

**ESCAPING FROM OPPRESSION IN STEVEN SPIELBERG'S  
*THE COLOR PURPLE* MOVIE (1985):  
A FEMINIST APPROACH**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment of Requirement  
for Getting the Bachelor Degree  
in English Department**

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ACCEPTANCE

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adalah merupakan hasil karya saya sendiri yang belum pernah dipublikasikan baik secara keseluruhan maupun sebahagian, dalam bentuk jurnal, working paper atau bentuk lain yang dipublikasikan secara umum. Karya ilmiah ini sepenuhnya merupakan karya intelektual saya dan seluruh sumber yang menjadi rujukan dalam karya ilmiah ini telah saya sebutkan sesuai kaidah akademik yang berlaku umum, termasuk para pihak yang telah memberikan kontribusi pemikiran pada isi, kecuali yang menyangkut ekspresi kalimat dan disain penulisan. Demikian pernyataan ini saya nyatakan secara benar dengan penuh tanggung jawab dan integritas.

Surakarta, 20 Desember 2012

Yang Menyatakan,



(Gunawan Sigit Pradipta)

## MOTTO

*Better late than never*

*Our friends show what we can do, our enemies teach  
What we must do  
(Potterstein)*

*A good book is great friend*

## **DEDICATION**

*Dedicated to:*

*My beloved Mother and Father*

*My beloved fiancé*

*My beloved brother*

*My sweet niece and nephew*

*My beloved friends*

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The researcher

**GUNAWAN**

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>TITLE</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>APPROVAL</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACCEPTANCE</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>TESTIMONY</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>MOTTO</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>xii</b>

### **CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION**

A. Background of Study .....	1
B. Literature Review .....	9
C. Problem Statement.....	12
D. Limitation of the Study .....	12
E. Objectives of the Study.....	12
F. Benefits of the Study.....	12
G. Research Method .....	13
H. Research Paper Organization .....	15

### **CHAPTER II : UNDERLYING THEORY**

A. Notion of Feminism.....	16
B. Major Principle of Liberal Feminism .....	19
C. Oppression.....	23
D. Structural Elements of the Movie .....	31



E. Theoretical Application .....	36
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**CHAPTER III: SOCIAL-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AMERICAN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

A. Social Aspect.....	38
B. Cultural Aspect.....	41
C. Economic Aspect.....	43
D. Political Aspect.....	45
E. Science and Technology Progression .....	47
F. Religious Aspect.....	50
G. Women’s Condition.....	52
H. Biography of Steven Spielberg.....	53

**CHAPTER IV : STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS**

A. Structural Element .....	57
1. Narrative Elements .....	57
a. Character and Characterization .....	57
b. Casting .....	72
c. Plot.....	77
d. Setting.....	81
e. Point of View .....	89
f. Theme .....	90
2. Technical Element.....	90
a. <i>Mise-en-Scene</i> .....	91
b. Cinematography.....	108
c. Sound.....	111
d. Editing .....	111
B. Discussion .....	115

**CHAPTER V : FEMINIST ANALYSIS**

A. Feminist Perspective .....	119
1. Rebellion Against Patriarchal System .....	119
2. Women’s Position .....	121

3. Women's Role.....	123
4. Women's Right .....	126
5. Women's Participation .....	127
B. Oppression.....	129
C. Discussion .....	137

## **CHAPTER VI : CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

A. Conclusion.....	140
B. Educational Implication .....	141
C. Suggestion.....	143

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **APPENDICE**

## SYNOPSIS

Taking place in the Southern United States during the late-1800s to mid-1930s, the movie tells the life of a poor black girl, Celie Harris (Whoopi Goldberg), who's abuse begins when she is young. By the time she is fourteen, she has already had two children by her father (Leonard Jackson). He takes them away from her at childbirth and forces Celie to marry a local widower Albert Johnson, known to her only as "Mister" (Danny Glover), who treats her like a slave. Albert makes her clean up his disorderly household and take care of his unruly children. Albert beats her often, intimidating Celie into submission and near silence. Celie's sister Nettie (Akosua Busia) comes to live with them, and there is a brief period of happiness as the sisters spend time together and Nettie begins to teach Celie how to read. This is short-lived, however; after Nettie refuses Albert's predatory affections once too often, he kicks her out. At the beginning of the story has seen the oppression of women, and even it was his own family.

Albert's old flame, the jazz singer Shug Avery (Margaret Avery), for whom Albert has carried a torch for many years, comes to live with him and Celie. Delirious with sickness, Shug initially insults Celie by saying "you so ugly" on their first meeting. Despite this, they eventually become close friends and Shug helps Celie raise her self-confidence. Shug and Celie also entertain an affair (more pronounced in the book, but only hinted at in the film). Celie also finds strength in Sofia (Oprah Winfrey), who marries Albert's son Harpo (Willard E. Pugh). Sofia has also suffered abuse from the men in her family, but unlike Celie, she refuses to tolerate it. This high-spiritedness

proves to be her downfall, however, as a rude remark to the town mayor's wife and a punch to the mayor himself ends with Sofia beaten and jailed.

Nettie, meanwhile, has been living with missionaries in Africa and writing to Celie often. Unbeknownst to her, Albert confiscates Nettie's letters, telling Celie that she will never hear from her sister again. During a visit from Shug and her new husband, Grady, Celie and Shug discover many years' worth of Nettie's correspondence. Reconnecting with her sister and the assurance that she is still alive helps give Celie the strength to stand up to Albert. She almost slits his throat while shaving him, but is stopped by Shug. During a family dinner, Sofia is shown to be prematurely aged and permanently disfigured due to the severe beatings she received in jail, and demoralized into an almost catatonic state. During that time, Celie finally asserts herself, excoriating Albert and his father. Shug informs Albert that she and Grady are leaving, and that Celie is coming with them. Despite Albert's attempts to verbally abuse Celie into submission, Celie stands up to him by mentioning that he kept Nettie away from her because Nettie was the only one who really loved her. Before she leaves him permanently, she tells him that until he does the right thing, everything he does will go wrong. Seeing Celie stand up for her self, Sofia snaps out of her funk and is back to normal by laughing hysterically at a dumbfounded and embarrassed Albert. She also encourages Celie not to follow in her own footsteps.

In Tennessee, Celie opens haberdashery selling "one size fits all" slacks. Upon the death of her father, she learns that he was, in fact, her stepfather, and that she has inherited a house and shop from her real father. Meanwhile, Albert's fields and home languish into almost nonexistence as he slips into alcohol-fueled idleness, spending

most of his time at Harpo's speakeasy. Years of guilt finally catch up to him, with the knowledge that he has been a horrible person most of his life, especially to Celie. In a sudden act of kindness unknown to her, Albert takes all the money he has saved over the years, goes down to the immigration office, and arranges for a family reunion for her. Nettie and Celie's children, Adam and Olivia, who were raised in Africa, are reunited with her. Albert looks on from a distance and Shug proudly smiles at him because he finally did the right thing.

# ESCAPING FROM OPPRESSION IN STEVEN SPIELBERG'S

## *THE COLOR PURPLE* MOVIE (1985):

### A FEMINIST APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

*The object of the research is a movie entitled The Color Purple directed by Steven Spielberg. The study focuses on the feminist perspective of the movie. The major problem of this study is to depict how Cellie escaping the oppression reflected in Steven Spielberg's The Color Purple movie. The objectives of the study are to analyze the structural elements of the movie and to analyze the movie based on the feminist perspective. This research is the qualitative approach. The data sources are divided into two, namely primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is the movie itself. The method of the data collection is documentation research. The technique of data analyzes is descriptive analyzes. The results of the research show the following conclusions. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, Steven Spielberg wants to deliver a message to the viewers that escape from oppression in The Color Purple occurred because of social contexts. Secondly, based on the feminist analysis it shows that Steven Spielberg's movie wants to illustrate how women escape from oppression are subordinated and exploited in patriarchal society.*

**Keywords:** *Escape from, oppression.*