

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

For my thesis I choose the novel The Color Purple by Alice Walker. Alice Walker is a feminist writer and she has written many works about black Americans. “Her works are known for their portrayals of the African American woman’s life. She depicts vividly the sexism, racism, and poverty that make that life often a struggle. But she also portrays as part of that life, the strengths of family, community, self-worth, and spirituality” (Lewis). Lewis, citing Smith states, “No writers have made the intimate hurt of racism more palpable than Walker” (Lewis).

In my opinion, The Color Purple is an interesting book because it can make the reader really feel what had happened to the female character, because the narrator in the book is the female protagonist herself. “The Color Purple helps us to realize what the members of the black race have been put through in American history, especially for the black women. Celie as the female protagonist makes us believe that we become a member of an oppressed race” (Clarke).

Celie is a girl who was raped by her step father. Not only was she raped but her stepfather also sold her to a man who is called Mr.\_\_\_\_. Mr.\_\_\_\_ is a rough person. He married Cellie just because he needs someone to take care of him and his children, and he always beats Celie if she does not do what he orders. Then one day, Celie meets Shug, and through her Celie realizes that her husband should treat her better and that he should not beat her. After this realization, Celie makes a decision that she must leave her husband, and start her new life without him. At the end of the story, Celie finally leaves Mr.\_\_\_\_. Celie starts her new life; she opens her own business sewing pants and she lives together with her sister and her daughters.

I wish to analyze the theme of The Color Purple since I find that the theme is clear in this novel. Besides that, “In fiction the theme is its view about life and how people behave” (Annenberg Media). Based on this meaning of theme, I intend to analyze how Celie experiences oppression and how she faces it, until she frees herself from the oppression and finally gets a better life.

To analyze the theme in The Color Purple I apply the feminist approach, because I want to connect the female’s protagonist’s life to the theme. I intend to show that the theme supports the female protagonist’s life. I also use Kate Millet’s theory to help me understand how the theme is revealed through the female protagonist. Kate Millet states that one’s culture has a thousand ways to operate against the female and one’s culture assumes that a man will rule his wife as proof of being a man (Millet 2). From this theory, I want to relate the theme to what happened to the female protagonist in the novel.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problems that I wish to analyze are:

1. What is the theme of the literary work The Color Purple?
2. How is the theme revealed through the portrayal of female protagonist using feminism?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purposes of this study are:

1. To show the theme in The Color Purple by Alice Walker.
2. To explain how the theme is revealed through the portrayal female protagonist using feminism.

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

In this thesis I apply the method of library research. First, I read The Color Purple by Alice Walker as primary text, and Sexual Politics by Kate Millet as the theory. Next, through the references books and Internet sites I obtain more relevant information about the novel and the theory. Finally, from the information obtained, I analyze the novel and conclude my analysis.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I divide the thesis into four chapters. In Chapter One, the Introduction, I state the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I present the theory of Kate Millet. Chapter Three contains the Analysis of Theme in The Color Purple. Chapter Four contains the Conclusion of the analysis of the literary work. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices. The Appendices present the synopsis of The Color Purple, and the biography of the author, Alice Walker.