



**GENDER ROLES AND GENDER STEREOTYPES OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN IN *THE COLOR PURPLE* BY ALICE WALKER**

**THESIS**

**BY:**

**RYAN ANDUM RIZKI**

**1310014211007**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

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LEMBAR PERSETUJUAN

Judul Skripsi : Gender Roles and Gender Stereotypes of  
African-American in  
*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker  
Nama Mahasiswa : Ryan Andum Rizki  
NPM : 1310014211007  
Jurusan : Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Ilmu Budaya

disetujui oleh:

Pembimbing I

Dr. Elfiondri, M. Hum.

Pembimbing II

Femmy Dahlan, S. S., M. Hum.

diketahui oleh:

Dekan

Dr. Elfiondri, M. Hum.

Ketua Jurusan

Diana Chitra Hasan, M. Hum., M. Ed., Ph. D.



LEMBAR PENGESAHAN

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji

Jurusan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Ilmu Budaya

Universitas Bung Hatta

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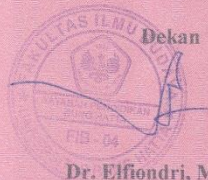
Padang, 19 Juni 2017

Tim Penguji

1. Dr. Elfiondri, M. Hum.
2. Femmy Dahlan, S. S., M. Hum.
3. Vilia Yusraini, S. S., M. Pd.

Tanda Tangan

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Dekan  
Dr. Elfiondri, M. Hum.

Ketua Jurusan

Diana Chitra Hasan, M. Hum., M. Ed., Ph. D.

**ORIGINALITY STATEMENT**

"I hereby declare that this Thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial propotions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the Thesis"

Padang, 19 Juni 2017



Ryan Andum Rizki

1310014211007

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**GENDER ROLES AND GENDER STEREOTYPES OF  
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Ryan Andum Rizki<sup>1</sup>, Elfiondri<sup>2</sup>, Femmy Dahlan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Bung Hatta University

E-mail: [ryanandum@yahoo.co.id](mailto:ryanandum@yahoo.co.id)

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Bung Hatta University

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**Abstract**

In this paper, the writer analyzes the gender roles and gender stereotype of African-American male and female characters describes in *The Color Purple*. The novel captures the life of the African-American and their responsibility in their household. The analysis has two goals which are describing the gender roles and gender stereotypes. The writer applies Gender Analysis and historical approach in conducting the research. The technique that is applied by the writer is close reading to gain a deeper understanding of the novel. The result of the research is male characters play the roles to provide the necessity of the family and became decision maker. The female characters have the roles as caretaker and homemaker in the household. The male stereotypes pictures as bossy and abusive. Meanwhile, the female stereotypes are powerless and obedient to male. In conclusion, the male stereotypes comes out from their important roles in the household and because of the women's roles, women are weak and must obey the will or command of men in household.

**Keywords: gender roles, gender stereotypes, African-American**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Reason for Choosing the Topic

*The Color Purple* is a 1982 great novel by American author Alice Walker that won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for Fiction. It pictures how the stereotype and role of African-American in rural Georgia 1910–1940 century southern of America. Celie is the example of African-American woman that should stay at home. The story tells that Celie lives with her abusive father who has the role in household that tell her to do what he told in the beginning.

Celie's father is the one who represents the role of a father who makes decision for his daughter Celie and also Nettie. Celie later becomes Albert's wife and move to his house. In her new house, Celie also does the same things such as staying at home and doing the wife's work or her duties. That is also the purpose of Albert getting married with Celie because woman is good in house work. In addition, Celie is really dependent and extremely obey her husband. Furthermore, Albert is also abusive as Celie's father. Albert acts like a boss in the household and Celie cannot do anything to release her pain from these men because she is too scared. The second example of housewives women is Sofia who also does the same things like Celie because it is usual in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that women should stay at home. Sofia is Harpo's wife who is also the son of Albert. It leads man to take this opportunity to make women as servant in the house. These men provide all the needs of his family

such as shelter and clothes. Celie's father and Albert show their role in the house through making decision of problem for their family. Both Celie and Sofia show that they are in bond of domestic dependency. For the long time they are silence and accept the condition of the stereotype that make their position unequal to men. These stereotypes of women make the man got the upper hand. It is emphasize that gender stereotype and role in rural Georgia which represent by African-American is really unique.

The unique of this Walker's work is that it shows how the gender role and stereotype of African-American in 19<sup>th</sup> of America and Walker wrote the novel into letter pattern with address form in every pages. In the *The Color Purple*, Walker presents or expands the story through the first point of view. Based on the uniqueness, the writer is interested to take the novel to be thesis analysis. Since the novel discusses about the gender role and also the stereotype, gender analysis is suitable enough to be applied for the analysis of the thesis. According to the facts, the writer takes the analysis of gender role and the stereotype in the story.

## **1.2 The Objective and the Scope of the Study**

The object of the analysis is a novel *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. This research is about gender role and also stereotype of African-American based on gender analysis. The objective of the research is to analyze the gender role that represent by African-American and also the stereotype that contains in the novel. The writer limits the study with the focus on analyzing gender roles in African-American

family and stereotypes of African-American in rural Georgia that located in Southern America in 1910–1940 that picture in the novel.

### **1.3 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the objective and scope of the study, there are two research questions that will help writer to do the analysis in *The Color Purple*. The two research question are:

1. How is the gender roles described in the novel?
2. How is the gender stereotypes pictured in the novel?

### **1.4 Review of related literature**

#### **1.4.1 Previous study**

The research of *The Color Purple* has held by previous researchers such as Miss Baga Amira *Celie's Emancipation Process in Alice Walker's* (2010), Zen Elvia BR Bangun *Woman's Problems and The struggles against Man domination as reflected in the Color Purple* (2015), Risanti Intan Al Baluni *The sexual orientation of Celie in Alice Walker's The Color Purple* (2012). Both Miss Baga and Zen Elvia discuss the novel through feminist approach and they discuss the struggles and the discrimination toward woman and how the process of the main character in gaining freedom. Based on Risanti thesis, she discusses the novel through psychoanalytic criticism and expands how the factors of main character becomes lesbian and Celie's homosexual identity development process. There is also N. S. Babamiri *Masculinity/Feminity in Alice Walker's Color Purple: A Womanist Approach* (2014) who discusses the power of African-American and the effect of masculinity toward

the black women that make them as slave. In the other hand, it is really different with what the writer discusses in this thesis. The writer analysis just focused on how the gender role and the stereotype of African-American that contain in the story using gender analysis.

#### **1.4.2 Theoretical Framework**

In doing the analysis, the most important elements that should be considered is choosing a theory. As a foundation of a research, theory is a tool to understand the topic or the approach that is applied by the writer. Gender analysis is suitable with the subject that the writer wants to be analyzed. The definition of gender can be known from Lorber “Gender is now understood to be a social status, a personal identity, and a set of relationships between women and men, and among women and men.”(8).According to Christodoulou:

Gender Analysis: Refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or other status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behavior and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures. (9-10)

Based on the statement above, it means that gender analysis is the way how to understand the connection between men and women, their action. Analyzing gender is also to know how the relation with the both gender to understand the different among them. The writer also use historical approach based on Busha that try to find historical data in order to relate it to the novel, like Busha said:

Historical approach values the aspects which can be considered as history, such as information, documentations, and also images which have happened in a society or nation. In this approach, not all experiences happened in the past are considered as history, only those historical experiences which relate to the creation of the literary work can be considered as supported history. (91)

It means that historical approach is a method that the researchers use to have interpretation of a novel in order to gain the background or a field outside the works and how the connection between history and work itself. Gender analysis is also shows how the role and stereotype emphasize women and men. Role and stereotype are different in definition like Brannon said:

The term gender role refers to the activities or behaviors typically associated with women or men, whereas gender stereotype refers to the beliefs associated with the characteristics and personalities appropriate to men and women. (183)

It can be known that gender role is more focusing on the action of women and men or the way they behave and in other hand, gender stereotype is focused on the beliefs where characteristics and personalities show in men and women. Based on *Merriam-Webster*, behavior is the whole activity of something and especially a living being whereas characteristics is a special quality or trait that makes a person, thing, or group different from others and the definition of personality is the quality or state of being a person. In addition, according to a report Women's right and Gender Section, OHCHR research:

A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men . . . Gender stereotypes can be both positive and negative for example, “women are nurturing” or “women are weak”.

(1)

It means that from that it can be known that stereotypes is an attributes or characteristics that both men and women have and the report also emphasize that gender stereotypes can be positive or negative. The other focus of gender analysis is gender role which related to the activity of men and women like Brannon state:

A gender role consists of activities that men and women engage in with different frequencies. For example, in the United States, repairing cars and repairing clothing are associated predominantly with men and women, respectively (160).

Brannon emphasizes how gender role of men and women differently. Based on the example like in the US how the activity of repairing car is more dominant with men and repairing clothes relates to women. The two examples seem similar but are really different in the way they doing the action. Brannon also emphasize that:

The concepts of gender role and gender stereotype tend to be related. When people associate a pattern of behavior with either women or men, they may overlook individual variations and exceptions and come to believe that the behavior is inevitably associated with one gender but not the other. Therefore, gender roles furnish the material for gender stereotypes. (160).

It said that the gender role and gender stereotype have a connection because the gender role is complementary with the gender stereotype. People who look at the behavior itself contains in women and men, and when people see the behavior they may make an exceptions and variations and have a belief that the behavior or the role just possessed in one gender only and the way they look the behavior with variation and have a relation with gender, it is called as gender stereotype. That is why gender role is complementary with gender stereotype because the role have an connection with the stereotype.

### **1.5 The Method of the Research**

Analyzing *The Color Purple* has method to collect the data in the story, so, the writer takes the analysis with close-reading analysis. Based on Jacobus (1995), Close-reading analysis is a method that the researcher notes specific uses of language,



such as imaginary, symbols, repeated terms, pattern of expression, the tone of speakers, and the main idea of the writer introduces. This method concept is to reading over and over again to gain the understanding of a literary work as whole and develop the ideas.

In this research, the note of the elements is based on the gender analysis. With gender analysis, this kind of method helps the writer to do the analysis which focuses on African-American gender role and gender stereotype that contain in *The Color Purple*. In detailed, based on Robert (1997) in his book “Writing Literature”, the gender role and gender stereotype can be known through the way of speech, dialogue, and action, comment by other characters. Based on the method, it can be known and found the gender role and gender stereotype in the story. In short, the writer reads the work first and uses this method to find the object of analysis which related to gender analysis.

The first one is suitable with the method that writer chooses the literary work. The writer thinks that “*The Color Purple*” contains a principle of gender things such as the stereotypes and the role. After reading the work, writer finds that the gender stereotypes pictured in the story. In addition, the gender role itself contains in the story, especially in the woman’s utterance. The writer tries to collect both of the data. Second, the writer tries to select the data which match to the subject of the research. Third, the writer tries to connect it with the theory which is used and also reads the previous study that related to the novel that writer discusses in order to make differences from this research. According to that, the writer tries to make an appendix

table and select the data which contains of gender stereotype and also gender role. In the last, based on the method the writer finds the gender stereotype in American as pictured in *The Color Purple* and also the gender role.