

**THE PORTRAIT OF BLACK WOMEN'S POSITION UNDER
PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION IN ALICE WALKER'S**

THE COLOR PURPLE

THESIS

*Submitted in Partial Fulfillment to
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ABSTRAK

Skripsi yang berjudul “**The Portrait of Black Women’s Position under Patriarchal Oppression in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple**” ini membahas tentang perjuangan wanita kulit hitam yang selalu mendapatkan penindasan dan dominasi dari kaum pria kulit hitam. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis terlebih dulu melihat jenis-jenis penindasan yang dilakukan kaum pria kepada wanita kulit hitam dan kemudian dilanjutkan dengan perjuangan dari wanita kulit hitam untuk membebaskan diri dari penindasan tersebut.

Penulis menganalisis novel ini berdasarkan sudut pandang feminis dan menggunakan teori kritik sastra feminis yang dikemukakan oleh Elaine Showalter, *Woman as Writer*. Melalui teori ini, penulis menganalisis gambaran ketertindasan yang dialami wanita dalam karya sastra penulis wanita. Untuk mendukung teori ini, penulis menggunakan teori *Black Feminist* oleh Barbara Smith karena dominasi ini dialami oleh wanita kulit hitam dan penulis novel juga merupakan wanita kulit hitam. Analisis diawali dengan analisa latar, plot, sudut pandang, karakter, dan tema. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif, dimana data dan analisis di ambil dari novel itu sendiri dan sumber-sumber lainnya berasal dari buku, artikel dan pencarian menggunakan internet.

Dalam penelitian ini, penulis mengambil kesimpulan bahwa pria kulit hitam selalu menempatkan wanita kulit hitam sebagai inferior dan tidak punya hak untuk melakukan pekerjaan di luar rumah. Sebagai superior, pria kulit hitam selalu melakukan penindasan dalam kehidupan berumah tangga dan memberikan batasan dalam bidang pendidikan serta pekerjaan. Penindasan tersebut membuat wanita kulit hitam menjadi pasif dan tidak bebas dalam berekspresi. Sehingga untuk lepas dari penindasan wanita kulit hitam harus berani untuk berjuang. Perjuangan ini dilakukan agar wanita kulit hitam memiliki persamaan hak dan posisi dengan pria kulit hitam dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

Feminism is women's movement that attempt to struggle to get equal rights and position with men as human being. Feminism appears because women realize that they live under the patriarchal society which makes them as the second sex who always exploited by men. Feminist criticism is one of literary criticism which deals with woman as the subject. Feminist theory tries to understand the nature of inequality and focuses on the promotion of women's rights, genders, interests, and issues. Theory of feminist also tells discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, oppression and patriarchy (<http://www.answers.com/topic/feminist-theory>).

Women who are inferior in social position always lose their liberty because of the power of men. Men always underestimate women because *traditional gender* roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing and submissive (Tyson, 85). So, feminist criticism appears to support women in fighting male domination in society that analyzes the presentation of women in the literary works, and examination how the way women are described in literature.

Men as superior always dominate all aspects in society and give disadvantages for women such as control all economic, political, laws and even in domestic issues. Men domination caused by patriarchal system that is like a cultural mind-set and does not grow up biologically. As Aristotle in Selden and Widdowson's A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory states that "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities". In accordance with this statement, St. Thomas Aquinas also believes that "woman is 'imperfect man' (203). Clearly, it gives a description how low the position of women in men's viewpoint is. Men also assume that they can control women's life and take the advantages from them.

Literary works is one of the mediums of feminist critics which is usually made by female and it always gives representation about women in patriarchal system. Most of women writers try to express their experiences and conveys their ideas about the society around them in literary works. One of them is Alice Walker; black woman writer who always gives representation about the condition of black women who always get the domination by men in society.

Alice Walker is a black female writer who was born on February 9, 1944, in the small rural town of Eatonton, Georgia. She has some works such as; *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *Everyday Use* (1973), *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973), *Meridian* (1976), *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Finding the Green Stone* (1991), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), and many others. All of her works always contain about life and the

struggles of black women who always get the discrimination in society even from their own community; black men. *The Color Purple* (1982) is her famous work which has setting in Georgia. Upon its publication, *The Color Purple* unleashed a storm of controversy. The novel is chronicles to the struggle of several black women in rural Georgia in the first half of the twentieth century

So, the writer is interested in one of the famous works of Alice Walker entitled *The Color Purple* which published in 1982. This novel is very interesting to analyze because Walker as the writer gives a representation about the position of black women as the second sex in society. In this novel, the writer finds some kind of oppressions that are faced by black women which is one of the themes in the story. Celie as the main character is low educated black woman who was forced by her father to marry with Mr. _____ whom she never knew and loved before. Celie cannot ignore her father's command and does what her father ask. In her marriage, Celie as a housewife just stay at home and cannot escape herself from the patriarchal system. She always does all the commands of her husband. She cannot do what she wants. If she makes a mistake in doing a job, her husband will give her some punishment. But, as human being, she realized that she has rights to get her happiness and she decided to break the patriarchal system in her life.

From the story, the writer sees that Celie as the main character is the feminist woman because she really wants to escape herself from patriarchal system that she gets in society. She wants to be someone although men always

dominate in all aspect of her life and even underestimate her position as woman especially black woman. From her character, the writer can find that women can change their future if they brave to do the struggle.

All explanations above give the writer much spirit and motivation to make an analysis about the patriarchal oppression toward black women. The writer analyzes about the kinds of patriarchal oppression experienced by black women and how the struggles of black women to escape themselves from the patriarchal oppression. Therefore, the writer chooses the title "**The Portrait of Black Women's Position under Patriarchal Oppression in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple***".

1.2 The Identification of the Problem

In this research, the writer focuses on the portrayal of black women in the novel of *The Color Purple*. The main character in this novel is Celie who always gets the discrimination and oppressed by black men in her society. Black male; her father and husband as the superior always put Celie in the second sex. She never has rights in her life. Before getting the struggles of Celie, the writer finds out some patriarchal oppression toward black women. As black woman, Celie always gets some oppression in domestic life by black men in her society. She is just an object of violence and sexual. Besides that, Celie cannot get the high education. She also has limitation in working. In her society, her father assumes

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

The Color Purple by Alice Walker is an interesting novel. Walker as the writer gives a portrait about the situation of black women in Georgia in the first half of the twentieth century who always surrounded by black men domination. Through the novel, Walker tries to describe the kinds of patriarchal oppression that are faced by black women and also shows the struggle of black women to fight the patriarchal oppression in order to get the equality in society and also to be independent women.

In this research, the writer focuses on two points; the first is about kinds of patriarchal oppression that experienced by main character in terms of domestic life, limitation in education, and working. In terms of domestic life, the main character never has rights in her family. Her father as a leader in family never protect his wife and children especially, Celie. He makes Celie as a property and object of sexual. Meanwhile, in education, Celie never get opportunities in getting knowledge because of his father's domination. His father assumes that she is an ugly black woman that should stay at home and never proper to get knowledge. Then, in working, the main character still never has rights to express her ability. She just allowed working in house because the nature of woman is at home.

Secondly, it is talks about the struggles of the main character to escape from domination. The main character should against the oppression because she

has rights to get her freedom in society. Sisterhood is the beginning way of main character to struggle. By sisterhood she gets some spirit to reach her happiness and really want to get the equality position with men in society. So to get the equality, leaving her husband is one of the ways. She should show to her husband that she can be an independent woman and strong without depends on him. When she decides to leave her husband, she earns money by herself. By her hobby, sewing, she can be an independent black woman. By sewing pants, she can get money and she can buy anything without ask to man. She is a successful black woman and full of self confidence when she leaves her husband. She can show to the black men that black women also have ability and cannot underestimate them anymore.

From all analysis above, the writer concludes that novel of *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker has represents the feminist idea because it is talks about the struggle of black women to get equality in society. Walker describe that black women also can be an active people with some abilities. By her works, Walker wants to show to the readers the situation of black women. Walker describe that black women always underestimate by black men but black women also have power to escape from the domination of them.

Based on the analysis, the writer concludes that novel of *The Color Purple* that written by Alice Walker is related to the theory of Gynocriticism which deals with woman as writer. Walker as black woman writer represented her experience about the condition of black women in her society that always get oppression by

men in society through her main character. In her works, Walker not only describes about the changing characters of black women from weak to strong but she put a sisterhood in her work as the different of works between black women writer with white women writer. By sisterhood, black women can share anything and also give spirit each other and it is the main spirit of black women to fight that represented by Celie.

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