

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **A. Theoretical Description**

##### **1. Gender**

Gender is a set of characteristics to distinguish between male and female. The concept of gender appeared in early 1970s (Pilcher, 2004). It is used to distinguish between biological sex differences and the way these are used to inform behaviours and competencies, which are called as either masculine or feminine. Pilcher (2004: 56) states that the purpose of affirming a sex/gender distinction is to argue that the actual physical or mental effects of biological difference had been exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power and to create a consciousness among women that they are naturally better suited to domestic roles.

Gender differences are set in hierarchical opposition, where the masculine principle is always on top of feminine principle. The society always treats people based on gender or gender order; men and women. Gender order is a patterned system of ideological and material practices which are performed by individuals in society, through which power relations between women and men are made and remade (Plicher, 2004: 60). It is through the gender order of a society that forms or codes of masculinities and femininities are created and recreated, and relations between them are organised.

Women have been living in patriarchal societies. Literally, patriarchy means

being ruled by the male head of a social unit. Since the early twentieth century, feminist writers have used the concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Patriarchy has been a fundamentally important concept in gender studies, leading to the development of a number of theories that aim to identify the bases of women subordinated to men.

In the patriarchal society, women are considered as subordinate of men. Women are regarded as weak human beings. Society with its patriarchal social structure has always put women in the second place. In some societies such as Chinese, Batakese and Javanese, women are supposed to do their roles in the house, such as taking care of the house, cooking, washing, feeding, and educating children. Male dominant power in the society defines women's personal lives and rights in the society through their physical qualities and the existing social beliefs as what Gerda Lerner (in Hall, 2001: 202) states:

“Numerous possibilities offer themselves as foundational components of patriarchy, including women's reproductive capacity (which led to an insistence on their “naturally” domestic role), their relatively smaller physical size (which allowed men to dominate them physically), and the mandates of narrow religious belief systems (which also worked to naturalize male power and render it unquestionable). ...all of these have aided at times in the reinforcement of patriarchy's power, which helps explain why male privilege has been so thoroughly entrenched in our core beliefs, social institutions, and perceptions of selfhood.”

There are numerous possibilities of reason as male domination occurs in the society, such as women's ability to give birth and it leads to an insistence on their domestic role to take care of the house and children, the physical size of women which allows men to dominate physically. All of those reasons make the society believe that men are more superior than women.

## **2. Feminism**

There are some definitions of feminism from some experts that are important to understand. Porter (in Beasley, 1999: 27) states that feminism is a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex. Furthermore, Morris (1993: 1) states that Feminism is a political perception based on two fundamental premises: (1) that gender difference is the foundation of a structural inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematic social injustice, and (2) that the inequality between sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the environmental construction of gender differences.

In many cases, women always tend to be subordinate of men; women are described as weak persons. As time goes by, women can do what men can. They show to the world that they are not subordinate of man. Some experts who concern with woman cases are called as feminists.

Feminists believe that some civilizations are ruled by the fathers, women always become subordinate of men in most countries, societies, traditions and religions. Feminists believe that the females tend to be defined by negative reference as the human norm by the males. A female is a non-man. People always see a woman as a weak and useless person. Feminists believe that the concepts of gender are largely environmental construct, female and male actually are born equal, but society makes them unequal. The last, feminists believe that the patriarchal ideology also pervades those writings which have been considered great literature and which until recently have been written almost entirely by men

for men. Female is not part of literary works.

There are some types of feminism. The most well-known types of feminism are: liberal feminism and radical feminism. Liberal feminism seeks no special privileges for women and simply demands that everyone receive equal consideration without discrimination on the basis of sex. As Jagger (in Gowaty, 1997: 23) suggests that liberal feminism shares two fundamental assumptions with the foundations of the traditional scientific method: (1) Both assume that human beings are highly autonomous and obtain knowledge in a rational manner that may be separated from their social conditions, and (2) both accept positivism as their theory of knowledge. Positivism implies that knowledge is constructed by inference from immediate sensory experiences.

According to Willis (1992: 117) radical feminism is a current theoretical perspective within feminism that focuses on the theory of patriarchy as a system of power that organizes society into a complex of relationships based on an assumption that male supremacy oppresses women. Furthermore, Willis (1992: 117) states that radical feminism aims to challenge and overthrow patriarchy by opposing standard gender roles and oppression of women and calls for a radical reordering of society. Radical feminism has the idea that women's oppression is the first, most widespread, and deepest oppression (Willis, 1992: 122).

### **3. Feminist Literary Criticism**

Morris states that literature is a cultural practice involving the writing, reading, evaluation, teaching of the literary canon (1993: 6). It has been believed

that creative forms of writing can offer special insight into human experience and sharpen the perception of social reality. Literature constructs representation of existing reality by means of words. Representation is perhaps the most fundamental of all human activities, structuring our consciousness of ourselves and of external reality (Morris, 1993: 7).

Literary works are considered as a real portrayal of the society in the modern time. That is why the feminist movement is portrayed through the literary works. Feminists are interested in literature as an influential cultural practice embodied in powerful institutions. They are concerned to discover how literature as a cultural practice may be involved in producing the meanings and values that lock women into inequality (Morris, 1993: 8).

Feminist literary criticism appears as the representation of women's power in criticizing the society, delivering and expressing their ideas. It is focused on the representation of women writers as the producers of the text and women readers as the consumers of the text (Humm in Jackson and Jones, 1998: 336). It implies that feminist literary criticism deals with women readers, women writers and women issue through female perspectives.

As Morris (1993) suggests that basic methods of feminist literary criticism include: (1) Identifying with female characters, (2) Reevaluating literature and the world in which literature is read. Identifying with female characters is a way to challenge the male-centered of authors. Feminist literary criticism suggest that women in literature were historically presented as objects seen from a male perspective. Reevaluating literature and the world in which literature is read

involves questioning whether society has predominantly valued male authors and their literary works because it has valued more than females (Morris, 1993)

### **3. Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation describes a pattern of emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to men, women, both sexes or none of them. Reiter (1989: 139) states that sexual orientation is enduring and also refers to a person's sense of personal and social identity based on those attractions, behaviors expressing them, and membership in a community of others who share them.

Garnets and Kimmel (2003: 4) state that “sexual orientation reflects the affectional-erotic attractions and love toward the same sex, other sex, or both sex.” Furthermore, Herek (2003: 274) states that

“Sexual orientation is not simply about sex. Because sexual attraction and expression are important components of romantic relationships, sexual orientation is integrally linked to the close bonds humans form with others to meet their personal needs for love, attachment, and intimacy”.

This statement strengthens the idea that sexual orientation is the same as what heterosexual has. The difference only lies on the subject to whom people attracted because the affection, need and love remain the same.

Researches over several decades have demonstrated that sexual orientation ranges along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to the other sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex. However, sexual orientation is usually discussed in terms of four categories: heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality. Giddens (2006: 450) explains further those four types of sexual

orientation.

a. Heterosexuality

Heterosexuality is the most common type of sexual orientation. It refers to an enduring pattern of or disposition to experience sexual, affection, physical or romantic attractions to persons of the opposite sex. Heterosexual is the most common and acceptable sexual orientation for most people in the society.

b. Homosexuality

The second type of sexual orientation is homosexuality. Homosexuality is romantic and/or sexual attraction or behavior among members of the same sex or gender. There are two terms for homosexual people, first is lesbian and second is gay. Lesbian is the term for a woman who is attracted to another woman while gay is the term for a man who is attracted to another man.

c. Bisexuality

Bisexuality is romantic and/or sexual attraction or behavior among members of the same sex or gender and can also be attracted to different sex or gender. Bisexual people are usually attracted to people not based on their sex or gender but on their personality or behavior, for most bisexual people, love is not based on gender or sex.

d. Asexuality

Asexuality, or sometimes referred to as non-sexuality is the lack of sexual attraction and the lack of interest in sex. Sometimes, it is considered a lack of a sexual orientation. Asexuality is different from abstention of sexual activity and celibacy which behavioral and generally are motivated by an individual's religious

or other beliefs. Some asexuals do engage in sexual activity despite lacking a desire for sex or sexual attraction, due to a variety of reasons, for example a desire to please romantic partners.

#### **4. Factors Forming a Person's Sexual Orientation**

According to Giddens in his book *Sociology* (2006), human being's sexual orientation is formed by several factors: biological, psychological, social and environmental as a complex interplay.

##### **a. Biological Factors**

Biological factor refers to the inherent physical traits, such as genes, brain and hormones that help determine an individual's sexual orientation. For example, there have been researches that show "neuromatrical and neurophysiological differences between individuals of different sexual orientations" (2006: 451).

There is any genetic basis for homosexuality, since identical twins are identical genes. A woman or man is five times more likely to be lesbian or gay if his or her identical twin is lesbian or gay than if his or her sibling is lesbian or gay but related only through adoption. The higher the percentage of shared genes, the greater the percentage of cases in which both siblings are homosexual

##### **b. Psychological Factors**

Psychological factor refers to the self-esteem and psychological well being of the individuals related to their sexual orientation. If an individual can successfully associate his or her sexual orientation into other aspects of his or her



life, it will be good for his or her mental health (Giddens, 2006: 452). The experiences of childhood can affect an individual's psychology. There are some experiences that cause traumas in individual's psychology, for example abusive parent, lacking of love, and rape.

### **c. The Social and Environmental Factors**

The social and environmental factors refer to various elements outside an individual, which help determine his or her sexual orientation. Based on social and environmental factors' point of view, sexual orientation "emerges from conscious or unconscious training regimen" which is imposed by "parents, teachers, peers, and society in general" (Giddens, 2006: 452). For example, the way a child is raised at home may affect his or her sexual orientation when he or she reaches adolescence. Sexual crimes may alter the victims' sexual orientation. Those factors may influence human beings' sexual orientation at any age.

Specifically Giddens discusses about lesbianism. According to Giddens, lesbianism often gets less attention than male homosexuality, for example in studies and researches. Giddens states that lesbianism may be simply a sexual preference, but it also functions as political choice more than male homosexuality. Lesbianism is associated with feminist movement and feminist groups, with the aim "to establish female solidarity and a woman-centered culture and life-style" (2006: 454).

## **5. Lesbianism**

Sometimes, women are treated violently by men. There are so many cases about rape and women abused, but women are usually too weak to fight and they prefer to be silent. The discrimination toward women, somehow makes some women hate and afraid of men. They are more comfortable to talk to other women. Some of women can also fall in love to other women and become lesbian.

Before 19<sup>th</sup> century lesbian was seen as diverge. The conversations and the knowledge about lesbian were forbidden in the society. People did not know much about lesbian because the topic is being forbade to talk about by the society. Lesbian itself is a term to describe sexual and romantic desire between females. Lesbian as a concept used to differentiate women with a shared sexual orientation. According to Zimmerman (1981), lesbianism is a kind of relationship in which two women's strongest feelings and affections are directed toward each other. Lesbianism refers to the most intimate bond between two women, whether sexual, emotional, or both. Men have historically shaped ideas about what is respectable for women in love, sex, and family, and due to the absence of males in a lesbian relationship, men reject the possibility of lesbianism or disregard it as a valid expression of sexuality. Some women who engage in homosexual behavior may reject the lesbian identity entirely and refuse to identify themselves as lesbian.

According to Rich (in Tylor and Richardson, 1993: 159) all women are originally female-identified, since the original love object for children, both male and female, is the mother. During process of becoming a woman in a patriarchal society, a woman also undergoes the process of becoming heterosexual, or male-

identified. Rich adds that women have their own experience, values and culture, which are very different from patriarchal heterosexual culture. Women's unique experience, values and culture are often invisible and marginal, even taboo.

## **6. Rich's Theory of Lesbian**

According to Rich, lesbianism is a kind of feminist separatism which compromises elements such as: the participation of all women in the woman-identified experience called lesbian continuum. In "Compulsory of Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1993, 159-175), Rich prefers to use terms lesbian existence and lesbian instead of lesbianism. According to her, lesbian existence suggests both the fact of the historical presence of lesbians and our continuing creation of the meaning of that existence. She further states that the term lesbian continuum is used to include a range-through each woman's life and throughout history of woman-identified experience. It means that becoming a lesbian is not simply out of the blue but each lesbian has been through some experiences that form them into a lesbian. It is not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman, for example the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support.

Lesbian relationships tend to recreate mother-daughter emotions and connections. Rich assumes that if all women suckle at their mother's breast when they are infant, the grown women can experience orgasmic sensation with other women because they perhaps recall their mother's milk smell.

Patriarchal system is considered to be the most cause of women's suffering and later become women's reason to rely on other women for comfort. According to Rosenberg (in Rich, 1993), women can get married although they have female emotional and passionate world and choose heterosexuality, it happens because they want to survive economically, have children, free from society criticism, fulfill what is expected by the society and in order to feel normal.

Lesbian continuum can be found in every woman's emotional being, such as the erotic as the sharing of joy among women, women's choice of women as passionate comrades, life partners, co-workers, lovers, community. Lesbian existence consists of the breaking of a taboo and the rejection of a compulsory way of life. According to her, lesbian existence is a direct or indirect attack on male right of access to women. It implies that lesbian existence is a form of anti-patriarchy and an act of resistance.

## **7. Developmental Stages for Homosexual Identity Process**

A variety of developmental stages for homosexual identity process have been formulated within recent years. These formulations are useful for helping people to describe the dynamic and multidimensional nature of their sexual orientation. Homosexual people are complicated. The developmental stages for homosexual identity process help them define themselves in reference to social constructions based on their thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and behaviors. In other words, people must identify at some point with being gay/lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual in order to establish a stable sense of self.

Some of developmental stages for homosexual identity process' theories are written by Ritter and Terndrup, who compiles the stage models from Cass, Troiden, and Grace. The following explanation is taken from Ritter and Terndrup's book entitled *Handbook of Affirmative Psychotherapy with Lesbians and Gay Men* (2002, 90-107).

#### **a. Cass' Theory of Homosexual Identity Development Process**

According to Cass, there are six stages of homosexual identity development process. They are identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. Those are discussed as follows.

##### **1) Stage 1: Identity Confusion**

The actual process of identity development process begins when people become consciously aware of information regarding homosexuality acquired directly or indirectly applies to them. The question whether a person is homosexual or not appears in this first stage. The feeling that "I may be different" also appears in this stage. The basis is on behaviour, actions, feelings and or thoughts in which she or he may think he is different from others.

##### **2) Stage 2: Identity Comparison**

The second stage of the process occurs when people who are attracted to members of their own sex can accept the possibility that they might not be heterosexual after all. The ability to admit that they may be gay or lesbian reflects

a significant decrease in the confusion they feel during the first stage of identity formation and marks an initial step toward committing to a lesbian or gay self-image.

An individual's reaction to being different may be positive while the individual continues to hide their acceptance of being homosexual from others. They may do this by trying to act as a heterosexual. The individual may also have a negative reaction to being different, seeking to avoid homosexual behavior.

### 3) Stage 3: Identity Tolerance

The third stage of the process occurs when people attracted to members of their own sex can admit that they probably are lesbian or gay. In this stage an individual begins to tolerate a homosexual identity, a seeking out contact acceptance from other homosexuals. The contact will influence self esteem and social skills. Self affirming interaction can lead to the next stage. "Socialization with homosexuals, at whatever level, allows for the rehearsal of the homosexual role, which then encourages others to identify the individual as a homosexual".

### 4) Stage 4: Identity Acceptance

The fourth stage of identity formation is characterized by ongoing and additional contacts with other lesbians and gay men. Relationships within the family and with others may be problematic. Gays or lesbians may reveal to some people that they are homosexual while denying it to others. Socializing with affirming peers has helped them clarify a more positive self-image and feel

greater security by being gay or lesbian. With newfound friends fully legitimizing their gay or lesbian identities, prejudiced attitudes toward sexual minorities become particularly inappropriate and offensive. Cass adds that the feeling of being acceptable in some places but not in other places frequently leads them to reject angrily heterosexual people who hate them.

#### 5) Stage 5: Identity Pride

Gay and lesbian individuals enter the fifth stage of identity formation with a strong sense of being different between the positive way they have come to accept themselves and society's devaluation of their identities. There is a strong personal acceptance of this homosexual identity. Though negative reactions from others may shake pride, a stronger identification and interaction with other homosexuals encourage pride in accepting a homosexual identity.

#### 6) Stage 6: Identity Synthesis

Gays or lesbians enter this final phase of identity development with a sense that the formerly adopted "them versus us" philosophy is no longer applied, which means sexual orientation is no longer the main determinant of their identity. Homosexuality is viewed as one part of a multifaceted self. There is an ongoing reevaluation of keeping homosexual identity separated from the other segments of one's identity. This is when the individual fully accepts the homosexual identity.

In the process of identity formation, each individual is different in the rate of progression through the stages. The final stage of development is reached through

the paths of development taken within each stage, and strategies adopted to cope with the tasks of each stage.

### **b. Troiden's Theory of Homosexual Identity Development Process**

Cass proposes six stages of homosexual identity development process while Troiden suggests that homosexual identity formation is formed into four stages: sensitization, identity confusion, identity assumption and commitment. Commitment itself has a variety of both internal and external indicators.

#### 1) Stage 1: Sensitization

This stage occurs before puberty, and is generally not seen in a sexual context. Rather, heterosexuality is accepted as the norm. Thus, there is no homosexual or heterosexual labeling to one's feelings or behaviors. This is characterized by childhood feelings of difference from same-sex peers. According to Troiden, feeling socially different during childhood for gender-inappropriate interests sensitizes "prehomosexuals" for subsequently defining themselves as lesbian or gay. The meanings attributed to these childhood experiences of social difference are later reinterpreted as indicating a homosexual potential.

#### 2) Stage 2: Identity Confusion

In this stage there is confusion of identity. As specific things become personalized and sexualized during adolescence, an individual may begin reflecting on the idea that her or his feelings and behaviors could be regarded as homosexual. Childhood perceptions of self as being different into perceptions of



self as being sexually different can lead to identity disturbance.

### 3) Stage 3: Identity Assumption

A homosexual identity becomes both a self identity and a presented identity. Now that this homosexual identity is tolerated, there is association with other homosexuals, exploration of homosexual subculture, and sexual experimentation. A gay or lesbian identity is initially tolerated and only later accepted. Due to factors related to gender role socialization, lesbians and gays typically define themselves as homosexuals at different ages and in different contexts.

### 4) Stage 4: Commitment

In this stage, an individual adopts homosexuality as a way of life. There is a self-acceptance and a comfort with homosexual identity. Commitment itself has a variety of both internal and external indicators.

#### a) Internal indicators

Sexuality and emotionality become a significant whole, legitimizing the same sex as a source of both love and romance as well as of sexual gratification. The internal indicators that show someone's acceptance of being a lesbian or gay are seen in the following.

- 1.1 The meanings of being gay or lesbian shift from a form of behavior or sexual orientation to an "essential" identity, a "state of being" and "way of life."

1.2 The gay or lesbian identity is reconceptualized as natural, normal, and valid for the self.

1.3 Satisfaction with being gay or lesbian is expressed as reluctance to abandon the new identity.

1.4 Happiness increases as people gain and crystallize a sense of identity and clarify their sexual desires and emotional needs.

b) External indicators

The internal indicators that reflect someone's acceptance of being a lesbian or gay are explained below.

1.1 Entering a same-sex love relationship often marks the onset of commitment to a gay or lesbian identity and reflects the fusion of sexuality and emotionality occurring internally.

1.2 The desire to disclose to heterosexual others increases as the lesbian or gay identity is reconceptualized.

**c. Grace's Theory of Homosexual Identity Development Process**

Unlike Cass' and Troiden's theories of homosexual identity development process, Grace concludes that there are five stages of homosexual identity formation: emergence, acknowledgement, first relationship, finding community and self-definition and reintegration.

1) Stage 1: Emergence

Grace's first level of identity development (*Emergence*) is similar to the initial stages of Troiden (*Sensitization*), during which children sense that they are

different from their age mates. Although same-sex attractions are ambiguous, they are sufficiently shameful to cause social and performance anxiety. They sense strong heterosexist and gender-specific norms to which they must follow, people often experience a double-binding fear of being noticed if they don't behave 'correctly' and being noticed if they don't try at all.

## 2) Stage 2: Acknowledgment

This second stage of identity formation typically occurs during adolescence, generally earlier for boys than for girls and within a teenage social context that is extremely heterosexist and shaming of sexual minorities. Fear of acknowledging their same-sex feelings lead many to deny, rationalize, or bargain in order to limit conscious awareness of their emerging sexual identities. These responses are quite similar to strategies outlined by Cass and Trolden for managing the stage of identity.

At some level, they know they are deceiving others. Intense distress often accompanies self-hatred and frequently sexual minorities engage in both healthy and unhealthy activities that provide relief from the self-disgust. During the emergence and acknowledgement stages, these cumulative effects of homophobia can disturb the willingness or ability of individuals to proceed further with identity formation.

## 3) Stage 3: First Relationship

In this stage, a lesbian or gay is trying to have same-sex relationship. First

relationships have the potential to be seriously damaging or intensely healing to the psyches of the individuals involved. The basic needs for affirmation, physical and sexual contact, and emotional nurturance are met during the dream world stage, the psychic armor built over the years to protect the private self begins to soften. As a result, people are extremely vulnerable to their partners, their own feelings, and the emotional impact of the relationship.

#### 4) Stage 4: Finding Community

Once lesbians and gays have acknowledged their sexual identities, the next step is to find a peer group or community where they can publicly share their private selves. Grace refers to the stage of finding community as gay and lesbian adolescence when people often feel an urgency to make up for the teenage era they spend living as a pseudo-heterosexual. Lacking experience in initiating and maintaining relationships with the sex they desire, they often feel inadequate about how to behave and how to manage new and unfamiliar feelings. As with the chronological teenage years, gay and lesbian adolescence is a period filled with awkwardness, uncertainty, and pain.

#### 5) Stage 5: Self-Definition and Reintegration

Grace describes this final stage of identity development as an open-ended, ongoing, and lifelong process. As the gay and lesbian identity continues to be affirmed and solidified, new images and concepts of the self evolve which allow for new social networks and relationships. Having defined themselves as lesbian

or gay, individuals are free to engage in the process of combining this identity within the totality of their being. With this self-consolidation comes the ego strength necessary for proceeding with other important developmental tasks of adulthood.

#### **d. The Stages of Homosexual Identity Development Process in *The Color Purple***

Troiden's, Cass', and Grace's theories of homosexual identity formation explained above are some of the types of homosexual identity development process. Each expert has his/her own theory about how homosexual identity is formed, but the researcher concludes that although they have different name but there are some similar ideas from the experts in the early stages of homosexual identity, there are sensitization or emergence, identity confusion, identity assumption and first relationship. Those stages are experienced by the main character of *The Color Purple*.

##### 1) Stage 1: Sensitization or Emergence

This stage occurs before puberty, and is generally not seen in a sexual context. Rather, heterosexuality is accepted as the norm. Thus, there is no homosexual or heterosexual labeling to one's feelings or behaviors. This is characterized by childhood feelings of difference from same-sex peers.

##### 2) Stage 2: Identity Confusion

In this stage there is confusion of identity. As specific things become personalized and sexualized during adolescence, an individual may begin reflecting on the idea that her or his feelings and behaviors could be regarded as

homosexual. Childhood perceptions of self as being different into perceptions of self as being sexually different can lead to identity disturbance.

### 3) Identity Assumption

A homosexual identity becomes both a self identity and a presented identity. Now, as this homosexual identity is tolerated, there is association with other homosexuals, exploration of homosexual subculture, and sexual experimentation. A gay or lesbian identity is initially tolerated and only later accepted. Due to factors related to gender role socialization, lesbians and gays typically define themselves as homosexual at different ages and in different contexts.

### 4) First Relationship

In this stage, an individual is trying to have same-sex relationship. First relationships have the potential to be seriously damaging or intensely healing to the psyches of the individuals involved. The basic needs for affirmation, physical and sexual contact, and emotional nurturance are met during the dream world stage, the psychic armor built over the years to protect the private self begins to soften. As a result, people are extremely vulnerable to their partners, their own feelings, and the emotional impact of the relationship.

## **B. Previous Research Findings**

There are some previous researches that have been made about the novel and sexual orientation, especially lesbianism. The first is written by Hernita Oktarini from Yogyakarta State University. Her thesis is entitled *The Process of Becoming a Lesbian and Its Consequences as Experienced by Holland Jaeger in Julie Anne Peters' Keeping You a Secret*. This research focuses on explaining the

stages of lesbian identity development process experienced by Holland Jaeger and the consequences she has to deal as a lesbian.

Another research is written by Angela Astrid from Sanata Dharma University, she wrote *The influence of patriarchy on Otoko and Keiko's lesbianism in Kawabata's Beauty and Sadness*. This research focuses on the aspect of patriarchy in Kawabata's *Beauty and Sadness*, the oppression experienced by the characters Otoko and Keiko and the influence of patriarchal oppression on Otoko and Keiko's lesbianism.

Another example of research is written by Ari Widiastuti from Sanata Dharma University. *Celie's Struggle to Show Her Existence in Alice Walker's The Color Purple* is the title of her research which focuses on the struggle of the main character of the novel.

Some of the ideas from the previous researches above are used in this research, they are the idea of sexual orientation, lesbianism and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. However, this research develops those ideas from different point of view. This research focuses on factors that cause someone's sexual orientation, specifically lesbian and the transformation into lesbian that is experienced by the main character of the novel. Basically, this research is different from the previous ones.

## **C. Background of the Novel**

### **1. The Writer**

Alice Malsenior Walker is an African-American writer. Most of her works concern about race and gender. She was born in Eatonton, Georgia, February 9,

1944. She is the youngest daughter of Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Lou Tallulah Grant. She has been writing very privately since she was eight years old (Walker, 2010).

Walker went to Spellman College in Atlanta for full scholarship in 1961, but later she transferred to Sarah Lawrence College near New York and graduating in 1965. She was married to Melvyn Roseman Leventhal, a Jewish civil rights lawyer on March 17, 1967 in New York. After that they moved to Jackson, Mississippi and they became the first legally married inter-racial couple in Mississippi, but later they were divorced in 1976 (Gonzalez & Goodman, 2006).

Walker's first book of poetry was written while she was still a senior at Sarah Lawrence, and she took a brief sabbatical from writing when she was in Mississippi working in the civil rights movement. Her first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* was published in 1976.

In 1982, she published *The Color Purple*. It became her best known work. This novel was about a young ugly black woman fighting her way through not only racist white culture but also patriarchal black culture. She was the first black woman who won Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983 for her novel *The Color Purple*. This novel became a bestseller and it was adapted into a movie in 1985 and also adapted into Broadway musical play in 2005.

Walker's works typically focus on the struggles of blacks, particularly women, and their struggle against racist, sexist and violent society. Her writings also focus on the role of women of color in culture and history. Walker is a respected figure in the liberal political community for her support of



unconventional and unpopular views (White, 1999).

## **2. The Novel**

*The Color Purple* is a novel by American author Alice Walker that won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for Fiction in 1983. This book is taking place mostly in rural Georgia. The story focuses on female black life in the 1930s in South America. This book is talking about numerous issues including their exceedingly low position in American social culture. The novel has been the frequent target of censors and appears on the American Library Association list of the 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2000-2009 at number seventeen because of the sometimes explicit content, particularly in terms of violence.

In her preface to the Tenth Anniversary Edition of *The Color Purple*, Walker explains that this novel is her spiritual journey as well as Celie's, which unites them as comrades on the journey. In fact, the whole novel focuses on the journeys of its women. Although she wrote the novel in 1982 and Celie's story takes place in the early 1900s, these women fundamentally share a common path (Walker, 2008).

*The Color Purple* is often used as an example of a "woman's novel." For Walker, woman writing is a writing which focuses on African-American women in twentieth-century America. This tradition of novels tends to deal with the oppression of African-American women, not only by means of white domination but also by specific white and black males. In these novels, we often meet women

who fight against all odds for their survival and for the survival of their families.

Although there are no specific dates given, the novel is set at the beginning of the twentieth century, approximately between 1910 and 1940. After the abolition of slavery throughout the United States after the Civil War in 1865, African Americans still faced huge economic difficulties. By the early twentieth century, there were many more opportunities to succeed. Many received education, and many moved out of the rural South into the industrial North. In *The Color Purple* there are such changes occurring. The entrepreneurial Harpo sets up his own juke joint and brings in the already well-known blues singer Shug. By the end of the novel, the progression of opportunity is clear, for Celie is able to set up her own business. Celie works from the same house where her father lived and worked. Thirty years earlier, her father's life was cut short by white rivals eager to keep him down.

When Walker published the novel in 1982, one of the most highly praised features of the book was its use of language. Mel Watkins of *The New York Book Review* (1982) commented that the novel "assumes a lyrical cadence of its own...The cumulative effect is a novel that is convincing because of the authenticity of its folk voice." The language was particularly important to Walker.

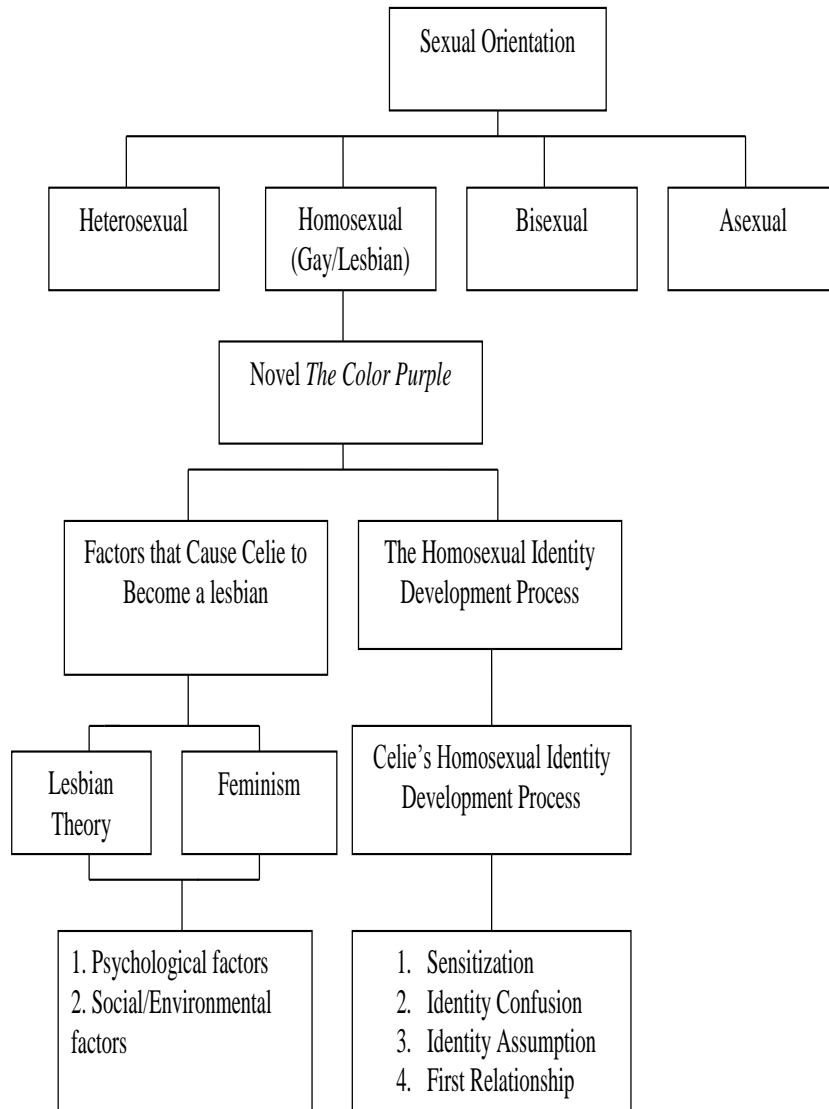
#### **D. Conceptual Framework**

This research is about the sexual orientation in the main character of *The Color Purple*. The researcher focuses on the transformation of Celie's sexual orientation and the factors that cause Celie to become a lesbian. Sexual

orientation, feminism and lesbian theories are used to analyze the research problems. Gidden's theory on sexual orientation is used to analyze the factors that cause someone's sexual orientation and specifically Rich's theory on lesbian existence and continuum is used to analyze the factors that cause someone to be a lesbian. Troiden's, Cass', and Grace's theories of homosexual identity formation are used to analyze the transformation of Celie's sexual orientation. Feminism is used as general knowledge to analyze the two research problems.

#### **E. Framework of Thinking**

Based on the description above, the researcher tries to reveal the factors that cause Celie to become a lesbian and Celie's homosexual identity development process.



**Figure 1.1: Framework of Thinking**