

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF AMMAR THELEDJI- LAGHOUAT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUGAES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**An Analytical Account on Identity Formation and Agency :Exploring
Female Characters in Alice Walker's The Color Purple**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER DEGREE IN CIVILIZATION AND LITERATURE

Supervised by :

Mrs. SELET Djihad Afaf

By:

**NEHAILI Djihan Assala
SERKHAD Noura**

Academic Year 2020-2021

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved and respective parents , who have been my source of inspiration that gave me the strength to never give up . I had promised to make them proud of the achievement of this goal and I hope that I have fulfilled that promise.

I also dedicate this work to my brothers , friends , and classmates who have supported me throughout the process .

I dedicate this dissertation also to my soul mate Serkhad Noura ;without her help ,we would never become the persons that we are to day .

Djihan Assala

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear parents for their moral and emotional support .I am deeply grateful to my sisters and my brothers. A special thanks to Souad ,Zohra, Habiba ,and ELhadje for always being there for me in every thing I do.

I would to extend a special thanks to my sweet cousins Salima,Imen,Widad for their love and care.

I am thankful to m faithful friends Souad ,Farida ,Kawther ,Soumaia with whom I shared a joyful and unforgettable memories.

A sincere thanks to my dearest friend Friha Ameer for her continual encouragement, I would like to thank Assala DJihan for taking this journey with me and providing love ,care ,and great help along the way.

Finally ,I dedicate this work to my beautiful nieces Kaltoum, Zaineb, Batoul and to all those who love me.

Serkhad Noura

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people . A special thanks to our supervisor : Mrs. Selt Djihad Afaf , for her support , encouragement and patience; without her help , the goal of this project would never have been realized .

Thanks to our teachers who trained us throughout our education , among them teachers of Department of English .

Finally, We would to thank everybody who was important to the success of this dissertation

Abstract

The present dissertation seeks to investigate the identity formation and agency among the female characters in Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (1982). It aims at showcasing the intrinsic role that feminist solidarity plays in sustaining the female identity and self-fulfillment in male-centred societies. The present work, also, endeavours to conduct a feminist as well as psychological study of the main five female characters: Celie, Shug, Sofia, Mary and Nettie in order to elucidate their ability to surmount the hindrances imposed on them because of their gender. In order to realize the objectives of the present study, a descriptive method along with an analytical one have been followed in order to draw a parallel link between feminist as well psychological analysis of female's struggle in patriarchal societies. Finally, the present dissertation concludes that the female characters succeed in reconstructing their identities and maintain their agency because of their feminist bonding.

Table of content

Dedication	I
Acknowledgements	II
Abstract	III
Table of Content.....	IV
General Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Theoretical framework: Feminism , Wominism and Agency in a Black African Context	
1.1.Introduction.....	8
1.2.Feminism Movement.....	8
1.2.1.The First Wave.....	9
1.2.2. The Second Wave.....	9
1.2.3. The Third Wave	10
1.3 Womanism.....	11
1.4. Conceptualization of Identity	12
1.4.1. The Contribution of John Lock	14
1.4.2 The contribution of Sigmund Freud	15
1.5 Definition of Agency	17
1.6.Conclusion.....	19
Chapter 2: Exploring Agency in The color purple	
2.1.Introduction	21
2.1.1.Alice Walker’s reflection in her works	21
2.2.The Color Purple : Review and The Historical Context	23
2.2.1. Agency via the Novel’s Synopsis.....	24

2.2.2. The Historical Context of The Novel	25
2.3. Agency as expressed through the themes of the novel.....	28
2.3.1. Oppression.....	28
2.3.1.1. Sexism.....	29
2.3.1.2. Racism.....	30
2.3.2. Self-Discovery.....	32
2.4. Agency for African and Black Women.....	32
2.5. Conclusion.....	34

Chapter 3: Feminist Reading of The Color Purple

3.1. Introduction.....	36
3.2. Female Struggle Within The American Context.....	37
3.2.1. Celie and Sofia as an abused women	37
3.2.2. Shug Avery and Mary Agnes.....	40
3.3. Female Struggle in African Spectrum.....	41
3.4. Female Characters Seeking Freedom.....	43
3.5. Conclusion.....	48
General conclusion.....	51
Works Cited.....	53
المخلص.....	56

General Introduction

General Introduction

Hundred years ago , the Africans have been drifted as slaves to America due to their colour discrimination . Since their arrival , they faced discrimination , segregation for decades on the matter of the skin's colour and lacking of education . The white community treated them as slaves and took their basic rights . Especially women who were discriminated against their own community as blacks and women . Moreover , this conditions have created among those Afro-American settlers an identity crisis .

The major theme in the post colonial literature is the Afro-American Identity Crisis. In this frame , literature has played a significant role to demonstrate how African Americans have affected the image of Black women in society as a whole and in the West especially . African –American writers like Maya Angelou , Toni Morison , Alice Walker and many others portrayed through their writing on community the power and the struggles of women in male dominated societies . And they tried to be the voice of the voiceless .

Alice Walker is one of the greatest Afro-American authors who wrote mainly about the Black's experience in American society and particularly the experience of Black females . She is a feminist writer who belongs to the same community and has suffered from social racism and sexual oppression , knew well the pain of Black women . The author in that fiction has portrayed many Afro-Americans who struggle to reconstruct their collective and self-identity . It is the story of Celie , Nettie , Shug and Sofia who suffer from not only racist white culture but also patriarchal black culture . She has created those characters who establish their own place in order to form their selfhood in an unjust society which is the core of interest of the present thesis “the Identity Formation and Agency”.

Alice Walker's “*the Color Purple*” is the novel studied in this dissertation . This particular literary work has been chosen because it tackles the themes of quest of identity and

women's agency . This dissertation's central aim is to examine the novel from different angles . Furthermore , the provided research is conducted to highlight the ambiguous points in Alice Walker's narrative in order to examine them , which is our contribution to the literature in Walker's work .

By this work , we tend to analyse the themes and the female characters of the novel . We are trying to show how black women like Celie , Shug , Sofia , Nettie or Mary Agnes engaged in journey of self -discovery and development to reconstruct their collective identity . Moreover , we are going to clarify how those women resisted men's oppression and how they could achieve their agency . In addition , our main objectives are to show how those female characters are able to liberate themselves from the damaging results of patriarchal systems and show how they could obtain their rights and free themselves .

The present project is conducted to approach “ *The Color Purple*” by Alice Walker differently . It is written to answer a basic question which is to which extent did the female characters , Celie , Nettie , Sofia , Shug Avery and Mary Agnes succeed to achieve their identity and their agency ? . This question triggers other sub-questions : how could the Afro-American women reconstruct their identity by standing together ? how could the female characters in the novel become an actualized agents of their lives ? which one of these characters is more successful in reaching her identity ?

In this narrative of “*The Color Purple*” , Alice Walker tackles the issues of black identity crisis by describing a sample of black females in two communities , one is an Afro-American community in America whereas the other is an represented in the Olinka tribe .At this level, we hypothesize that the female characters of the American society have succeeded to form their identity and achieve agency in a higher extent than the Olinka .Furthermore, women in

America are a good example of the female's solidarity, agency and identity formation than Olinka women.

This dissertation examines the major themes that are related to Alice Walker "*The Color Purple*", mainly black feminism, racism, sexism and identity. Through this work, we try to highlight the relationship between women's agency and the identity formation in the novel, and to show how the women solidarity was used effectively as a way to valid identity. Finally, we want also to prove that "*The Color Purple*" is a good literary work to be conducted. Thus, there is always a possibility to study it and give a new analysis.

In this fiction, Alice Walker's main interest is to reflect of the fact of the experience of African –American in the American society as a whole and the experience of Afro-American females in particular, in their root to explore their identity and agency, which is the topic of interest. Actually, many scholars and critics from different perspectives have examined the work of Alice Walker "*The Color Purple*". Issues like feminism, identity, self-discovery, agency and improvement in the chosen work were the center themes of many researchers. Nevertheless, our work seems to be a contribution in this field in combining the element of identity formation and agency.

Collins suggested that the three novel of *Sula*, *Kindred* and *the Color Purple* are very significant because "By insisting on self-definition, black women question not only what has been said about African-American women but the credibility and the intentions of those possessing the power to define" (Qtd. In Linnerud 9). Mel Watkins in his review of *The Color Purple* (1982) commented that "The estrangement and violence that mark the relationship between Alice Walker's black men and women" and he suggested that "The male domination in the frustration of black women's struggle for independence was clearly the focus of what was striking and consummately written novel".

According to Patricia Harris Abrams , Alice Walker introduces in her work “*The Color Purple*” a several themes such as a various sorts of sufferings faced by human beings ,lose of innocence, search for identity and faith, the nature of human spirit, and some taboos in relationship between women as parents and children .

Janice Inês Nodari in her article “ Constructing a New Historicist Identity : The Role of Nettie in Alice Walker’s “*The Color Purple*” analyzed the novel from a historical presentation . The New Historicism is a movement that deals with issues related to historical facts . Thus, the novel reflects some historical facts such as the formation of separated communities (Americans and Africans) and their relations to those historical events: The Civil War, The Civil Right Movement and Feminism , Throughout the novel, Nettie plays the role of an historian and a social construct .She is not only portraying but elaborating on what she see. She also agreed that the motif of Alice’s writing is That “questioning self” (Qtd . In Nodari 12)

In the novel , Alice uses a feminist genre which is Epistolary Form in order to allow her reader to see the development of her characters through writing’s style. According to Aneeqa Zafar in her article “Alice Walker’s Use of Epistolary Narrative in *The Color Purple*” commented that Alice utilizes epistolary form for some consequently purposes . She also claimed that “Walker involves the story of her novel around two characters , Celie and Nettie , but actually she is talking about the whole society that is full of domestic violence which includes both physical and mental abuse , racialist and patriarchy” (2).

Puja Sarmah stated in her article “Redefining Body And Its Agency : A Study Of Women Characters In Alice Walker’s Novel , *The Color Purple*” that the body is an agent and it is primary site for construction and performance of gender, specifically of femininity because the female body is the most exploited target of male aggression ,an example in the

novel is Celie. She mentioned that in every place patriarchy controls the female by forcing her body into a positions of powerlessness which denying them agency . She also claimed that all the female characters in the novel are denied of agency in a patriarchal society. Yet, at the end they became an actualized agents, starting from their bodies.

Furthermore , in order to achieve this work , a number of works have consulted . Among them the article of Gayatri Spivak “Can The Subaltern Speak?”(1988). When she shows the limitation of the liberal nations of freedom , choice and agency . By her title , she refers to the least influential in society . She mainly focuses on the subaltern women . In the text , she refers to the manner in which western culture investigate other cultures and she highlights the fact that the west deny any sense of agency voice or power to the subaltern . Moreover , she suggests that it is impossible to recover the voice of the subaltern or oppressed subject because of the fact that natives are divided by differences of gender , class caste and other hierarchies. Thus, the result of her essay suggests that the subaltern can not represent themselves , they must spoke for .

In order to understand the psyche of the character and how it involved in her identity formation , the views of Sigmund Freud are of great importance . Avinach Desousa’s article “Freudian Theory and Consciousness : a Conceptual Analysis” examines the different aspects of the Freudian psychoanalytical theory from historical , psychoanalytical , anthropological and sociological angles . Focusing on the consciousness , ego , psychology , psychoanalytical , psychotherapy and the relationship between them . Moreover , Danail Lapsley , in his article “Id , Ego and Superego”. (December 2012) , deals with the Freudian’s psychoanalytical theory , mainly he focuses on defining the Id , Ego and Superego , which could help us examining the psychological state of the characters , and the inner struggle to reconstruct their identity .

Eventually , the issues presented above are all well discussed in Alice Walker's "*The Color Purple*" separately in various studies . However, identity formation and agency as away to achieve self and collective identity in "*The Color Purple*" is our contribution to literature .

In this study , we used three significant approaches . First , we depend on the historical approach in order to provide the reader with a historical background about the African – American's history in America during the 20th century . The second used approach is the sociological one , since it serve us in examining the social life of the Afro-American society of two communities , America and Olinka . Third , we use the psychological approach to give a close psychoanalysis of the female characters in the chosen novel . Concerning the methods , we depend mainly on the descriptive , the comparative and the analytical methods . Firstly , we give a descriptive study to the social life of the female characters . Secondly , we make a comparison between the American and African communities . Finally , we depend on this descriptive and comparative studies to analyze the relationship between the female characters , identity formation and agency in Alice walker's novel .

This dissertation is composed of three chapters .The first chapter is about the historical framework of this research . Then , the second one provides the readers with a descriptive study of social life of Afro-American women in order to explain agency . Finally , the last chapter is an analytical and comparative study of the subject matter by giving a feminist reading to the novel .

Chapter One

Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

1.1. Introduction :

The question of “who I am” have crossed the minds of most of us. Researching for the answer is the journey we are in. To find answer and logical explanation for this question or for every thing surrounding us concerning our existence. Human being enlarged their knowledge and awareness. Thus, the human being process of thinking examines the problematic of physical, metaphysical, and super natural phenomena. Philosophy which is the mother of every subfield of knowledge highlighted every ambiguous points. Its theories opened up an endless dialogue, each gives justification and proves to solidify the contest of his theory. American writer’s novels were about women’s struggling to gain their independence, certain theories as the feminist, psychological, postcolonial and ideas such as identity, self fulfillment, agency seem to be more appropriate to approach this novel, as they can help us to identify the reasons behind the female characters behaviour and development. This chapter includes some philosophical theories ,which are relevant to the topic under discussion.

1.2. Feminism Movement

Feminism is a global, social and political movement that took place from the end of the 19th century . It is derived from the word “féminisme”. This movement was led by middle - class women to form an economic, political, cultural and legal rights for women and to improve their position in all aspects of public and private life.

As a literary movement, it is emerged in 1960s as a reaction to the restricted image on women because the representation of woman was unjust. This representation often depicted women as an inferior gender and as a passive object that could not survive on its own.

Moreover, According to Oxford Dictionary Feminism is “The advocacy of women’s rights on grounds of equality of the Sexes”. Thus, the feminist movement threw light on the

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

segregation based on sexism. The Feminist Movement was divided thematically into three major waves.

1.2.1. The First Wave

The First Wave of feminism took place in the late 19th century particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States. It comprised with women's Suffrage Movement of the 19th century (the right to vote and stand for parliamentary office). The concern of this wave was to obtain "Equal contract and property rights, dealing with property to vote". Its leaders including Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton broadly proclaimed at the Seneca Falls Convention (1848) "That we hold this truth to be self evident, that all men and women are created equal".(History and Theory of Feminism).

Feminists of the First Wave focused mainly to obtain the rights of political participation in election. In United Kingdom, these activists gained their goal in 1918 when women had the right to vote after the Representation of People Act, whereas in United States, they gained this right in 1919 by the 19th Amendment. This winning motivated women to ask for more rights and freedom. (History and Theory of Feminism).

1.2.2. The Second Wave

Feminism's Second Wave took place in the early 1960s and lasting through the late 1980s. It is a continuation of the first wave . However, the feminists asked and demanded for more rights beyond the early quest for political rights to fight for greater equality in terms of education, work place and home. They wanted to make an end of gender and racial discrimination. This wave actually was influenced greatly by two major movements : The Civil Rights Movement(1960) and The Abolitionist Movement in United States That advocates slavery and calls for social equality.

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

1.2.3. The Third Wave

Feminism Third Wave dates back to the early 1990s and the term was created by Rebecca Walker (the daughter of Alice Walker). When she published a piece in MS magazine saying that “I am not a post - feminism feminist. I am the third wave” .In this wave, feminists have been extremely eager to define their feminism as something different from the previous two waves and they often criticized the second wave for its lack of attention to the differences among women due to race, class and religion.

Moreover, this wave was informed by post-colonial and post-modern thinking and brought a new contribution which is the concept of “multiracial feminism theory”. The later seems as (the liberation movement spearheaded by women of colour) ; that claims the rights and advantages of the marginalized people (black females, minorities and immigrants).

The Afro-American feminist, Patricia Hill Collins was an active writer concerning gender in equality and racism. Her main interest was in the Afro-American female experience in the American society. She stated in her most famous book, *“Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment That*

As a historically oppressed group, the united states black women have produced social thought designed to oppose oppression. Not only does the form assumed by this thought diverge from standard academic theory. It can take the form of poetry, music, essay and the like but the purpose of black women’s collective thought is distinctly different. Social theories emerging from/or on behalf of united states black women and other historically oppressed groups aim to find ways to escape from, survive in and /or oppose prevailing social and political injustice (09).

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womanism and Agency in Black African Context .

Those words clarify that, Black Women in the United States were suffering from oppression for a long period, since their first coming from Africa to America as slaves. In response to this historical oppression they formulated a black consciousness that gave them the agency to strive for empowerment on their own term and to defend themselves in injustice system. This consciousness took different literary forms that helped it to spread world wide.

1.3.Womanism

The Feminism considered to be an umbrella that holds all females with their different needs but Afro-American women felt that it could not respond or comprehend coloured women's situation. So the black feminists authors started their resistance by celebrating their black heritage and over ruling racism. One of them is Alice Walker in 1983 in her collective essays, "In Search For Our Mother's Garden" when introduced the meaning of the term of "womanism" to mean a black feminist or feminist of colour. She noted that "A woman who loves other women sexually and or non sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture...and women's strength...committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female, not separatist ...womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender" (African American studies 241)

From those words, Walker clearly explained that a womanist is a Woman who dignifies and respects women's culture and their ability for exchanging and showing emotions .Moreover, Womanism for Alice is not only concerned with the issue of black women but with collective good of all people, even if they are different, they have some common concerns.

Overall, Feminism is one of the most world wide spread movements that human accepted to rebel against the whole system whether politically or socially , just in order to give women their rights and to achieve their identity.

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

1.4. Conceptualization of Identity

Every individual in this world has his/her own identity. In fact, each one of us has been designed differently from the other one. But the answer of the question “Who I am” arises from the connection between “Self” and “Other” because when people interact with one another, their mind will be open to new ideas, so individuals automatically shape or modify an identity for a better understanding to the world that surround them.

Identity is considered to be the first principal of human being. The term identity refers to the “sameness, oneness, state of being” from middle French identité(146); from medieval Latin indentation (nominative identitus). Later it reached the English language in 1560s idenptité, and according to the Online Etymology Dictionary “identity is all about sameness”, this means that identity make an individual recognizable. It is the principle that differentiate any individual from others by using certain markers such as the language use, dress, behaviour and even gender. Kannu Ikechukwu Anthony said that John Locke is the first person that brought the term identity into existence. He claims:

When we see anything to be in any place in instant of time, we are sure that it is that very thing, and not another which at that same time exists in another place, how like and undistinguishable so ever it may be in all other respects: and in this consists. When the ideas it is attributed vary not at all from what they were that moment in we consider that their former existence, and to which we compare the present... when there for we demand whether her anything be the same or not, it refers always to something that existed such a time in such a place. Which it was certain, at that instant, was the same with itself, and no other. (Qtd. In kannu 34).

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

John Locke clarifies that each being is determined in itself, is one with itself that does not exist in another place in the same time; each thing is unique by itself across time ,have the same characteristics over time. In brief, identity definition can be summarized in answering the main question of being “who am I” or “what is it”.

In addition, the term identity has developed over time. It gained the interest of many researchers and scholars. Each brought a new contribution about identity. Henri Tajfel provided the field of study with a new theory concerning identity that he called “Social Identity Theory”. Social Identity identifies who any person is in relation to his social belonging. Tajfel claims that the group which any person belongs is a source of pride and self esteem. Move over, social identity addresses how the belonging to a certain group could effect the person’s psyche. It aims to specify and predict the circumstances under which individuals of themselves as persons or as group member. (Huddy 132).

When persons perceive themselves as a part of one group, it is intergroup for them. Whereas, when persons compare themselves with another group that they do not identify with , it is called out group. These mentalities are created due to three processes. First, the social categorisation that categorizes people according to some factors such as colour, level, religion and other. when we know to which category we belong. Consequently, we recognize what is the appropriate behaviours for us. Second, social identification, which in the adaption of identity to the group we belong to by having the same actions, it strengthens emotion towards that identification. Finally, the social comparison in which we compare the inter groups favourably with out-group, as a result, racism and discrimination spread among societies. (Social Identity Theory).

Furthermore, in his article “African Identity and The Emergence of Globalization”. Kannu Ikechuknwu Anthony clarifies the need of African identity’s renaissance ,since the African were denied strongly . According to him ,African renaissance resembles the revival

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

or the rebirth of the African identity. It should rebuild the African national image “The Black Consciousness Movement” was a significant step towards reoffering the identity of African. Moreover, he mentioned the main three factors that encouraged rising the quest for the African identity. The first, ideological race classification that comes as equivalence to Darwin Social Evolution. Kannu Stated that, “This was when Charles Darwin produced his the Origin of Species by Natural Selection” in which he stated that from all variations of life found in the world, nature select certain of them for survival while others one marked for extinction. This means that human beings are classified naturally. Second , slave trade that used to be easy prey to the western abuse and mistreatment. Third, colonialism and the exploitation of Africa that kept them uncivilized , all the time regarded as back wards. Thus, the African were pushed to rescue themselves that is based whether on their ancient civilization, black-back wards, skin color.

Overtime, there were a conflict of giving an exact definition to the complexity of the concept of personal identity. Generally, it is regarded as components of experiences from child hood to adult hood that construct a unique set of characteristics. It involves believes, values and emotions , this constructions based on each individual’s experiences along his life and how these experiences are processed within human development stages. Providing this field of study with such a definition come after huge conflict between philosophers, different contribution and theories took place throughout history , Among those philosophers John Locke and Sigmund Freud.

1.4.1. The Contribution of John Locke

John Locke said that personal identity is a matter of continuity in contrast to Christian belief that the soul accounts for personal identity. In his essay of “Concerning Human Understanding”, he presented the significant of experience in imprinting knowledge in human

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

mind. He believed that children were born passive "Tabula Rasa" as if the experiences in their environment develop their thinking without any pre-existing of ideas. He divided experience into two types: external and internal. The external experience mean human being's emotional interaction with the surrounding objects while the internal experience is the human's reflection of the human mind such as reminding, believing, and emotion. Locke suggests that one personal identity is depending on consciousness that extends because of thinking , he said "Consciousness a accompanies thinking" (Qtd. in katelyn) so that persons must process this mental mechanism, which is thinking, in order to perceive who they really are (katelyne).

Moreover , John Locke was an active philosopher who supported his theory of "Tabula Rasa" with another theory concerning the human mind, the Lockean theory of memory. Rayan A Piccirillo in his article, stated that "As far [a] consciousness can be extended back wards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person, it is the same self now as it was then; and it is by the same self with his present one that now reflects on it, that action was done"(Qtd. In Lokean Theory of Memory). Locke claims that any person can remember his experiences that used to be happen in the past. Those experiences that enrich the consciousness are stocked in mind of humans formulating his memory, so we can deduce that there is an inseparable link between memory and personal identity. It is build based on the experiences that are kept in the memory of each.

However, this theory has been criticized negatively by many philosophers in the field such as John Perry, Reid. Their criticism handles a logical argument that if a person could not remember doing something the past does not mean that is did not happen (Lockean Theory of Memory).

1.4.2.The contribution of Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1859-1930) is considered as the father of psychiatry. He originated the psychoanalytical theory of human personality in the late 19th century. He is the first to discuss

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

the unconscious mind. He claimed that there are three level of consciousness. First of all, the conscious mind, which includes any thing we are aware of. Second, the preconscious mind, is a part of our conscious mind. Yet, it is out of attention. It holds our memories that can be recalled and retrieved i.e. the memories we are aware. Yet, out of our attention. Third, the unconscious mind, which is out of our awareness.

According to Freud, the human mind is constructed from three different principal part that are, the id which referrers to instinct and the senses of humans. It resembles the unconscious level and egoism nature of human being. Second, the super ego, resembles the conscious mind, is the moral compass that state what is appropriate and what is not. The last one is the ego ,Freud considers it the self. It is in between the conscious and the unconscious that keeps that balance between the ego and the super ego.

The conflict among the three parts of the individual's mind is the direct responsible of building The personal identity. This conflict starts from childhood towards adulthood in what Feud called the Psychosexual Development that is composed of five stages .First , the Oral Stage in which the libido is all about the baby mouth and his acquirement of his oral skill (from birth to 1.5) through imitation of the surrounding people . According to Freud , the oral stimulation result an oral fixation on all oral thing in the later life . Second , the Anal Stage (1.5-3 years of age) , Freud claims that during it the child ameliorates his toilet hobbit through the training of certain behaviour . Third , the Phallic Stage (3-5 years of age) throughout this years both kind of sex start to have a sexual attraction towards parents of the other gender. Fourth , the Latency Stage that marks the development of inactive sexual feeling towards the other gender . Finally , the individual mind combined all previous tasks to obtain a healthy sexual feeling and behaviour . This stage is called the General Stage that starts from twelve years old forward (soul).

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

Moreover, the formation of identity is a process that never ends because ever stimulus we experience consciously and subconsciously throughout our life has an impact on the way we create our identity. Hence, identity formation deals with the complex manner in which human established unique view of self and it is affected by a variety of internal and external factors such as society, family, race and life experiences. These factors can have a positive or negative force on our identity because many people gain a positive sense of self-esteem for their identity groups in which society with his costumes' and cultures has influenced their identity even before they conceived it. The family has a signification impact also. As we consciously and sub consciously look at our parents and we are influenced by variables like the size, the type of family we are belong to; its status and the level of education.

Our past experiences can also shape our identity whether positively or negatively, any emotional support or difficult times we receive as children can have a huge effect in forming and developing adult identity. In addition to ethnicity and race, which are a complex factor that influence our identities from the moment we are born.

1.5.Definition of Agency

The modern age is the age of equality of men and women, before this time, women didn't have many rights as men did, but with the Feminist Movement and The Human Rights Movement, the role and the importance of women changed in all aspects. Thus, the authors of the late 19th and early 20thcentries produced a new texts that explored ways of re-examining gender differences and portrayed female characters that has a new sense of empowerment and agency.

When you read a novel or a text about minorities , women or colonies, one of the question is whether the author could fulfill the agency of his main protagonist. So the question of agency become a problematic in post- modernism and post colonial studies as the question is if our existence is determined by the ideology in which we live, so how do we can create a

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

unique place as an individual, can we be an agent controls of our action when every thing surrounding is controlling us.

The term “Agency” remained unquestioned until the 19th century, when philosophers began wondering about the choices that human make are dictated by forces beyond their will. For example, John Locke defined agency as “The capacity of human being to shape the circumstances in which they live”. Karl Marx claimed that people in modern society are controlled by economic determination. And Fredrick Nietzsche argues that our choices are based on our own self desires. Additionally to Freud Sigmund who accounted for the unconsciousness of human mind.

According to Cambridge Dictionary, the term agency is defined as “The process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or control What happens to you”. It is essentially the freedom to make choices and then act upon to them and it exists whenever one person give another the right to act on that person behalf. Actually, this ability of make choices is affected by the cognitive belief structure which one has formed through his experiences. The psychologists asserted that the parental role in a family has a huge contribution to create their children’s agency. Consequently, the children under oppression of free will by the parents tend to show signs of frustration and have trouble exploring their self identity in the future. This lack of agency make them silence, incapable with behaviour issues.

According to Martin Hewson, associate at the York University, describes three types of agency which are individual, proxy and collective agency. Individual agency, occurs when person acts on his / her own behalf. While proxy agency, is when an individual acts on the behalf of someone's else (such as an employer). Finally, collective agency happens when people act to gather such a social movement. Furthermore, women can express agency in many different ways; as an individuals or collectively within the family and through their

Chapter One Theoretical framework: Feminism , Womonism and Agency in Black African Context .

participation in markets or politics. It can take a number of forms like resistance and subversion, make choices, and identifying goals, these choices or goals which determine their life later on. It is possible for woman to have an agency when she makes a choices based on rational thoughts , moral obligation and responsibility.

In the Feminist Approach, if the woman succeeded at the end whether socially, artistically or economically; it is called an empowerment or agency. Thus, the modern feminist texts (novels) pushed for a new meaning for “a happy ending” making sure that there is more to the female protagonist's life than a good marriage. Roberta Seelinger Trites argues, “the feminist character’s recognition of her agency and her voice invariably leads to some sort of transcendent, usually taking the form of a triumph over whatever system or stricture was repressing her”(McDoungh 02). The female protagonist can over come a step father, a government, or even herself, but the key is that she is the one making decisions about her own life and claiming her own version of agency.

1.6.Conclusion

To conclude, the previous discussed theories have emerged and developed in order to clarify each ambiguous point in human being’s life. They have been adopted by African – American authors as basic themes in most their works. Alice walker is one of these authors who discussed the mentioned issues in most of her works, particularly in has best known novel “The Color Purple”. The reader of this novel can figure out the implication if all the theories that has been discussed above.

Chapter Two

Exploring Agency in The Color

Purple

2.1.Introduction

In almost of Alice walker's works , she gives a clear picture about the sufferings of Afro_ American women . She presents a stories of Afro-American characters who suffer from different shapes of oppression, sexism and racism both by white and black men. Her novel "*The Color Purple*" can be read from historical , social or a feminist angle. In this novel , Walker mainly portrays the suffering of her protagonist "Celie" from being a sexually abused as a child , as a wife , then to an independent woman with other black women that suffer from oppression in different ways .

This chapter discusses Alice walker's *Bildungsroman* "*The Color Purple*". First we shed light on the author's life in addition to her achievement as a writer . Then , we will move to the novel . we will provide the historical context and the summary of the novel . We also explain the themes of the novel in relation to identity formation and agency. Finally , we will explain the relationship between agency and black feminism . Thus , the comprehension of the novel helps us to shedding light on the subject matter and to show how the female characters could form their identity and achieve their agency .

2.1.1. Alice Walker's reflection in her works

Alice walker is one of the recognizable authors among African-American and female readers around the world. She was the first African-American writer to win Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983. Alice Walker is a writer, poet, novelist, short stories writer, a [feminist](#) and activist for the women rights. She was born on February. 9th, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia in the United States. She was the eight and the youngest child of a father who was a poor sharecropper and a mother who worked as a maid.

Due to the hard circumstances in America at that time because of racial problems, She grew up in an environment of violent , racism and poverty which Left a great impression on her writings later. In 1952, when she was eight, she accidentally blinded in one side by a BB gun pellet . This accident was **traumatic** for her which made her **immersed** in her studies. Alice walker's family and childhood experiences had a huge influence in shaping her personality and her career , particularly with the traditions that used to practise mainly stories of her grandmother , Afro-American folktales and slaves' narratives , the fact that was reflected in most of her works.

In her early life , after graduated from high school ,she won a scholarship at Splem College in which she became an activist in The Civil Rights Movement . In 1963, she participated in "The March on Washington For jobs and freedom" . At the same time , she considered committing suicide because of her extreme depression . Therefore , she wrote her first story "*To Hell With Dying*" and a several of volumes of poetry in order to explain her feelings. After her graduation in 1965, she started her career as a teacher in Jackson on State University and she used to give lectures about women , a women's literature course .

Later , she joined a group of writers , and she started writing her first novel "*Third life of Grange Copeland*" in 1970 . then her second novel "*Meridian*" in 976 . Following by her most popular novel "*The Color Purple*" in 1982 . The later novel won the Pulitzer Prize and the American book award in 1985. It was adopted into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1985 and a musical version was produced by Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones in 2004 . Almost all her novels are about the Afro-American history , culture and experiences of Afro-American especially women. Therefore , she is considered as one of the most important figures who established the basics of Afro-American literature .

Through her works , Alice Walker continued presenting stories that are related to the racial and gender equality . She was praised for her precise description of the life of black people especially Black Women . She also helped on the rising awareness of the system of violent racism of the South and its effects . As an African-American female , she used her personal experiences to tell a stories about other black females . That made her a significant writer all over world with her works : “ *The Possessing of Joy*” (1992), “ *The light of My Father’s smile*” (1998), and “ *Now is The Time to Open your Heart*”(2005). In fact , Alice is still using her pen and her voice for many issues involving gender and race relations in United States and in the world .

2.2.The Color Purple : Review and The Historical Context

The Color Purple is a symbolic depiction that highlights the ideas and the issues that Alice Walker believes in. She uses the purple colour in order to distinguish her **womanism** (purple)from feminism (**lavender**). For many critics, the purple colour stands for the womanist norms. Thus ,the title indicates women’s hope. As Alice Walker expresses in the novel, the purple represents all the good things in the world that God creates for human to enjoy. Moreover, the purple colour is the official colour of international women’s day.

“*The Color Purple*” is the third novel of Alice Walker . It is written in an Epistolary Form . This form is considered as a feminist genre and it includes a series of letters . The novel takes place between 1909 and 1940s’ in two distinct places ; a rural Georgia and Olinka village . The book is composed of (90) letters . The first half of the letters is from Celie to God and the other half is between Celie and her sister Nettie

2.2.1. Agency via The Novel's Synopsis

The story of the novel begins with Celie telling her story. Celie is sexually abused by her father (later revealed to be her stepfather), PA. And she has two children as a result. The first child is a daughter named Olivia, and the second named Adam. PA or Alphonso takes the children away from Celie. So she was denied for the right of a mother as a woman, though she may not know what exactly motherhood is. She is a fourteen years old girl who is writing letters to God to express herself. In her first letters, she asks for gaudiness because she does not understand what is happening to her. She felt totally alone in the world, hence "God" is someone she can talk to him without judging her. Moreover, in her letters she asks questions that she answers herself via communication with herself and that is why she becomes strong at the end.

"Dear God, why did my mother not protect me?"

"Dear God, why is Mr. _ so mean?"

"Dear God, are you taking care of my precious, precious, Nettie?"

In addition, she details how her father has been sexually abusing her, the man she believes to be her father threatens her if she tells anyone that he is raping her. So, her agency was challenged by silencing. Then, she turns her attention to protecting her sister, Nettie, from her father's sexual advances. After her mother dies, her father marries her to Mr. _ (called Albert) who is emotionally and physically abuses her in order to control her. Subsequently, Celie begins to build a relationship with other black women, especially those engaging forcefully with oppression. So she begins a sexual relationship with Shug Avery. Shug is her husband's lover. Celie takes care of her when she is sick. Then they become friends and later a lovers. Shug gives Celie the idea of sewing pants for living. As a result of

her relationship with Shug , Celie learns how to be strong and independent woman because Shug made her aware of her physical beauty . Before that , she thought that she was not beautiful like other women . Thus , she was able to gain some self-confident .

The oldest of Celie's stepfather children , Harpo , who falls in love with an independent young woman called Sofia and finally marries her . Celie advice Harpo to beat his wife into submission , and this is not because of her jealousy ,but if would ever known what love and affection in reality , she would never suggested him to beat his wife .However , Sofia resists Harpo's beating and later she confronts Celie about betrayal , and once Celie explains the reason why she did that ; the two women become friends .

Meanwhile , Celie's sister , Nettie , is the only character who loves Celie . In the novel , Celie shares a sisterly love with Nettie and a that what makes their relationship more strong . Celie loves and feels protective of Nettie , this drives her to become more independent free thinking and smarter person. She also tries to keep her safe from other men specially from their father , Alphonso . After the escape of Nettie , she writes faithfully to her sister , telling her about Olivia and Adam . Therefore , the symbol of sisterhood is an appropriate symbol because Nettie and Celie share strong relationship throughout the story , even though they were far from each other .

2.2.The Historical Context of The Novel

According to Lauret Maria “ *The Color Purple* ” is “a historical novel of some sort”.(94) She claims that history plays a huge part of forming the plot of the novel and Alice Walker through her novel explores the history of 1900s society and used it as a basis for her novel To discuss the identity formation and agency in Alice Walker's “*The Color Purple*”. It is necessary to go over the major political and social events in America history that led to it identity formation . These events happened during and previous of the writing of the novel.

So ,Alice Walker's writings were greatly influenced by these historical events that took place in the 20th century . Additionally , her novel is like a reexamination of those events , particularly The Post Slavery, The Civil Rights Movement , and The Feminism .For that reason, her writings seek to portray a realistic image of the life of the black people in the early 20th century that characterized by poverty, labor shortage and oppression.

The events of the story took place when slavery abolished .Yet , the sufferings of black still exist. In fact, Slavery began in America in 1619 and continued throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries until he Abolitionist Movement in the North. The American Civil War (1861-1869) was an armed conflict between the northern and the southern states of America . This war had huge effects over nearly a century , many African-American people experienced humiliating and devastating discrimination laws like Jim Crows Laws (1876_1956) which were a barrier preventing Blacks from participating in various activities with whites . These laws made it impossible for black people to use the same water fountains , lunch counter , and bathrooms as white patrons or to obtain education in white universities . At the end , the civil war was put an end to slavery in 1865 . It was abolished in all America by the 13th amendment and it decided that the USA is one nation . However , with its extreme effects , deaths and destructions in cities , there was a period of reconstruction .Yet, a segregation period because many Africans were still suffering from its strong effects . So, they had no opportunity to establish themselves outside of share cropping or to ask for equality .(An Illustrated History of USA)

In the novel ,Walker was implied this throughout the story. The story took place in rural Georgia, a southern state in America , it depicts the bad situation of the black people . An example from the novel ,Celie's real father was lynched by a mob in 1900s since he had business that compete the white business . Another victim of Jim laws is Sofia .When she

defended herself from the insulting of the mayor's wife. She arrested and prisoned for her action. Moreover, the humiliation of black males due to their skin's color led them to use their anger violently towards women. That is why women were suffered from the double oppression, race and gender.

The Civil Rights Movement was the biggest influence in Walker's writings. She was very active in this movement. The Civil Rights Movement "Was a movement that took place in the United States beginning around the 1960s and led primary by blacks in an effort to establish the civil rights of individual black citizens"(Advance English Dictionary) and It was most specifically in the South. This movement was happened to secure the human dignity ,civil rights, and freedom from injustice and discrimination. Its leaders persuaded all their aims through the courts, by negotiation, petitions and non-violent protest demonstration. One of the most famous demonstration that across all the country was the "March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom" in 1963. Actually , Alice Walker participated in this march when she heard Martin Luther King Jr. famous speech " I have a dream". As a result to this movement , many laws passed to secure the equality of blacks .One of these laws, The Civil Right Act of 1964 . Due to this act, blacks could no longer excluded from restaurants ,hotels and other public facilities . In addition to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which led to increasing the number of black voters.

Another significant event that had a significant role in the writing of "*The Color Purple*" is the Feminist Movement . Alice Walker coined the term of Womanism as a redefinition to feminism in order to express woman of color . It was in this situation she presented her novel "*The Color Purple*" in 1982 even though the events in the story took place in Georgia between 1900-1940s.This novel is one of the literary works of Alice Walker that tackles the black feminism "Womanism" .It depicts the suffering of the protagonist Celie and other black

female characters and shows how these women resist the injustice by bonding together and helping each other in order to create a place for themselves. All the female characters in the novel are considered as feminist womanist characters.

Historically speaking, the novel happened in the early 20th century. When significant changes occurred throughout the United States. The American Civil War, The Civil Rights Movement, and the Feminism altogether had a huge impact in writing of the novel. Thus, the understanding of these historical events help all the readers to comprehend the novel thoroughly.

2.3. Agency as Expressed Through The Themes of The Novel

As an African-American writer, Alice writes "*The Color Purple*"; a story that deals with the Afro-American women's struggles. Self-discovery, the question of identity and agency. Women's agency is very important theme for black feminism. Actually, agency is the individual's ability to make effective choices and to transform them into desired outcomes. However, Walker in her novel shows how her female characters are denied of agency in a patriarchal society. The reader is captured by a series of scenes that give a clear picture about those females who are not agent for their lives because of sexual and racial oppression. Therefore, Alice depicts clearly the theme of oppression with his two forms, sexism and racism, in addition to the theme of self-discovery.

2.3.1. Oppression

Oppression is one of the major themes in "*The Color Purple*". It can be defined as "The unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power". In the novel, the oppression can be seen through the character of Celie who is oppressed in almost of her life by all the men around her. She is suffered from physical and verbal violence by her step father and her husband.

The other female characters like Shug Avery , Sofia, Mary Agnes are also a victims of oppression throughout their whole life.

The physical , social , economical and political environment help to rise the degree and the forms of oppression . All female characters in the novel suffer from both forms of oppression either sexism or racism . Even though , the sisters(Celie and Nettie) are lived thousands miles apart , one in Georgia and the other one in Africa .Yet, they suffer from the same struggles regarding racism and sexism because both of the forms of oppression are very engrained not only in American society but in all societies over the world .

2.3.1.1- Sexism

Sexism emerged from the second wave of feminism . It can be defined as “ The oppression of one sex by the other based on the traditional stereotypes of sexual rules”() . It is the abusive behavior against people on the basis of sex. In the novel , from the first scene the protagonist Celie is dominated by her stepfather who is repeatedly beaten and raped her and he also forced her to keep silence. “ you better not never tell nobody but God . it’d kill your mammy”(Walker 03).

Furthermore , the best example of sexism in the novel is Albert and Celie’s marriage . In the page (35) Albert said to his son ,Harpo “wives is like children , you have to let’en know who got the upper hand . Nothing can do that better than a good sound of beating”(Walker 35). When Albert compared wives to children , he is making them seem inferior and they could order around by a dominate person as a father or a husband. The mentality of Albert reflected on his marriage with Celie’s as she is regularly beaten even without reason.

This abuse was carried on to his son's marriage with Sofia . In the page (36), when Celie and Harpo were talking , he asked her “ what he ought to do to make her mind”(Walker 36). Because Sofia was different from Celie and he wanted to dominate her like his father with Celie .She replied “ beat her” . Harpo took her advice and beaten Sofia but she resisted this oppression and beat him back . Actually ,Celie gives this advice simply because the abuse is all what she has experienced in her relation with Albert.

Additionally, Nettie is also experienced sexism and how it is influenced the Olinka people. An Olinka mother said to Nettie “ a girl is nothing for herself , only to her husband can she became something”(Walker 55). From this quote , women do not have an identity of their own unless by having husband and become a mother of his children. In Nettie words :

There is a way than men speak to women that remained me too much of pa. They listen long enough to issue instructions. They don't even look at women when women are speaking . They look at the ground and bend their heads towards the ground. The women also do not “look in a man's face “ as they say. To “ look in a man's face “ is brazen thing to do . The look instead at his feet or his knee . And what can I say to this ? Again , it is our own behavior around pa (Walker 156).

From those words, we can generalize that the women's situation in the olinka tribe is a parallels to the American society where women are discriminated and meant to exist just for men.

2.3.1.2.Racism

Racism is the main feature that characterized American society . It can be considered as a part of the United States' social ,historical , and cultural life because people judge others on their skin color , race or gender . The concept of Racism can be defined as the convention that individuals of one race are fundamentally superior than individuals from another race . Mainly the blacks are the ones who suffer the most from Racism because of their skin color (Cheney et al) . They have to abide to what the American society tell them .

In the novel , male domination with racial violence prevailed with power which had crushed the strong woman , Sofia . Sofia faced a series of incidents when she insulted by the wife of the white mayor . However , she fought back and caused a trouble . She actually responded in a way which is not appropriate in her society . As a result , she abused . She is not only sent to prison for many years , she also ended up as a maid for the mayor wife . If Sofia had not been a black woman , she would not have been asked to be a maid in the first place . Moreover , Neeru Tandor observes that “ The jail that Sofia is held is a metaphor for all blacks people caged by racism” (Qtd . In RAAJITHA 04) . As they are blacks , they have to deal with racial discrimination for a long time the Afro-American women specially have got no rights for themselves . This is what Sofia felt about the black people : “only white people can ride in beds and use the restaurants , and they have different toilets from colored” (Walker 12) “White folks is a miracle of affliction , say Sofia” (Walker 98)

Consequently , Sexism and Racism are affected the characters of the novel internally and externally . Internally is shown when Albert Verbally abused Celie “ look at you , you black , you pore , you ugly , you a woman . Goddam , he says , you nothing at all” (Walker) . Externally is shown when Albert physically abused her during their marriage .As a result to this oppressions and struggles , we can see the evaluation of the characters maturely and the independent that women gain as through their self-discovery's journeys .

3.2.1.4. Self- discovery

Eventually , the story of “*The Color Purple*” is considered as a story of self-improvement and discovery not just for Celie but for all the other characters . Women in this novel engage in self-discovery’s journey . Moreover , Alice Walker depicts the journey of her characters through a process of transformation . This transformation presents in a clear detailed way . Actually , the females’ personalities and fates do not change suddenly , but they develop slowly after experiencing many incidents .

Self-discovery is a fundamental component of personal growth. It is a life long journey of exploration through our inner self, self-questioning and examination of our thoughts . By this process , a person can gain a deep understanding of his or her own self’s character , though and his purpose of life . However , the self-discovery is a journey that needs a long time in order a person know himself and his abilities .

Walker in her novel succeeds at connecting her main protagonist Celie with the outside world . She is transformed from a young passive girl who is the object of violence and discrimination into an independent women with full confidence . With the help of the other female characters , she starts to love herself and others . Thus , after a long journey , from being submissive girl to an independent women , she finally find her lost self as well other female find who they are and what make them unique.

2.4-Agency for Black and American women

The primary focus of the Black Feminism was understanding the problems facing Black women .Initially, the black feminists attempted to distance themselves from the White Feminism . Walker, along with other feminists of color/ womanists highlighted in which the experiences and concerns of women of color are excluded from standard white feminist

discourse, and argued that Blacks as a racial category were subjected to great oppression than white females.

Patriarchy was the most theme that concerned the Black Feminism because it was like a barrier to women's agency and progress. Therefore, the history of patriarchy revealed a variety of injustice, women suffer from a gender, racial, and class oppression which created a structure of domination. In fact, women had always been a subject to men's domination through male self-interest and they have been prevented from full development as human being.

In the novel, the rural South Georgia in which Walker sets the story is extremely patriarchal community. The male characters dominate women in violent and oppressive manner. This dominated community makes the female characters' condition more worse. They suffer from both white and black patriarchy and it is obvious through the main character "Celie", whose experiences of sexual abuse at the hands of her step father and her husband. It can also be seen in Harpo's mentality when he mistakenly thinks that he can dominate his wife Sofia by beating her and believes it is his right to do. In addition, the men in Olinka tribe regard women as worthless commodities, they are worth just for their husbands and their children.

Women's agency is a process through which women can obtain power and control over making their own choices. However, the black women's agency was challenged through silencing their voices and marginalizing their body. Therefore, this girl to an independent woman, she finally finds her lost self as well as other females find who they are and what makes them unique. Walker along with other feminists argued that Agency for black women is not solely a natural capacity, but it is constructed and developed out of sexual relation. As a result, one becomes an agent in relation to another agent which is the female characters' relation in

the novel. They become agents in relation to each other and make this agency as a foundation that resist systems of oppression.

2.5.Conclusion

To conclude ,the novel of Alice Walker , the color purple is an excellent presentation of Afro-American experiences in America . She sheds the light to the different aspects of the Afro-Americans life . Furthermore , Walker's work has reflected clearly the social life and personal problems that faced the African-American women. Moreover , she writes her novel in an epistolary form in order to allow the readers to see the development of her characters . She also shows the readers the ways which those women could prove themselves and become the agents of their own choices .Thus , Alice's narrative work opens up doors to many interpretation and critics . Hence , it could be analyzed based on various philosophical theories and movements .

Chapter Three

A Feminist Reading of The Color Purple.

3.1.Introduction

Alice Walker holds the responsibility of Afro-American voice that had been denied for a long time . Her works are direct reflection of that fact. The chosen literary works "*The Color Purple*" Mentions a set of historical events that took place in the USA throughout almost 30 years . These events concern the Afro-American women at the first place in their mission of finding a suitable place .

In "*The Color Purple*" ,Alice Walker uses her pen as a weapon to bring the marginalized Afro-American into the center of discussion . She highlights many turning points in the history of America like the Civil War and its effects , the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Feminist Movement . She also highlights how racism and sexism play a major role in the American community. Moreover , her feminist dimension is clearly presented through her choice of the female characters as the protagonists of the color purple and as the title which presents the womanist norms. In addition to her choice of the themes.

In the novel , the female characters Celie ,Nettie, Shug Avery , Sofia , Mary Agnes, Tashi and Olivia . They are just a women with different names . However, they have faced the same distributed reality . They suffered from verbal and physical abuse. Each one of these women is haunted by her traumatic past and she is a victim of male's oppression. Eventually , All these experiences have effected these women's personalities and fates.

The main protagonist "Celie" and her sister Nettie who lived in different place . Celie lives in Georgia ; a rural state in United States and Nettie lives in Africa on her missionary voyage . With these two different communities women are victims of psychological and physical torture. Furthermore , the experiences of Alice Walker as a black American woman help her to present the issues of Black women powerfully. She also wants to give message that women can overcome any situation and can find happiness .For that ,women in the novel

ended up to fight their horrible situation , seeking freedom , love and self. Image's reconstruction.

This chapter gives a feminist analysis to the color purple. It discusses Alice Walker's version that she embodies in the novel through the female protagonists and the themes that are related to the feminism . So , the female characters are analysed in related to the feminist theory.

3.2. Female Struggle Within The American Context

In "*The Color Purple*" , Alice Walker embodies her own particular version of Black Feminism. This version can be seen through her female characters and the issues that she addresses. In her article "Feminism Issues Analysis in Celie Character Through "*The Color Purple*" Latifah states that through "*The Color Purple*" , there are six feminism issues .Those issues are the family, sexual , assault , spouse abuse , race and the ethnicity, consciousness raising and independence . Consequently, almost all the female characters of the novel faced these issues .

The novel takes place in two different communities ; a rural Georgia in USA and the African village "Olinka". It represents all the different shapes of oppression against the black female protagonists of the novel . In both communities , women are a victims of male's unconscious drives or as Freud called it as the Id . They received different forms of sexual and aggressive behaviors like rape , beating and murdering .

3.2.1-Celie and Sofia as abused women

The first victim in the novel is Celie who experiences many bad treatments whether by her family or people around her. The story starts when Celie is 14 years old . she is poor and uneducated girl . she lives with her sick mother , her sister and her mother's husband ,

Alphonso ,whom she believes to be her real father . When her mother becomes seriously ill and does not respond to his sexual needs . Alphonso abuses Celie and rapes her repeatedly telling her “you gonna to do what your mammy wouldn’t”(Walker 6). As a result , she becomes a mother of two children but Alphonso takes the babies away from her and tells her that they are dead . Additionally , he threatens her not to tell anyone except “God”. Rashmi Gaur explains Celie’s sexual exploitation in the novel as :

The horrifying account of Celie’s sexual abuse on the very first page of the novel is a sad commentary on the androcentric culture which condemns women to subordinate state . Defenseless and threatened Celie can not share her trauma with other members of her family . (Qtd. In Sinivas 24)

At the age of nineteen , her stepfather Alphonso makes an arrangement to have her married to his old friend who is a widower and has four children . His name is Albert or as Celie called him Mr._ in the story . Her husband is no different from her stepfather, he beats her and makes her work in his house and in his farm almost as slave . He marries her just because of his children not because he loves her . Celie narrates this “Mr. _Come get me to take care of his rotten children . He never ast me nothing about myself” (109). Moreover, she also received the same bad treatments from his children especially from his eldest son Harpo . Harpo beats her with rock . “He picked up a rock and laid my head open, the blood run all down tween my breast”(Walker 14). Additionally , he begins to show a sexual interest on her little sister , Nettie . His behavior forces her sister to run away . As a revenge , he even stops Celie to communicate with Nettie by hiding the letters of Nettie from Africa .

The patriarchal husband and stepfather do not oppress Celie sexually but also physically and psychologically. Alphonso along with his abuse and rape, he also stops her from school. Then, when Mr. _ comes proposing to Nettie, Alphonso refuses and proposes Celie instead. Alice Walker shows his cruelty when he describes her to Mr. _ He says “she ugly ...fact is, he say, I got to git rid of her ... and she a bad influence on my other girl ...don't even look like she kin to Nettie ... she ain't smart either ... and another thing she tells lies” (*The Color Purple* 2). In addition to brutality and cruelty of her husband, when he asks why you beats her, he says “She is my wife”. He also says horrible things like this regularly “You ugly, you pore, you black, you nothing”. Therefore, all the physical and verbal violence she experience makes her physically and psychologically traumatic with no self-esteem, no supporting family and with no interest in men.

Celie reacts to all this bad treatments and discrimination by acceptance and silence because she feels ashamed by the fact that her father rapes her and the fact that she is black, ugly, an uneducated girl. Moreover, she does not know how to fight all this situation “But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive”(Walker18). These words clarifies that she is just living for the sake of survive not to enjoy her life or fight for something. However, with her communication with other female characters around her and their positive influence in her life, she starts to show her consciousness raising to escape this unhappy life. Thanks to the factors: writing letters, female bonding and finding spirituality, Celie becomes able to find her voice and her agency.

Another victim of the double oppression in the novel is Sofia. Walker represents Sofia as a minded and physically strong female character who suffers greatly from her independent spirit. She rejects completely the systematic oppression that practiced on black women. Thus, she has the ability to fight all the men around her life. Her ability comes from her strong relationship with her sisters who always fight back their father, their brothers, their

cousins and later on their husbands . Sofia is the belief that women would survive only by possessing strong faith on themselves . She expresses this : “All my life I had to fight . I had to fight my daddy . I had to fight my brothers ; I had to fight my cousins and uncles . A girl child ain’t safe in a family of men” (Walker 38).

Her strong personality can be seen also when she first introduces herself as a Harpo’s partner and the mother of his child . Celie describes her as a tall, smart, ruddy looking, and strong woman .She is only fifteen years old when she first meets her husband , Harpo, then they marry against their parents’ will .At the beginning of their marriage , they love each other , have five children and live happily . However, Harpo could not stand her strong personality and her resistance . So, he tries to dominate her but whenever he beats her , she fights back and hurts him very badly “they fighting ... like two men. ...He slap her ... she throw him over her back . He fall ban up against the stove”.(Walker 36) . His behavior leads Sofia finally to leave him .

Even though , Sofia is a strong female character , she suffers greatly from gender and racial discrimination . As an example of that she is not allowed to sit in front seat along with the mayor’s wife while teaching her to drive . Another bad incident happens to her when the mayor’s asks her to be her maid , Sofia gets nervous and strongly refuses “ Hell, no”(52) . This attitude results in lengthy jail sentences . She is beaten and sentenced for twelve years . Later on , Sofia’s sentences commute to serving as a prisoner –maid in the mayor’s house, she expresses her devastating experience like: “ they got one in a little stone room up and under the house , hardly bigger than Odessa’s porch , and just as warm in the winter’s time . I’m not at the beak and call all night and all day”(Walker 100).

3.2.2.Shug Avery And Mary Agnes

Next, two female characters are blues singers. First , Mary Agnes or as her nickname Squeak is the only character expressly as mixed range of black and white ancestry. She is

Harpo's lover after Sofia leaves him. In contrast to Sofia, Mary is small and quiet submissive. However, when Sofia is imprisoned, she is the one who helps her, she asks her white uncle for help but the result is a big shock; she is raped by her uncle. After her leaving to Harpo, she becomes a subject of male lust of Grady which leads her to drugs' addiction.

Second, the sophisticated, liberated and attractive blues singer. Shug Avery. Her real name is Lillie but she is known as Queen Honeybee, she is aggressive and always ready to fight for what to believe in. She actually enjoys her life by singing, travelling, having many relationships in spite of gender or age. As a result, her life style threatens the male dominated society and neglects the social doctrine of Christianity, she is condemned for immoral behavior from the pulpit as her father is a priest, he drives her away. In the novel, she reveals to Celie that her mother never really loves her while her father makes sexual advances. For that, she hates her birth name and learns to be independent at an early age.

Though, the female characters in United States have different personalities and social experiences. They suffer almost from the same racial and gender discrimination. However, they could reconstruct their personalities and their self-image through their social interaction with one another and help each other.

3.3. Female Struggle Within African Spectrum

In Africa, women's situation is not much different, there is a sense of which both black American and Africans are the victims of gender and racial oppression. It is through Nettie's letters to her sister Celie that Alice depicts the life of the African Olinkan people. In the novel, Olinka are fictitious people. Nettie and the other missionaries travel to Monrovia, Liberia in the west of Africa. From there they travel by foot and walk for four days until they come to Olinka village. In fact, the Olinka is a patriarchy society in which women are victims of genital mutilation, facial scarring and other physical and psychological torture.

The Olinkan women are oppressed by men in different ways . This oppression occurs within the local culture and the relationship between whites and blacks . The men have the absolute control over their wives . Even some of them are promised to old or middle aged men from the birth . Moreover , they are not allowed to get education ; in Nettie words “Among the Olinka , the husband has life and death power over the wife . If he occurs one his wives of witchcraft or infidelity , she can be killed”. (NODARI). In addition , the Olinka rituals of genital mutilation and facial scarring lead to kill many girls and make them more submissive .

Throughout the novel , Nettie plays the role of historian who articulated the evil of colonialism . The tragedy of Olinka tribe is the most significant of active colonial oppression .This tragedy begins when the English rubber workers build a road throughout Olinka village . At first , Olinkan people welcome the idea because they see it as a progress . However, they raped their land and destroyed their homes , crops with orders to shoot anyone who opposes them . Then , they forced them to start paying rent for the land and water . The effect of colonialism leads the Olinkan people to run away and join the Mbeles to fight the white colonial . As a result , many of the children and women are killed .

Although ,Olinkan people welcome Nettie , she faces prejudice while working as a missionary since she is neither Olinka nor a man . From her early age , she is smarter and attractive than her sister . she forces to leave her home when her stepfather and later on her sister’s husband after they make a sexual advances towards her . fortunately , she saves herself and then lives with a couple Samuel and Corrine who adopt her sister’s children . After that , they serve as a missionaries to the Olinkan people in which she uses her education to help Olinkan women , one of them is Tashi .

Tashi is self-confident young Olinkan girl . She is educated in a missionary school established for the Olinkas . She becomes a friend to Olivia and Adam (Celie's children) . For that , she is torn between her Olinka culture and the most modern world that Nettie and Olivia introduces to her . However , after her tribe destroyed by the British workers , she chooses to undergoes the two painful rituals the genital mutilation and facial scarring . As a result , she becomes very ashamed of the marks on her face that soon leaves to join the Mbeles to fight against white colonialist . Although Adam persuades her to come back , she refuses to marry him because of her fear that she will not be accepted in the United States .

Generally speaking , whether in United States or in Africa , Women are victims of patriarchy society ruled by oppressed men , gender and racism which the common point between them . The women are greatly suffer from men's unconscious desires . They are abused physically , sexually and emotionally . However, in a way or another living together in the same place could heal each other's injured soul and they could love and accept themselves . Then eventually , they find their voice.

3.4.Female Characters Seeking Freedom

The question of identity is not newly raised topic , rather it has already been controversial that occupied people's mind . Alice Walker through her bildungsroman *The Color Purple* raises the question of women identity and agency in American society in particular and the whole world in general . She clearly depicts the growth of some women from voiceless characters to a voiced one and she shows how those women stand up against the unfair treatment that they receive .

The story line seeks to explore the construction of the self and collective identity of a group of Afro-American women . The share of memories of racism and discrimination of this group gave birth to collective consciousness in which each one perceive himself as a part of a

group, which is called intergroup in Tajfal's theory. In addition, they used to be compared with the out-group, the white community members on the basis of their skin color. Moreover, Toni Morrison believes that the identity is grounded in a sense of community, not individualism. For her individual life is like the lives of the tribe (Qtd .In Morrison 1993), So the individual identity and collective identity are very relatedly .

Taking into consideration three main psychoanalytic theories of Lacan, Freud and Fangay, the presence of the other is very important in one's identity formation. First, According to Lacan each one identifies himself according to other people. Thus, the process of identity formation is based on the presence of others who act like mirror that reflects one's self image [vanheule and verhaeghe 402]. Second, Freud considers that Ego's construction process is actually based on social interaction. Thus, he argues that the human personality is not innate rather it is constructed through time by different social interaction with others starting by the parents then society [venheul, verhaeghe 393,394]. Third, the psychoanalytic attachment theory by Fangay who considers the presence of the other is necessary in the construction's process of one identity. He also explain that the child at his early life establishes his basic or primary representation that reflects the others. Then it develops through time to become secondary presentation that is one's identity or self. so, the three theories have a common point which is the importance of the "other".

From that point, the social interaction between the female characters is the main mean that helps Celie and the other characters to find their freedom and to construct their identity. The relationship between Celie and the other characters in particular Shug, Sofia, and Nettie are very influential and turning point in regaining their self confident. In this regard, Shug is considered as the main reason that let Celie discover herself body and her improvement. Thus, the entry of Shug in Celie's life brings many changes. Before her, Celie considers

herself as an ugly and dependent person, in addition to her bad experiences with men. Shug is Celie's husband lover who comes to his house after being ill. The two later on develop a deep relation as a friend and then they begin a lesbian relation. Therefore, Shug helps Celie to gain a self esteem and to speak about herself. She also helped her to start a pants business. In addition, she helps her to find the letters of Nettie that Albert kept them hidden from Celie.

Even though, Celie is not well educated person, writing letters is the only means she has of expressing her feeling. She writes in vernacular and makes many mistakes which represents her psychological state. Yet, what is matter is her capacity to write her own words which relieves her. At first, she writes only to "God" as her only saviour. Thus, her idea of God is just a reflection of white patriarchal power "he big and old and tall and gray and white" (Walker 194). However, Shug changes her idea of God as a white man by saying "stop and think for a minute, state shug. Here's the thing. Say Shug. The thing I believe " God is inside you and inside everybody else" (Walker 176). Likewise, she argues that God is not personified with no gender or race. She believes that God is benevolent and wants all of the creation to appreciate the richness of life. As a result, Celie accepts this idea which allows her to assert her own independence. Eventually, in her last letter Celie addresses " Dear God, Dear stars, Dear sky, Dear trees, Dear people, Dear everything" shows her spiritual transformation from belief in a single God to a God that exist in everywhere.

Another turing point in Celie's life is the finding of her sister 's letters. These letters help Celie to know more about Africa, slavery, religion and Olinka culture. But the most thing is knowing her the truth about her children and her real father. In Nettie's letters, she tells Celie that her children are still alive and the person who raped her is not their real father

. this truth changes a lot of in her life that gives her courage to stand against her husband .
She finally decides to leave him and travel with Shug. She says :

I say it's time to leave you and enter in the creation . And your dead
body is just the welcome mat I need you took my sister Nettie away
from me . I say . And you know was the only person love me in the
world . But Nettie And my children coming home soon . I say . And
when she do . All us together gonwhup your ass (Walker 109)

In the novel , writing letters is considered as an act of resistance . Amira Baga claims in her thesis “ Celie’s Emancipation Process “ that there are three reasons that leads Celie to write. first , she writes to rebel against her stepfather because she is obliged to be silence about the rape. Yet , the fact that she writes to God and describes her suffering into a paper is considered as a kind of reaction . Second , Baga argues that Celie chooses to write because of her lack of confidence to tell any person about her pain . Third , she uses writing as a therapy . Even if writing does not erase all her bad experiences . Yet , It gives her the power to control her painful memories. Moreover , Baga mentions that the real experience if Alice Walker is reflected in the novel. As Walker immerses herself in writing in order to heal from her traumatic experiences of being blinded by one side . Additionally , for Valerie Bobb , writing and telling enable Celie to “ fix the events of herself , thereby lending them coherence” (111) . Hence , Celie seeks freedom through writing and the presence of other female characters.

Black women in the novel do succeed in resisting injustice by realizing their problems and by bonding together. Celie as an example gains the ability to liberate herself and thus to become an agent through writing. She uses it to surpass through the claims around her body, her rapist step father, her violent husband and static black community bound her in. When she leaves Mr. _ he tells her that she is nothing, just a poor black women, she replies to him "I am pore, I'm black. I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here"(Walker 187). With these words she accepts herself and declares that she is a human being who has ageny on herself.

Some female characters liberate themselves economically like Shug, Mary Agnes and Celie. Shug Avery and Mary Agnes establish independent successful career as singers and enjoy more freedom than others. They gained liberty through the world of music, leading to emancipation of art, soul and finally self. By singing, Shug Avery buys a car and a house in which she and Celie live together. Another female character who becomes economically independence is Celie. She establishes a trousers business with the help of Shug and the money that inherited from her stepfather. Later on, she becomes a successful business woman who makes pants for all genders.

The novel also represents the strong relationship between women although they share the same man. A clear example of that is Mary Agnes and Sofia. Mary helps Sofia when she is in prison. And she success to release her even she is raped by her uncle. Afterward, Sofia also looks after Mary's child when she goes away to be a singer. Another example is the relationship between Celie and Shug. Shug Avery is Celie's husband lover. However when she becomes very ill. Celie takes care of her. In addition, Shug helps Celie to love and accept herself. She also stand against Albert when he beats Celie. The two women later become a lovers.

Walker does not portray the end of the Olinkan people but she expresses that in Olinka women have a strong friendship groups amongst themselves . Nettie who lives in Africa for almost twenty years . As a missionary , she uses her education as a weapon to survive . She helps the olinkan girls to get education . Moreover, she protects her sister's children Adam and Olivia . In the end , they return to United States along their foster father. Additionally , Adam's wife Tashi after she escapes to the mountains she persuades by Adam who sympathies with her by doing the same facial scarring rituals . Eventually ,Adam marries her and takes her to the Unites States .

Consequently, the female character in the novel could prove that they are brave enough to challenge their fates and imposed rules on them by men . In addition , they could rebel against their patriarchal society , and against both white and black men's oppression . Also they proved that women could reconstruct their self identity as an Afro-American females . Moreover , they arrested the fact that , by helping each other; the black feminists could empowers and prove their self and collective identity .

3.5.Conclusion

To conclude , Alice Walker's the color purple is a literary work that offers a description of two Afro-American communities' struggle , America and Olinka, in seeking their identity formation and their agency in both places , women suffer from gender and racial oppression . However , they use their positive relationships as a tool to reach their objective and they do succeed in achieving their goal . they succeeded in resisting injustice by bonding together and helping each other . Their life experiences that they go through are forcibly shape their identity . the identity formation does not depend only on these events but the way they handle those events in their search of agency and their own voice. They created their own place , finding their freedom and became agents of their body and their actions. This chapter

elucidated that women could survive in the unjust societies if they help each other . In the novel ,women do gain power . They support each other and develop themselves with their own system of advocacy and agency . Their connection is their primary agency through which gain power . Each woman support another and they empower each in several ways . As women , this novel gives us a hope as it provides a sense of optimism and it inspires all the oppressed women all over the world to free themselves .

General conclusion

General conclusion

Alice Walker is considered as one of the most recognizable African-American writers not in America only but in all the world . She depicts through her works the experience of Afro-American in USA and tries to reflect the difficulties that they have faced because of racism . Moreover , the issue of identity crisis of the Afro-American is the main theme in all her works . In her bildungsroman “the Color Purple” , she recounts the history of America from an Afro-American perspective . In addition , she narrates the effects of slavery on blacks and struggles in their quest for identity .

The novel tells a story of blacks ‘ struggles in USA and Africa , mainly the black women . The female characters of the novel suffered from the evils of racism and sexism . However , they engaged in a journey of self-discovery in order to escape the evil of patriarchy and live a decent life . The story takes place in 1900s and it depicts two communities , one in a rural south state of Georgia in America and the other is Olinka tribe in Africa . On the one hand , the female characters in America oppressed by whites and blacks because they are blacks and women . On the other hand , the females’ sufferings in Africa is the same yet the impact of colonialism made it worse for women , they are not fighting for their self-identity , but also for their land . Moreover , by living together , they learned how to be free again and to live without men’s help .

The main protagonist and the most victimized character Celie , is a young poor and uneducated black woman that grows in patriarchal environment where she encounters physical , sexual , verbal and psychological violence . As a result , she lost her identity and selfhood. Moreover , Alice portrays the gradual forming of a new black woman . Celie with the help of other female characters .

Nettie , Shug and Sofia helps Celie a lot in her transformation to a respectful and independent women . First , her sexual transformation happens thanks to Shug Avery who loves her . She makes her love herself by discovering and accepting her own body . Shug is a key character in Celie's transformation and she is the symbol of free sexual woman . Then , her sister Nettie who plays the role of a teacher . She helps her sister in writing her suffering down in paper and opens her mind because of her letters about Africa. Lastly , Sofia is reliable support for Celie . She is presented as a strong fighter woman who insists on her rights, making Celie realizes her possibility to become an independent and strong woman .

Moreover , not only Celie who liberates herself but all the female characters affected each other . They heal themselves and discover love once again . As result , we see that women's solidarity and sisterhood are very important step for women to gain control and become agents for their own lives . In addition , the message of Alice Walker through her novel *The Color Purple* is that women must stand up against the unfair treatment of men and they must do this by helping one another . At the end , they succeed and win their happiness .

As we hypothesize at the beginning of this work , the female characters in America's community do succeed to form their identity and achieve their agency in a higher extent than the Olinka's women through their feminist solidarity . Celie , Nettie , Shug , Sofia , and Mary by sharing the same discrimination , they learn to stand against men's oppression . Moreover, Celie is the most successful character in reaching her identity than other characters . She is the most victimized woman . Yet , at the end , she becomes a true agent to her life.

Alice Walker narrative “ *The Color Purple*” is really an interesting modernist and feminist work . It can be analyzed from different angles and perspectives . The purpose of our present work is to explore the female characters' agency and their identity formation in “ *The*

Color Purple". Thus , we can say that the novel does not only talks about black women but all the oppressed women in the world who are a victims of sexual and racial discrimination . So , in order to be free from patriarchal domination , women should learn how to be independent with their efforts and keep on fighting against the unjust male dominated society.

Throughout This research , we faced many difficulties due to the COVID-19 . The transportation became very hard because we live far away from Laghouat city . In addition to the lack of sources in the subject matter in our libraries . Moreover , we encountered many queries that answering them could take the present research to different trajectories . Thus , we suggest them as topics for further analysis and studies ; among them we mention : To which extent can the novel *The Color Purple* be considered as attack on masculinity ? how we study the binary of femininity and masculinity from a postcolonial perspective ? And finally how can we study feminism as a part of a wider agenda related to racism ?

Works cited

Primary Source :

Walker , Alice. *The Color Purple* .Harcourt Brace Jovanovich , 1982.

Secondary Source :

Books:

Collins , patricia Hill. *Black Feminism Thought Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment.* Routledge, 2000.

Davidson, Maria D. *Black Women, Agency, and The New Black Feminism.* Routledge, 2017.

O'callaghan, Bryn. *An Illustrated History of USA.* Harlow: Longman, 2004.

A chapter from a book :

Davidson, Maria D and Scott Davidson. *African American Studies: “Perspectives on Womanism , Black Feminism, and Africa Womanism.”*

Articles

American International Journal of Contemporary Research. , Vol. 3,6 June 2003.

Anthony, Kanny Ikchukwu . “African Identity and the Emergence of Globalization.”

Cheney, Carl, et al. “Tri-Country Domestic & Sexual Violence Intervention Network Anti-Oppression Training for Trainers. 2006, www.actforaction.org.

Huddy, Leonie.” From Social to Political Identity : a Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory “. S. n, 2001.

Katlyne. *John Locke’s theory of “Tabula Rasa”.*

Latifah, Latifah.”Feminism Issues Analysis in Celie Character Through “The Color Purple” Novel by Alice Walker.

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=tn&source=web&rct=j&url=http://openjournal.unpam.ac.id/index.php/MPS/article/view/3196&ved=2ahUKEwjM47bp1p7xAhUgQOEAHf8dBmcQFjABegQIERACusg=AOvVaw1Ht8V6FisNb3upQ1k5J9i-&cshid=1623933216598>

NODARI, Janice Inês . “CONSTRUCTING A NEW HISTORIST IDENTITY : the role of Nettie in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple “.Revista Littera , V.1 , № 1, jan- jul 2010

Piccirillo, Rayan A.”The Lockean Memory Theory of Personal Identity : Definition, Objection and Response”. 2010, www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1683/the-lockean-memory-theory-of-personal-identity-definition-objection-response.

RAAjaha, Rach. “Quest For Self : A brief Study of Alice Walker’s The Color Purple

“[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.rjelal.com/5.3.17/112-](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.rjelal.com/5.3.17/112-118%2520R.%2520RAAJITHA.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiSzbmH157xAhX0RkEAHWwWDgEQFjAJegQIDxAC&usg=AOvVaw3HHNOWQIIIRLNwIFUT3Guq)

[118%2520R.%2520RAAJITHA.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiSzbmH157xAhX0RkEAHWwWDgEQFjAJegQIDxAC&usg=AOvVaw3HHNOWQIIIRLNwIFUT3Guq](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.rjelal.com/5.3.17/112-118%2520R.%2520RAAJITHA.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiSzbmH157xAhX0RkEAHWwWDgEQFjAJegQIDxAC&usg=AOvVaw3HHNOWQIIIRLNwIFUT3Guq)

Sarmah , Puja . “Redefining Body And Its Agency : A Study of The Woman Characters In Alice Walker’s The Color Purple

“<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/download/3260/3255&ved=2ahUKEwi8082B1Z7xAhVsREEAHS7iBxcQFjAAegQIAxC&usg=AOvVaw26zmBw4HfgWLixIsP-aZ3s>

Srinivas , Pala . “Physical And Psychological Victimization of Women : Reading Alice Walker “ The Color Purple”. International Research Journal of Management Sociology& Humanity Vol . 7 , Issue 6 , 2016.

Stănișoară, Codruța Mirela .”Alice Walker’ Colors of Identity”. Journal of Literature and Art Studies.vol. 6, No. 9, 989-995.September 2016.

Vanheule, Stijn, and Paul Verhaeghe. “Identity through a Psychoanalytic Looking Glass”. Theory & Psychology , vol.19, pp.391-411.,www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermission.nav.

www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1683/the-lockean-memory-theory-of-personal-identity-definition-objection-respons.

web biography

HistoryandTheoryofFeminismwww.gender.cawaterinfo.net/knowledge_base/rubricator/feminism_e.htm.

Zafar,Aneeqa.”Alice Walker’s Use of Epistolary Narrative in The Color Purple”

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.amazon.in/Alice-Walkers-Epistolary-Narrative-Purple-ebook/dq/B013V21908&ved=2ahUKEwjiNxOm->

[1J7xAhWugVwKHVViC8YQFjACegQICBC&usg=AOvVaw0G6lqtmlijF2b3uTsFzUzT&cs
hid=1623932669073](https://www.google.com/search?q=1J7xAhWugVwKHVViC8YQFjACegQICBC&usg=AOvVaw0G6lqtmlijF2b3uTsFzUzT&cs=1&hid=1623932669073)

Encyclopedia and Dictionaries

Advance English Dictionary . (S A tachnologies , 2017)

Cambridge Dictionaries Online .(Cambridge University Press ,2021)

Online Etymology Dictionary. Dan Mc Cormack (Douglas Harper, 2016)

Oxford English Dictionary. (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Encyclopedia Britannica

Videos

Green , Emma . “The Color Purple Interpretation : Feminist and African American Criticism
“. YouTube .11 March, 2018.

Simi Raj ; Merin. “ Can the Subaltern Speak? “ YouTube Video.

Dissertations

BAGA, Amira . “ Celie’s Emancipation Process in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* “ .
Constantine University . June 2010.

Linnerud Næss , Silje . “ Re-defining African American Women’s Communication ,
Sexually and Creatively in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* , Octavia E ,Butler’s *Kindred* ,
and Toni Morrison’s *Sula* . The University of Oslo 2007

MCDonough , Megan Sarah . “ From Damsel In Distress To Active Agent : Female Agency
In Children’s And Young Adult Fiction “ University of Louisville . 2

الملخص

تتطرق المذكرة الحالية إلى التحقيق في تكوين الهوية والوكالة بين الشخصيات النسائية في رواية " اللون الأرجواني" لأليس وولكر 1982 وتهدف إلى إظهار الدور الجوهرى الذى يلعبه التضامن النسوي في الحفاظ على الهوية الأنثوية وتحقيق الذات في المجتمعات الذكورية . كما تهدف هذه المذكرة إلى إجراء دراسة نسوية و نفسية للشخصيات الخمس الرئيسية (سيللي , شاق, صوفيا , ماري ونيتي) من أجل توضيح قدرتهن على التغلب على العوائق المفروضة عليهن بسبب جنسهن . من أجل تحقيق أهداف الدراسة الحالية تم الاعتماد على المنهج الوصفي مع المنهج التحليلي من أجل رسم صلة موازية بين التحليلات النسوية و النفسية لصراع الإناث في المجتمعات الذكورية . في الأخير تلخص هذه المذكرة إلى أن الشخصيات النسائية نجحت في إعادة بناء هوياتهن و الحفاظ وكالتهن بسبب ترابطهن النسوي .