.

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2025



FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN INDONESIA

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On June 30th, 2025, a *Skripsi* Defense was held as partial fulfillment of the academic requirements to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature, Faculty of Letters and Languages, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, on behalf of:

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This *skripsi* is entitled "Refugee Voices in Viet Thanh Nguyen's Selected Short Stories" and has been approved by the Board of Examiners, consisting of:

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Declared in Jakarta
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Hopefully, this *skripsi* can be helpful and provide readers with new knowledge. Therefore, the writer expects constructive criticism and suggestions from readers to improve to be better.

August 30th 2025

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ABSTRAK

*Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana suara pengungsi direpresentasikan dalam tiga cerpen karya Viet Thanh Nguyen yang terdapat dalam kumpulan *The Refugees* (2017), yaitu *Black-Eyed Women*, *War Years*, dan *Fatherland*, serta untuk mengetahui bagaimana para pengungsi bereaksi terhadap penderitaan yang mereka alami. Penelitian ini berangkat dari konteks sejarah pengungsi Vietnam pascaperang dan berfokus pada dua aspek utama: subaltern speak dalam bentuk suara trauma dan suara kehilangan, serta respons trauma berupa *fight*, *flight*, dan *freeze*. Analisis ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif didukung oleh teori Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak dalam *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) serta teori Judith Herman dalam *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa suara pengungsi dalam tiga cerpen memuat pengalaman traumatis seperti kekerasan, perang, kehilangan orang terdekat, kehilangan tempat tinggal, dan hilangnya rasa aman, yang seringkali dibungkam oleh narasi dominan. Respons yang ditunjukkan bervariasi, mulai dari perlawanan aktif (*fight*), penghindaran (*flight*), dan keterbekuan emosional (*freeze*), bergantung pada latar pengalaman dan dukungan sosial tokoh. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa karya sastra berfungsi sebagai medium untuk menyuarakan pengalaman yang terpinggirkan.*

Kata Kunci: Suara Pengungsi, Perang Vietnam, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Teori Spivak, Teori Trauma dan Pemulihan

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore how refugee voices are represented in three short stories by Viet Thanh Nguyen in the collection *The Refugees* (2017), specifically *Black-Eyed Women*, *War Years*, and *Fatherland*, and to investigate how refugees respond to the suffering they experience. This research starts from the historical context of post-war Vietnamese refugees and focuses on two main aspects: subaltern speak in the form of voices of trauma and voices of loss, and trauma responses in the form of fight, flight, and freeze. The analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method supported by the theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) and Judith Herman's theory in *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). The results show that the refugee voices in the three short stories contain traumatic experiences such as violence, war, loss of loved ones, loss of shelter, and loss of security, which are often silenced by the dominant narrative. The responses shown vary, ranging from active resistance (fight), avoidance (flight), to emotional freezing (freeze), depending on the character's background experience and social support. This finding confirms that literary works serve as a medium for voicing marginalized experiences.

Keywords: Refugee Voices, Vietnam War, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Gayatri Theory, Trauma and Recovery Theory