

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of the study

In daily life there is still a contradiction about the position of women in society, especially their position to men's. The old assumption concerned the women's position to be behind or under the men's. Their place in society was on the second position for they had no authority in making decisions. They fully depended on the men as the decision-makers, as the woman mystique says that is to get married, have four children, and live in a nice house in a nice suburb.

In the further development woman realized their right that they actually had the same position as the men did. Male domination, with its 'androcentric' (Greek andros, "male") and phallocentric (Greek, phallos, "penis") was questioned (Ruthven, 1984 : 1). The two terms above implicitly state that man is superior to woman because man becomes the "centre" of power or, in other words, that anything is centred to man's authority. They also lead our perception to advocate the male domination. Women, then, began to claim the equality of right with the men's. This movement is popularly called feminism that tries to rise the dignity of women. In

short, feminism project is to end the male domination (Dworkin in Ruthven, 1984:4). This movement was known since the nineteenth century, even very likely earlier, and nowadays, in the twentieth century, it becomes very popular.

Feminism is widely supported especially by the women themselves. They try to express their ideas in various ways, for examples having career and writing articles. Literature is one of the ways they use in expressing their ideas, it is even one of the important devices in their movement. Many authors take this issue as the topic or theme of their works. Alice walker is one of them and her novel, *The Color Purple*, tries to portray the black women's condition who live in oppression and the struggles they do in order to get this situation out.

The centre of interest in *The Color Purple* is on Celie's struggle to change herself from an inferior woman to be an independent one. This process of changing coincides with the general principles of feminism while feminism itself becomes an actual issue until nowadays. For black women, their feminism is a little bit different from feminism in general. General feminism is motivated by sexual discrimination while in black feminism, racial discrimination includes. Those are the writer's motivations to analyze this work.

Although slavery has been abolished, it does not mean that black's condition has got better (Thompson,-:8). They remain to live in a color line system. Meanwhile, in the patriarchal black families, black women get a bad sexist treatment just from the black men (Low and Clift, 1981:862). Black women become sexual object for both black and white men. In such a condition black women get double oppressions, sexual and racial oppressions. It might be tripple oppressions if economical oppression includes (Ruthven, 1984:19).

Alice Walker is a black American woman, the youngest daughter of a sharecropper in Eatonton, Georgia. She was born on February 9th 1944 and began writing in 1967. Her first novel, *Third Life of Grange Copeland*, that she wrote in the 1960s when she was a student at Sarah Lawrence College was published in 1970 and the second, *Meridian*, in 1975. *The Color Purple* is her third novel that is considered as her best work that has won two awards, American Book Award and Pulitzer Prize in 1983. Graduating from Sarah Lawrence she recieved a writing fellowship and planned to spend it in Senegal, West Africa but in 1966 she decided to go back to Mississippi with a realization that "I could never live happily in Africa - or anywhere else - until I could live freely in Mississippi". She went on her career as a writer and yielded many works that most

of them talked about black and woman. Her marriage with Mel Laventhal gave her a daughter but they, then, separated (Wallace, 1989). Dealing with Alice Walker's background, we here can judge her that she is one of the proponents for emancipation.

I.2. Statement of the problem

Based on the background above, the most interesting points found in *The Color Purple* are the social conditions of black American during the first half of the twentieth century that pushes the main character, Celie, to have very complex conflicts and Celie's process of change. Then, the writer tries to state the problems on :

1. How does Celie's society treat her?
2. What is her struggle to reach her independence?

I.3. Objective of the study

The writer basically tries to find the entire elements of the novel that influence much in building up the theme of the story, especially the characters and the conflicts, and then states the objectives of the problem on :

1. Finding the plot of the story and the conflicts of the main character (her inner conflicts and her conflicts against her environment)

2. Finding the changing process of the main character.

I.4 Significance of the study

This analysis is expected to give something valuable to understand about human being and life, and to rise our capability in analyzing literary works. Furthermore, it is also expected that the readers of this paper can learn and understand more about black society, especially about black women's position within, and feminism as the device for their struggle to achieve their expected ideals.

I.5. Limitation of the study

In analyzing this work the writer limits the discussion on the intrinsic elements, mainly setting and character. Setting here is emphasized on the social setting because it has an important role to turn up the whole story. The emphasis of character analysis is on the main character while the other characters are merely used to support the main character analysis.

Besides, feminist point of view is used to analyze this work. In short, this analysis is developed by using the general principles from the point of view of feminism.

I.6. Theoretical background

This is a thematic analysis that can not be separated from the entire story and the internal relation among the elements. In this case, therefore, the writer uses intrinsic approach by analyzing the intrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements used in this analysis are characters and setting. To support this analysis, extrinsic approach is necessary to use because the social condition has an important role in embodying the whole story. The extrinsic approaches those are appropriate to use in this analysis are the theories about Black American society and feminism. It means the writer uses sociological approach.

I.7. Method of the study

In this analysis the writer uses the descriptive analysis method, that is the descriptive explanation of the problem through dialogues, events, and actions. This method is applied based on the work itself and supported by other informations about this work.

Besides, the writer needs to do a library research that is a process of finding informations which are helpful to arrange this research. The writer collects data and informations from various books, articles, encyclopedias, and all other kinds of related materials.

1.8. Definition of key-term.

feminism : organized activity on behalf of women's rights in the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes that in the nineteenth and twentieth century becomes movement seeking to remove restriction that discriminates against women.

male-dominance : dominant position of men in an order of forcefulness to women.

patriarchy : a familial system that gives a man (father) special rights to be the leader of a family.