

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Research

The Color Purple is one of Walker's most famous works. The novel has an epistolary form. The setting of this novel is in 1900 through the mid-1940s in America. The main character in the novel is Celie as black people. She was 14 years old, a girl from the rural south of the United States (Georgia) who lived in dysfunctional family. As black young girl, she is oppressed by men in her life. Ironically, as a young girl, she does not know about sexual knowledge and easily tricked by people around her and this is make her as a black young girl cannot be taught. In this case, Celie is not only raped, beat, and her son was sold by her stepfather. Furthermore, she also is forced by her stepfather to marry a widower named Albert. In the novel, Albert is often referred to as Mr. X. As black young girl, Celie, is treated by her husband (Mr.X) as the target to fulfill his sexual desires. Moreover, Celie's husband is falls in love with Shug Avery. She is a woman who trains and gives her sexual knowledge, the meaning of love, and makes her more confident as black people. As Walker shows Celie as black young girl live not only with bad nuclear family but also with bad environment. In Celie's family, she lives with Nettie and her stepfather. Nettie as nuclear family always supports Celie's life through ups and downs. This indicates their family especially her stepfather does not care about Celie except Nettie. In addition, their environment still in the great depression and this is makes their life

become uncontrolled which poverty are the main problems of their lives. Dudenhenfer argues in his article “Poverty is in the Rural United States” claims that poverty is the main problem that we always can be found in urban area (1980:37). Poverty is one of the main problems in the great depression that makes the lives of the people messy, it befell in black’s family especially Celie. It is as big impact on Celie’s life as a result of her family being affected. This is inseparable from the influence of the great depression in America. In this era, the impacts of black people become weakness of their economy in their position and this is in the society that cannot be separated. It means during at that time there was an overlap of the economy which had an impact on social, educational aspects such as formal, non-formal, and informal education. This was stated clearly by Walker as the author of *The Color Purple*. She does not only state the sadness of Celie’s family but also shown the evidence and causes unknowledgeable of Celie’s environment would be explained in the next sections.

Firstly, I describe black people’s education in general. According to Claudio Zaki Dib in his article “Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Education: Concepts/Applicability” there are three types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal education. Simply, formal education is education that is held in schools in general, non-formal education is education outside formal education such as like manner including characters, and informal education which is a track that is made by family and the conditions that surround someone related with

education specially to get attitudes, skills, values, and love from our daily experiences (1988: 3013).

Nowadays, most people concerns with education. Education is a window to the world; we can increase our knowledge with proper education. In family, education is the most important thing. It should be taught by parents and must be introduced to children from an early age. As the result, children can enrich their knowledge from an early age. Nevertheless, some people forget with informal education, which is this education very crucial in our lives. This education gives many impacts to our lives, such as becomes to be good as human in their actions and utterances. According to Smith in Laura López Luis's article "Non-formal education vs. formal and informal education" believes that informal education is the education that we get from the outside beside formal education (2019:2). Besides, Soelaiman et. al also argues informal education is the education that we can reach from our family and environment based on our daily experience neither consciously or unconsciously, from the first of our born to the world till the end of our lives(1981:45). I conclude that there are two kinds of education, formal and informal education. As we know, formal education is the education that we get in school such as science, politic, economic, math, biology, and many more whereas, informal education is the education that we get from our family such as manner, attitudes, respect each other's, and civil right. As Walker shown black people who lack informal education are blind toward what they should know, for example sexual education. This is the impact of the loss of parents'

role in educating their children. It is the reason why Celie lacks informal education and this problem motivated me to discuss this topic. It can be seen when black people face with many problem such as poverty, lack of education, and social environment in which there was great depression the 1900s – 1940s. It was the time when the financial condition was very poor. Zainab Abdul-Karim Musir in her article “Women’s Friendship in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple” states that the novel starts at the beginning of 1900 in rural Georgia [...] (2012:26). It shows the Americans during that time faced great depressions era. The condition of black people’s family becomes chaos due to the poor of economy. Consequently, the black people who still do not have informal education are becoming less educated. This is a representative of black American people at that time. Brookover et. al in their book “A Sociology of Education” says education is the mixture of social attractions meanwhile sociology is the explanation of the nature that related with human interaction (1929:6). It means that the educational process goes on in a formal as well as in informal situations. Thus, it is supported by the sociological analysis of human interaction in education in education may include both situations and might lead to the development of scientific generalizations of human relations in the educational system.

In the middle of the twentieth-century educational background of black people in America was very limited. In this case, black people believed that education in America was not considered as an important part of society. Black people were considered it was unimportant to go to school. The only way to have

education by learning at home with their family as this strongly affected of black culture. Most of them lived with education that still very standard. In doing this research, I do not only concern about Celie as the main character who is represented as black people, but I also analyze Albert (Mr.X), Shug Avery, Nettie, Harpo, and Tashi as the minor characters to support the community about black people lacks informal education. Ironically, as black young girl, Celie, cannot achieve informal education such as manner from her nuclear family and her society. She only gets a formal education. This education is relatively easy in the elementary school such as reading and writing. As a result, she can write a diary that has been described in the novel. Inversely, Celie does not get informal education properly. She does not get an education from her parents like her other friends at the same age. As a young child, she only surrenders with the condition that she faces and makes her blind to science as it relates to sex education.

Based on the explanation described previously, this thesis applies the theory of sociology of literature by Alan Swingewood and Diana Laurarson. I discuss how Celie's stepfather, Celie's husband, Celie's sister, and the people around her make her blind about informal education. It means informal education is very important to their life and this is must support by the role of society and environment. Which are these two aspects cannot be separated from our lives. As Vishnu Sasidharan in online article states that the people through informal education are produced by natural courses that growth in the society and he also states that family is the basic agencies that give the best place and lesson for education in our fellowship (2013:2). Thus, as black people, Celie as

black people does not get formal education which makes her unable to protect herself.

This is also the significant reason why I conclude that the informal education is very important to black people specifically for children in a family. I think family as a part of social structure is the most important element to make a good relationship in society, through importance of education, social environment, political right, religious practice, and economic development, wherever and whenever we interact with others in order to make a good value, manner, and character. Therefore, I entitle this thesis as *Black People's Lack of Informal Education as Reflected in The Color Purple by Alice Walker*.

1.2. The Identification of the Problem

Black people during the Great Depression Era in America 1910 - 1940s as uneducated people lack of informal education as illustrated in the novel, *The Color Purple*. In the novel, black people not only represented by Celie but also Harpo, Steppather, Nettie and Shug Avery. The main problem in this thesis is the role of parents or adults in teaching black young girl about sex because her stepfather also does not receive an informal education. Besides, black people were represented by her stepfather also take the opportunity in narrowness and the social condition that he supports it. Celie is represented as a black young girl who lacks of informal education, but her knowledge develops rapidly when Shug Avery gives her information about a sexual intercourse. Moreover, this education

is very important to her life to make her not easily fooled by her Stepfather, Alphonso (Mr.X), and Shug Avery has done to her body.

1.3. The Scope of the Research

I describe the meaning about education such as formal and informal. I focus on informal education especially how black people lack of informal education. I limit this study is to analyze dysfunctional family which shows by black people. It includes sexual intercourse as part of formal education and norms, attitude, right, confident and many more as part of informal education. As portrayed by Walker in the character's of Celie, Shug Avery, Her Stepfather, Harpo, Nettie, and Tashi in *The Color Purple*.

1.4 The Research Questions

To make clear the scope of the research, this thesis is emphasized to analysis into statements to answers these questions, as follows:

1. How is black people's education illustrated in *The Color Purple* written by Alice Walker?
2. How is black people's lack of informal education represented in *The Color Purple*?
3. What are the effects of lack of informal education toward the black people in *The Color Purple*?

1.5. The Objectives of the Studies

This thesis aims to analyze black people who lack of informal education related to the environment during the 1900s in black people's society in America as reflected in *The Color Purple*. Therefore, I attempts to analyze black people lack of informal education related to environment during the 1900s as it happens during black people in America reflected in *The Color Purple* and to identify the lack of informal education having many conflicts as depicted in the novel and to reveal the effects of lack of informal education in *The Color Purple*. I do hope this study will enrich people's knowledge and be helpful for other researcher in further literary research.

1.6. Review of Related Studies

The first review to strengthen this thesis is an article by Hynes *et al* entitled "African-American culture: "Business and Education" in Crossref-it.info" have noted: *The Color Purple* show us about the morality and according to the writer of the novel, she stated that education is has a superpower in our life. It is have the impacts to gain the knowledge and lead us understand of many things. As a result, going to school is the best way to make dream becomes true (2012:2). Simply, education is the most important part of our life in the society to get a better life. Without education our life becomes unknowledgeable, from my point of view, this is having big impacts and without education; all of people in this world cannot see anything to make their life better than before. Although, as represented in *The Color Purple*, Celie as portrayed black young girl does not get the informal education, because of her innocence and ignorance as a young

girl who scared in looted happy by the environment of her family. Sometimes, education in the family is a key of success that we get from our parents. This article might support my research on the way to elaborate on the importance of education.

Besides, the article entitled "*Social Exclusion, Children, And Education Conceptual: Conceptual and Measurement Issues*" by Stephan *et.al* states that education is one of the most important factors to influence the growth and development of children and this is an intrinsic factor that is clearly used as access to get the most valuable things (2001:8). In this case, I agree that education is very important for children development, especially in getting things such as knowing about how to they can survive and keep their fatal bodies from others and it related to their life so that they will save with education that they have received.

The next article is by Manuela du Bois-Reymond from *Council of Europe: Directorate of Youth and Sport, Strasbourg* entitled "Study on the Links between Formal and Non-Formal Education" has noted non-formal education as a second school for children who are affected from formal education which broadly supports by the system of formal education and this education cannot be separated each other's (2003:14). This article investigates the importance of informal education. However, informal education is also very influential on one's life. Moreover, informal education is the second school for children; it is worth for as parents to teach her children and those are important to the child

should know about their background from the education. This research is useful for my thesis in analyzing informal education and it gives the definitions of non-formal.

Coombs and Ahmed have conducted their research with the title “Non Formal Educational Force in The Postmodern Era”. The focus of the analysis is told about the definition of informal education. The article shows informal education is the right of everyone especially for black people to get an appropriate education. They can respect each other for those who are experts in education or vice versa. As shows, informal education is the process of someone to get and increase everything in our life such as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, ability, and perception from our surroundings (2009:3). Based on the explanation above, it supports the subject I will discuss. I also agree with the statement that has been conveyed by the writer because informal education is very important in our lives. This article might support this research about informal education as depicted in *The Color Purple*.

Another article is from Ottoh et. al with the title “Gendered Selves Reconstruction in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* and Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*” in 2013. Ottoh et. al talk about the definition of society which is the society is determining factor in administering gender roles, my standpoint differs in some respect, in that, while gender roles have been a social construct, the individuals who operate them are not completely naive of its creation and enactment (2013:22). I believe that every human being needs each

other although it has different backgrounds and genre as well as a woman. I also believe that social construction is the key element in getting an informal education in a community and this is the spearhead in life. Briefly, I strongly agree with the statement which is best conveyed for my research.

Pousali Das mentioned in his article “Exploring Womanhood through Female Consciousness in Alice Walker’s *Color Purple*” in 2015. The focus of his analysis is black women have a freedom of choice and attainment of a social role. In this research, he describes Celie as one of the representations of black women. In this case, the social role helps Celie to perceive her desires and respect. It also helps her to socialize within society and search for an identity. I find his research explains that the black women are free to speak as a woman in the environment. They also should care about the aspect of life such as desires, society, and tries to find their identity as black women. This article also explains that families should care for their families both physically and mentally. Additionally, it also scrutinizes how women get freedom in expressing their opinion and their resistance toward society. It is a good reference in analyzing my research which described *The Color Purple* very clearly even based on his article he did not mention the sociological approach.

The next article comes from Alabi, T. and Alabi O.S. on their article entitled “Female Education: A Sociological Analysis of Girl-Child Education in Nigeria” in 2014. They use sociological analysis and Socio-Feminism. They analyze the education of girls in Nigeria. This article interprets the ways of bringing education to the doorstep of Nigerian girls (2014:6). This article uses

the same approach with my research: a sociological approach. It has the same issues as the object of my research. This might support my research in the way to interpret education for black people, especially for girls.

Dwilingga Razanda in his thesis "The Contribution of American Slavery Conflict to Development of Black People as Reflected in Life" in 2017. He argue that social life cannot be separated from the interaction between individuals or more, and also it requires a mutual orientation (2017:38). This means that as social beings, we need each other; it is impossible if we as human beings live alone and do not expect their help. Based on these explanations, the good role of environment and society give positive effects on the character to another. Therefore, the findings in his thesis are very helpful to gain the definition of social society toward my research. It seems that the thesis of Dwilingga is also closely related to the title of my research using sociological theory.

The last article is "Female Solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*" by Tantitanir. He mentions that Walker tends to present black women as a slave for men and how they try to survive as black women (2017:118). Based on the quotation above, the picture of black women in a male-dominated system in the novel takes an important role in society. I strongly believe that Alice Walker as the writer of *The Color Purple* describes how black people especially women find difficulties to survive in their life. This article is useful to support my research in the case of how black people in their environment struggle to get a proper life.

As mentioned above, I have the same object toward this research but have different focuses and theories. Those sources might help in completing the analysis of black people's lack of informal education in *The Color Purple*.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

According to Abrams in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* states that mimetic is the elaboration of art as the essence that made or produced that always related with the aspect of the all creations (1976:8). It means that mimetic is a compatible approach which discusses the literary text as a reflection of society or the universe. This theory explains the story of the novel is considered a clone of the lives of black people in America.

In sociology, Janusz Mucha in her article "The Concepts of "Social Relations" in Classic Analytical Interpretative Sociology" states that: social interactions should be done by others. It related with the relation of somebody such as have bad relations each others, very fateful person, brotherhood, or monetary crisis in economy. Thus, based on the relation we can conclude that the person has bad or good characters (1978-2003:27). It means that society influences others. As Mucha states above, the people in our society cannot be separated from humans, whereas we need each other like a symbiosis mutualism. In this case, the life of black people is highly questioned especially in *The Color Purple* which written by Alice Walker.

In doing this research, I also analyze the novel by using the Sociology of Literature proposed by Alan Swingewood and Diana Laurenson. In short,

Sociology literature is the study of society through literary works. Based on his book *The Sociology of Literature* (1972) which written by Alan Swingewood and Diana Laurenson who divided their theory into three modes; First, the aspect of literature that related to social structure, family relationship, and class conflict. This work concerns on various social problems in human life. Second, this work is related to the productions of literature especially to the social situation of the writer. Lastly, this approach provides the relation of society toward literary works in terms of specific moments. This approach will look closely at how literary works being accepted in a society at a specific time.

In this case, I intend to focus on Swingewood and Laurenson (1972) in their first perspective to apply in this research which says literature provides a mirror of the age. Thus, I apply the first perspective to my data *The Color Purple* written by Alice Walker. This novel contains the social condition in American society and the issue of lack of informal education toward black people.

1.8. Method of the Literary Research

There are some steps are used that are relevant to the novel. I follow three steps in conducting this research: collecting the data, analyzing the data, and presenting the data.

1.8.1 Collecting the Data

In collecting the data, the data divided into two categories; primary data and secondary data. The primary data are obtained by reading and

comprehending the novel *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. The secondary data are taken from various sources; books, articles that related to my research. The data also have been collected by using the library research method.

1.8.2. Analyzing Data

There are several steps that I use in analyzing data; first, I read the novel to gain an understanding of the whole story. Second, I conduct the data and take suitable data by quoting them from the novel. Third, I also use the sociological approach by Alan Swingewood and Diana Laurenson. Fourth, I present an overview of the social condition of black people in America during the great depression era in the twentieth century. Lastly, the next step is to analyze the lack of informal education toward black people by presenting the social life in their families and their daily life in society toward their lack of informal education and the impacts on their life.

1.8.3. Presenting the Result of the Analysis

The result of the analysis is presented by qualitatively and descriptively. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in W. Lawrence S Neuman's book "*Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*" state that: "Qualitative research has expanded greatly in recent decades and is rapidly displacing outdated quantitative-style research" (1994:14). Finally, I describe it precisely in the form of words in the analysis.