

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a creative work that contains the intent of the author. “A literary work does not mean just having an idea, a theory, or a system of thought, but in literary work contains ideas and systems of thought” (Grace, 1956.p.6). In other words a literary work contains a variety of ideas, theories, and systems of thought.

Literature is a term used to describe a spoken or written material. This term is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific work. It includes work of drama, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Literature is also an expression of emotion, passion, feeling of the writer towards the life, society, experience, and politic.

Lesbianism is one of the issues that are widely exposed in the media lately. “Lesbian is a label given to describe homosexual women or women who have sexual desire and emotion to the other women” (Ricch, 2000.p.94). Talking about lesbianism cannot be separated from feminism. Lesbianism was built as one of the excesses of feminism. Contruction of the 20th century declared lesbian as a concept used to distinguish between women who have a deviant sexual orientation with a woman sexually oriented normal (lesbian). During the American Reconstruction, feminists are divided on this issue. As a result, the lesbian feminists form his own group and together with black feminists voice their protests and other minority groups such as the workers. “Feminisme is an understanding that arise when women demanded to get equal rights as men” (June Hannam 2007.p.22).

Alice Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia on February 9, 1944. She worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer, and took part in the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi in 1960. Alice Walker is the most admired African-American writer. Walker is the youngest daughter of a farmer, she grew up with a poor life. Her mother worked as a maid to help her family's

life. After completing her studies, Walker worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer. She is active in the Civil Rights Movement, fighting for equality for all African Americans. Her experience informs her first collection of poems *Once*, published in 1968. But now she is better known as a novelist, Walker shows her talent in storytelling, her *Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970). Walker continues to explore her writing. In 1973, she published a series of short stories, *In Love and Trouble*; the poetry collection *Revolutionary Petunias*; and her first children's book, *Langston Hughes: American Poet*. She also appeared in a black feminist movement. Walker's career as a writer increased with the publication of her third novel *The Color Purple*, in 1982. Taken in the early 1900s, the novel recounts the experience of African-American women in life and struggles, Celie. Celie underwent an act of oppression and abuse by her father, and later, her husband. Her work won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for Fiction in 1983.

Three years later, Walker's story was successfully lifted to the big screen. Steven Spielberg reveals *The Color Purple* to the big screen, starring Whoopi Goldberg as Celie, as well as Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover. Like her novel, the film was a success by receiving 11 Academy Award nominations. Walker explores her own feelings about the film in her first work in 1996, *The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult*. In 2005, *The Color Purple* became a Broadway musical.

Walker has repeatedly proved to be a versatile writer. In 2004, she published *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*. And two years later, in 2006, she published a collection of essays, *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Light in a Time of Darkness*, and the well-received picture book *There Is a Flower at the Tip of My Nose Smelling Me*. As a political activist, Walker also writes about his experience with the Women for Women International group in 2010 *Overcoming Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Palestine/Israel*. She published another collection of poetry, *Hard Times Require Furious Dancing*, in the same year.

After more than four decades as a writer, Alice Walker continues to increase. In 2012, he released *The Chicken Chronicles*; In this latest memoir, she contemplates caring for her cock herd. After releasing *The Chicken Chronicles*, she began working on *The Cushion in the Road*, a collection of meditations on various topics to be published in 2013. Walker married with activist Melvyn Leventhal in 1967. They had one daughter Rebecca Walker, they decided to divorce In 1976.

The Color Purple was written by a feminist, Alice Walker and published in 1982. In 1983, she won the Pulitzer Prize in the fictional category. This book describes the life of a young black woman in the early 1900s and the journey of her discovery. In this novel the protagonist is a girl named Celie and the story is told from her perspective. She was only fourteen years old, in fact she came from a capable family, but she did not know it,s he lived with her stepfather, and experienced an act of oppression by her own father. Her stepfather married her to a man, he is Albert, he usually called Mr.____. He has three children, the oldest named Harpo. Celie's life at Mr.____'s house did not happen well until her sister Nettie stayed with her. Nettie is a good friend and every day Nettie goes to school but when she comes home, she teaches Celie what she learned that day. Soon, Mr.____ decided to expel Nettie. Nettie promised Celie to write letters as her communication to Celie, but Celie never received her letters. Celie grew to be a dutiful and cowardly woman. She can not make herself happy and can only pass her days thinking that this is almost over. When Harpo brought home his new wife, Sophia, this made Celie want to change her life, because Sofia is a brave and dislike woman. When Harpo committed violence to Sofia, Sofia left Harpo and at this moment the lover of Celie's husband came Shug Avery. She is a popular cafe singer famous for her wild manner and her love for men. Celie admires Shug Avery's figure, she sees Shug as a beautiful figure, they make a lifelong friendship. Celie is always open to Shug about anything as well as Shug what it means to make love. Her relationship with Shug makes Celie also learning to be a strong and independent person. This new personality shows Celie's real self, Celie tells

Mr.____ that she is a strong woman, she will leave him to live in Chicago with Shug. Living in Chicago made Celie more independent and her life much better. She opened a pantry shop for women and men. After a few years, Celie decides to go back to her husband's house to take care of Harpo and Mr.____ but she also continues her business. Though the book is centered on the first character, Celie and her life, this book also focuses on other life stories of women in Celie's life including Shug, Nettie, Sophia, and Squeak. These women help each other discover the beauty within themselves and in life by leaning back and helping, they gain the power to fight for their rights and overcome those who oppress and live their lives their way.

There are some reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel. In this novel have any characters such as Celie, Shug Avery, Nettie, Celie's father, Celie's husband, Harpo, and Sofia. This novel is written with a technique epistolari. The story is beautifully told from these seven characters that are well rounded characters. Illustrations the book delight the researcher when reading the novel.

The second is the writer interested in knowing what factors are causing lesbian, the writer thinks Celie will live happily with Shug but after reading through to completion, it is not like what the researcher thought at first. Shug leave Celie sake of others.

The third reason is this novel has a moral message conveyed in this story. One of them is that we respect each other and treat each other without regard to gender.

Based on the illustration above, the writer is interested to analyze this novel by using a feminist of literature entitled *The Aspect of Lesbianism of Celie Reflected in Alice Walker The Color Purple Novel (1982): A Feminist Approach*.

1.2 Previous Study

The Color Purple novel is an interesting novel to read. As far as the writer knows the research of *The Color Purple* novel has been conducted by Nina Setyorini from Sanata Dharma University of Yogyakarta in 2009 with

the title **“Feminism Portrayed in the Main Character, Celie, in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple”**. The research is about how is Celie’s character depicted in the novel and problem is how feminism is portrayed through the main character, Celie, in the novel.

The second research is Risanti Intan Al Baluni from State University of Yogyakarta in 2012. The title of the research is **“The Sexual Orientation of Celie in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple”**. This object of the research are to reveal the factors cause celie to become a lesbian, and how is development of celie’s homosexual identity process.

The third research is Lya Zulfa Hanun from Diponegoro University of Semarang in 2011. The title is **“Aspek Lesbianisme Tokoh Celie Pada Novel The Color Purple Karya Alice Walker”**. The objective of the study is to analyze aspects lesbianism from Celie’s.

The fourth research was conducted by Ari Widiastuti from Sanata Dharma University in 2011 with the title **“Celie’s Struggle To Show Her Existence In Alice Walker’s The Color Purple”**. This research about how Celie’s struggle in the novel.

1.3 Problem Statement

Refer to the background above, the writer wants to explain lesbianism in character Celie and analyze what are some aspects of lesbianism contained on the behavior of character Celie in the *The Color Purple* novel.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is:

1.4.1 To explain lesbianism in character Celie.

1.4.2 To analyze aspects of lesbianism in character Celie.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing lesbianism of Celie in Alice Walker *The Color Purple* novel (1982) on Feminist Approach

1.6 Benefits of the Study

Of this study the benefits are:

1.6.1 This research can inform the reader an understanding of lesbian.

1.6.2 Readers can understand that lesbians can be caused by several aspects.

1.7 Paper Organization

The research paper of “The Aspect of Lesbianism of Celie in Alice Walker Novel *The Color Purple* (1982): A Feminist Approach” is divided in three chapters. The details of the paper organization are: Chapter one is Introduction. It consist of Background of the Study, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objective of the Study, Benefits of the Study, and Paper Organization. Chapter two is Literature Review. It consists of Underlying Theory and Theoretical Application. Chapter three is Research Method. It consists of Object of the Research, Types of Data and the Data Source, Technique of Data Collection, and Technique of Data Analysis. Chapter four is Structural Analysis of Alice Walker novel *The Color Purple*. Chapter five is Feminist Analysis of Alice Walker novel *The Color Purple*. Chapter six is Conclusion, Suggestion and Implication.