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The Enigmatic Status of Womanhood in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: A Postcolonial Approach

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Abstract

This paper applies postcolonial literary criticism to examine the problematic status of womanhood as preoccupying the position of subalternity in the colonized society by means of investigating Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982). Given this, it explores the postcolonial conceptions as reflected and employed in the novel. Therefore, this study argues that the constructs of double colonization and double oppression problematize the status of the colonized woman in *The Color Purple* in which most of the women characters suffer from double-edged policy as enacted against them. Women in the novel are systematically exposed to both the colonial power and the patriarchal system simultaneously. The research, meanwhile, thoroughly criticizes the racialized policy and mindset thereby analyzing the discursive discrepancies and polarizations between the so-called unequal pillars of blackness and whiteness that signal the constructed identitarian subjects in the novel. In the light of this, the paper showcases the depictive paradigms of slavery in *The Color Purple*, demonstrating that slavery acts as a hidden structure of family construction and blurs the self-image of black women. In addition, the paper further contends that the characters' methods of language use are another means whereby the individuals' identities, worldviews and their positions in the world are determined. Finally, the paper argues that Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* attempts to criticize feminism for neglecting the black women rights when their resistance to the oppression is at issue.

Keywords: *The Color Purple*, postcolonialism, womanhood, double oppression, sisterhood, resistance.

1. Introduction

1.1 A General Background

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) is an acclaimed epistolary novel. It received the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and National Book Award. It can be categorized as part of the literature of otherness, resistance, and double oppressions by portraying the deconstruction of cultural, patriarchal, racial and sexual representations of women. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* tackles the difficulties that racial identity creates for black women and women's circumstance in patriarchal societies. A good number of writers have discussed the masculine domination reflected in the novel, they have read the novel from a feminist perspective, while the significance of this study is focused on women's sorrows from a different perspective rather than feminism, making a postcolonial reading to the text gives these difficulties another meaning and interpretation. The first part of the paper is an introductory section, it focuses on introducing postcolonial theory and terminology with discussing its employment in literature. The plot summary of the novel is also located in the introductory section of the paper. The second part of the paper is the practical section. It is devoted to analyzing and interpreting postcolonial concepts that are reflected in *The Color Purple*, such as slavery, racism, language and determining individual's identity, double oppression of women, and colonized women's resistance to the oppressions. This paper correspondingly analyzes Walker's novel by means of postcolonial literary theory.

1.2. Postcolonialism: Definition and Terminology

As a postmodern literary school, postcolonial literary criticism deals with the nexus of literary depictions and the colonial

experiences and policies in understanding the problems molded by the Western colonization and its aftermath. Being part of cultural studies, it examines the legacies created through the process of colonization. As Charles Bressler maintains: "Postcolonialism consists of a set of theories in philosophy and various approaches to literary analysis that are concerned with literature written in English in countries that were or still are colonies of other countries" (Bressler, 2011, p. 200). Despite this, postcolonial criticism has travelled beyond what Bressler maintains; it has also expanded to literatures written in languages other than English since postcolonial literature currently includes the national literatures written in opposition to colonialism. Postcolonial theorists investigate the ideological upheavals when two cultures interact, one powerful that is conceived as superior controlling "the other", a culture that perceives itself superior to the "inferior", colonized culture. Given such reasons, John McLeod, in *Beginning Postcolonialism*, defines postcolonialism as a challenge to colonial ways of thinking, 'writing back' in opposition to such views (McLeod, 2012).

A widely argumentative approach that has long caused controversies over the terminology has led to further ambiguity, postcolonialism is either written with a hyphen (-) or without. McLeod suggests the hyphenated 'post-colonialism' that denotes a particular historical period 'after colonialism' or better expressing 'after the end of Empire', which he believes that it is more functioning like a noun, but for scholars who deal with postcolonialism as a theory, as referring to disparate forms of 'representations, reading practice, attitudes and values', McLeod prefers non-hyphenated postcolonialism (Ibid., p.6). Meanwhile, Sankaran Krishna remarks: 'postcolonialism' represented the continuation of 'colonialism' following the period of

‘decolonization’ in the ‘third-world’ (Krishna, 2009, p.66). Therefore, it shows that postcolonialism does not mean the celebration of heydays following the end of colonialism, the drawbacks of empire do not mean the beginning of new era; the new era commences when the traces of colonization are vanished. Thus, postcolonialism refers to ideological conceptualization of identity, literature and culture following the colonial days. The term can be interpreted as both the continuation of and the opposition to colonialism since it simultaneously investigates the remnants of colonization and the opposition to colonial discourses.

Meanwhile, postcolonial literature(s) focuses on the relationship between history, culture, racial interactions, ethnic disputes, gender discriminations, and colonial education as depicted across literary portrayals. For Wendy Knepper, “[r]esistance to colonialist perspectives and representations of the world is one of the defining attributes of postcolonial literature” (Knepper, 2011, p.4). It is postcolonial literature’s functioning legacy to challenge the ideologies and beliefs whereby one nation or one culture is turned subservient to the other, a phenomenon indicating the asymmetrical relationship between the superior “the Self” and the inferior “Other”. When colonial literature creates its own method of viewing and writing about concepts such as nation, culture, race, identity, religion, gender, sexuality, and so forth, postcolonial theory proceeds to examine the way these codes function to keep on and justify the process of colonization, and it suggests both the possible methods of resistance and writing back against the oppressive dimensions of colonialism such as slavery, racism, genocide, and ethnocide. Inspired by such interactions, Pramod. K. Nayar construes postcolonial literature to the literature of resistance, anger, protest and hope. He further maintains that it is a literature seeking to understand, negotiate, and judge a specific

historical event and colonial rule (Nyar, 2008, p.1). Therefore, postcolonial literature showcases both cultural traditions of a nation and the colonial remnants that affect these cultural traditions.

1.3. Plot Summary of *The Color Purple*

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) follows epistolary style, in which the protagonist, a black, weak, poor, abused female teenager called Celie writes letters to God as being her only support and relative. When she realizes that God does not read them, she starts writing letters to her lost, missing sister, Nettie. Celie is a 14-year-old black girl living in a village of America's Georgia State. Following her mother's death, her father rapes her, she then gives birth to two children who are taken – and sold – from her later on. Eventually her father obliges her to marry a man called Albert, whom Celie calls Mr._____ instead. Albert has four children, despite his knowledge that Celie is a black, skinny, ugly girl, he accepts to take her to raise his orphan children. When she gets married, her sister, Nettie, remains alone at home with her father, who tries to rape her as well, but she escapes and goes to Celie's house that is worse. At Celie's house, Albert does not take off his eyes from Nettie; after her refusal, Albert dismisses her and promises to never let Celie hear from her. Nettie joins Samuel and Corrine, the two black missionary, with whom she goes to Africa.

Celie in the novel represents a black, weak, abused woman, who faces physical and psychological oppressions. She is muted and never fights back the oppressors until she is introduced to Sofia, Albert's daughter-in-law, who is strong and violent and always fights back the men around her. Another person who gave voice to Celie and changed her life is Shug Avery, Albert's ex-lover, who comes and lives with them. Shug teaches Celie many

things about her physical and spiritual lives. Nettie sends Celie many letters, but Albert hides them from her. Shug helps Celie to find the letters. Finding letters is the turning point of Celie's life. When she knows her sister is alive and Albert prevented her from knowing the truth, she decides to leave him and start a new life. Celie leaves her small village and goes to Shug's house in Memphis where she sews pants and financially becomes independent. Celie continuously receives letters from Nettie. Through these letters, Nettie helps her to discover many realities. She learns that Pa is not her true father, her real father was a rich man, killed by white people and Pa married her mother because of the prosperity. Nettie also lets Celie know that Pa has sold her two children – Olivia and Adam – to Samuel and Corrine – the missionary couples – and they took Nettie as a nanny for children whom she lives with now in Africa. Following Pa's death, all the wealth is left for Celie and Nettie, because the wealth belongs to their real father. When Celie goes back home to her village, she finds changes in Albert's attitude. He became a mature, calm man who respects her, so she decides to reconcile with him. Finally, after 32 years, the two children of Celie will come back and reunite with Celie.

2. Postcolonial Depictions of Women in The Color Purple

2.1. Self vs Other, Superiority vs Inferiority and the Construction of Racialization

The birth of race is the starting point of discrepancy constructions amongst humans, a fact that has long been misconceived to the extent that scientific development has stood for positivity. The historical experiences, however, have shown that so-called scientific discovery of race has doomed humanity. As

Hannah Arendt conspicuously argues: “For no matter what learned scientists may say, race is, politically speaking, not the beginning of humanity but its end, not the origin of peoples but their decay, not the natural birth of man but his unnatural death” (Arendt, 1968, p. 157). *The Color Purple*, meanwhile, reflects such ideological reiterations, as Ecaterina Pavel in her article, ‘Periculture and Post colonialism inside *The Color Purple*’, argues that individuals’ self-awareness is often stemmed from the momentous interaction with other different cultures; it is stimulated at this very moment of interaction. When the colonizer forms endo-culture (the culture of Self; one’s own culture, the one that one belongs to, an “innate nature”), the discrimination starts to appear with the colonized exo-culture (the culture of the Other, the exterior one), give birth to racism and oppression (Pavel, 2011, P.3). *The Color Purple* brings the oppressions to the fore that most of the women in the novel face due to their racialized identities. The White mayor’s slap on Sofia’s face while refusing to be his wife’s maid (Walker, 2004, p. 81) can be a fitting example for racial oppression. Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), explains the consequences of identity formation for the black objects who always represent “the Other” to “the White Self”. He, therefore, describes the figure of the black person as being:

[F]orced to see himself not as human subject, with his own wants and needs ... but an object, a peculiarity at the mercy of a group that identifies him as inferior, as less than fully human, subservient to their definitions and representations (McLeod, 2012, p.32).

Sofia, the black servant, is always inferior to the mayor’s wife. When she wants to teach mayor’s wife how to drive, she is obliged to sit in the back and teach her. Once she just moves into the front, the mayor’s wife reminds Sofia about her real position: “[h]ave you

ever seen a white person and a colored sitting side by side in a car?" (Walker, 2004, p. 97). As Whiteness represents power, it always affiliates the White people, their identities, their cultures, and their racial backgrounds to superiority when clashed with "the black others", their identities, cultures, and racial backgrounds.

2.2 Postcolonial Feminism and Double Oppression of Women

Playing the role of a medium to express out the untold, literary works act like imaginative spaces whereby the experiences are expressed, and narratives interrogated. The *Color Purple* acts as a platform that gives voice to black women, who are neglected, muted, and marginalized in society. Walker's novel is a trace of ideology that she demonstrates to the wider audience, encouraging a model of literature in which black woman starts to humanely realize herself and her position in the world, where she needs to be viewed as fully human but neither as shadow to men nor as slave to the white community. However, being an African-American writer, Walker has confronted much criticism for showing a negative image of black men, portraying them as rapist, beasts, and violent. She responds from a feminist perspective and says "the Master" is either black or white. Thus, a black woman writer should not distort the truth for the sake of showing a positive image of blackness, i.e., black men.

In their book, Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford refer to the term 'double colonization' of women by which they analyze the way women simultaneously experience the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy (Petersen and Rutherford, 1986). Postcolonial criticism widely discusses the issue of double oppression and double colonization of women. This is despite the fact that colonialism itself is a male-centered ideology as Robert

Young urges recognition of the growing similarities ‘between patriarchy and colonialism’ (Young, 1995, p. 162). Celie, Sofia, Nettie, Mary Agnes, and almost all women characters in the novel, are exposed to double oppressions as offered by both their patriarchal culture and the colonial power. They have a very passive position within the culture they live through, a status that resembles the one discussed by Hawzhen Ahmed who argues that “women are viewed as territory to embody nationhood and to be protected in a paternalistic way. Their symbolic position as passive terrain [...] suggests that they provide the ground on which men can actively construct the nation” (Ahmed, 2022, p. 39). Celie is dominated and victimized directly by the dominant power of men in her culture, and indirectly by the white colonial power, whose shadow still reaches her through the abusive colored men (father, husband, and shopkeeper).

Despite Sofia’s strong, abusive, and fierce characteristics, she still suffers from double oppression in a patriarchal society where men oppress her: “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 my uncle, a girl child ain’t safe in a family of men” (Walker, 2004, p.39). Her black identity causes her racial oppression by the colonizer as well. When she refuses to act like a servant for the white mayor’s wife, the mayor slaps her in the face and puts her in jail, then makes her a servant in his house for twelve years.

Black women have been doubly made invisible. Postcolonial feminism discusses the myths and stereotypes that are created around them, it therefore analyses the ways they are muted and are rendered voiceless. Gayatri Spivak, thus, raises a very crucial question that ‘can Subaltern speak?’ She states that the spoken words by subaltern females in the shadow of colonial history and

representation can ever be heard? and that: “If in context of colonial production, subaltern has no history, and can’t speak, the subaltern as female is even deeply in shadow” (Spivak, 1988, p. 83). Spivak asserts that when the colonized, the subaltern figure, is not in the authority to speak, how a subaltern female who is simply in the shadow of a shadow can speak? Spivak’s famous essay does not mean that the subaltern woman cannot articulate words, but that she is not in the authority to speak, everybody speaks for her; consequently, she endlessly remains as a subject of patriarchy and vulnerable to colonialism. In the same manner, Celie, as a subaltern female in *The Color Purple*, is always represented – somebody else speaks and decides on her behalf. Harpo, her son-in-law, tells her: “when Pa tells you do something, you do it, when he says not to, you don’t” (Walker, 2004, p.60). Spivak steps further beyond and maintains that subaltern women can speak but others do not know how to listen, a condition that leads to misinterpretation as McLeod comments: “the silence of female as subaltern is the result of a failure in interpretation and not a failure of articulation” (McLeod, 2012, p.223). The novel articulates this by means of the creation of the character of Celie, who longs for being an ideal listener, someone who listens to her own story and sympathizes with it, understands it. For Celie, finding a listener and her own voice are indistinguishably relevant. She comes across no listener and is obliged to write for God. According to Spivak, it is the fear of misinterpretation, and lack of having a listener that keeps subaltern women silent and a shadowy figure in margins. Given such reason, Celie assigns God as a listener. This, meanwhile, is reminiscent of Jean-François Lyotard’s argument about the construction of ‘discourse of power’ that the existence of ‘force’ is a method of demolishing “the other” and detachment of those who are subject of such discourse. Lyotard, therefore, states:

Whenever efficiency (that is, obtaining the desired effect) is derived from a "Say or do this, or else you'll never speak again," then we are in the realm of terror, and the social bond is destroyed (Lyotard, 1984, p. 46).

The Color Purple illustrates this structure of power relations through demonstrating the objectification of femininity. It showcases the way women are viewed as sexual objects and caretakers of children and being housewives, they do not have identity, meaning that identity is supposedly a privilege that men give to them: "a girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something" (Walker, 2004, p. 140). The slightest attempt for rejecting this mode of perception ends up with violence and oppression against them: "wives are like children, you have to let them know who got the upper hand, nothing can do that better than a good sound beating" (Ibid., p.35). One of the significant points about *The Color Purple* is Celie's search for truth, which makes her understand the abusive patriarchal culture she, as a woman, has endured, no matter if she is weak, obedient, or strong or disobedient.

The novel, thus, shows how double oppression of black women affects their religious faith, and creates a paradoxical ideology about God. For a character like Celie, God is the only supporter and listener who she can run to, on the one hand. On the other, Celie believes that God is white and man, how come He help a black, poor, ugly woman, as she says:

[T]he God I been praying and writing to is a man, and act just like all other man I know... ain't no way to read the bible and not think God white, when I found out I thought God is white, and a man, I lost interest. You mad cause he don't seem to listen to your prayers. Do the mayor listen to any colored? (Ibid., p.175).

She herself makes her final decision about the doubt and says God is man, like all other men even if you know he does not listen.

By means of the character of Celie, Walker portrays the life of black African-American rural societies in a realistic way; however, the most significant point the novel highlights is the importance of sisterhood, and it authorizes it by giving liberation to the protagonist with the assistance of other women. Most postcolonial feminists criticize feminism for deserting their black sisters in their discourses. In *The Color Purple*, Walker deeply gives a crucial role to sisterhood. Celie, the muted and being doubly oppressed, protests for her liberation and learns to fight back with the help of other women. Nettie on various occasions asks Celie to fight back: “you got to fight and get away from Albert. He ain’t no good” (*Ibid.*, p.114). On other occasions when Albert’s sister asks Celie to fight Albert and his wild children, she states: “you got to fight them yourself” (*Ibid.*, p. 22).

Finally, with the support of Shug Avery, Celie – both mentally and physically – becomes liberated. Celie narrates the story of her rape to Shug and this step liberates her mentally. In terms of physicality, she wins her liberation by leaving Albert and going to Shug’s house when Shug discovers that Albert has deprived Celie of getting letters from Nettie. Celie correspondingly turns unmuted: “I’m poor, I’m black, I may be ugly and can’t cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I am here” (*Ibid.*, p 187). She is now strong enough and fights for other women’s rights. She tells Mary Agnes, Harpo’s girlfriend, whom Harpo calls squeak: “Make Harpo call you by your own name” (*Ibid.*, 2004, p.80). She also tells Harpo not to beat Sofia: “that doesn’t mean you got to keep on bothering her, she loves you, she is a good wife” (*Ibid.*, p.60). *The Color Purple*, through such artistic portrayals, demonstrates the

way many women defend each other, and could teach each other about their rights and the legacy of sisterhood.

2.3 Slavery and Self-image of Black Women in *The Color Purple*

Women slavery is one of the most obvious trademarks of colonialist ideology in Walker's *The Color Purple*. The novel depicts the banal slavery that has long affected the family structure and gender roles amongst African-Americans. Celie, the protagonist of the novel, suffers from a racialized system that keeps her as slave to both the patriarchal and the colonial policies. Angela Y. Davis, in her *Women, Race and Class* (1981), refers to the circumstances black women go through underlined by the enslavement codes. She portrays numerous ways whereby slavery encapsulates the self-image of black women (Davis, 1981, p17). Celie is not seen as a human being who can communicate her opinions and desires; her father sells her out to Albert, saying: "you can do everything just like you want to and she ain't gonna make you feed it or cloth it" (Walker, 2004 p.8). Celie is just an object of trade, the buyer wants to have another look at her: "Pa call me Mr _____ wants another look at you ..., turn around, say pa I turn round" (*Ibid.*, p. 9). This is a momentous overview of the inhumane treatment of the black women, who are now a perfect commercial item that mark the history of White colonialism. Representing the inseparably marginalized blackness and womanhood, Celie belongs to that culture of denial, oppression, suppression, and devaluation of blackness in general and black womanhood in particular.

In addition to this, the racist discourses also fed on distorting the natural treatment of human beings through racial labelling. When it came to motherhood, discriminatory discourses and modes

of treatment turn different. Being slave, deprived black women of practicing the right of raising their children as Davis states: “since slave women were classified as “breeders” as opposed to “mothers,” their infant children could be sold away from them like calves from cows” (Davis, 1981, p.3), and for those who had their children, Davis explains that they were unable to nurse their children regularly, because of their hard work. Consequently, they had to endure the pain caused by swollen breasts and field works, a condition that surely resulted in women’s malfunctioning and poor life performance. In *The Color Purple*, Walker exposes the difficulties black women experience. The hard times Celie undergoes when facing slavery makes her write her third letter to God, saying:

He took my other baby, a boy this time. But I don’t think he kilt it. I think he sold it to a man and his wife over Monticello. I got breasts full of milk running down myself. He says why don’t you look decent? Put on something. But what I am supposed to put on I don’t have nothing (Walker, 2004, p.5).

Apart from Celie, another example in the novel is Sofia, who cannot breed her children. She becomes a slave in the mayor’s house for twelve years. She leaves five children to be raised by her sister and other women around.

Sexual violence and rendering sex a means of dominance are vehicles through which the novel narrates another dark aspect of black women exploitation. Davis argues that “the punishment inflicted on women exceeded the intensity the punishment suffered by their men, for women were not only whipped and mutilated, but they were also raped” (Davis, 1981, p.11). Similar to this, both Celie and Mary Agnes are two slave characters with the history of

rape, which included both mental and physical violence. Such violence muted Celie for around thirty years, she does not tell anyone except God. Meanwhile, Mary Agnes in the novel does not surrender, the experience of rape gives her voice rather than silence. She regains her identity when Harpo calls her squeak, she replies, “my name is Mary Agnes”(Waler, 2004,p.90). Such momentous response takes the function of *The Color Purple* to another higher level, acting as an alternative platform, the novel – being a literary arena – proceeds to change that unlikely reality that violated the rights of black womanhood.

2.4 Women’s Status and Language Usage

The legacy of language and its consequential results when exposed to postcolonial dialogues are always open-ended; however, different contexts may require various discussions given the terrains under study. Prominent postcolonial theorists and writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Salman Rushdie, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe amongst others have put their arguments over the language use as related to postcolonial heritage. For them, despite having contesting or agreeable arguments, colonial discourses create intersections where language and power meet, language is more than a simple means of communication. Postcolonialists, therefore, argue that language determines individuals’ values whereby they can decide on their positions in the world through language as Ngugi wa Thiong’o in *Homecoming: Towards a National Culture* argues:

Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularity through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics, and at their social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other human

beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world (1972, p.290).

For Ngugi, thus, language is so powerful that it decides on the personal affiliations and their backgrounds. Such argumentation also recalls Bill Ashcroft's that states: "Place, and the experience of displacement, emerge out of the interaction of language, history, visual perception, spatiality and environment in the experience of colonized peoples" (Ashcroft, 2001, p.59). The legacy of language is thus rendered effective in causing either spiritual displacement or psychological homefulness. The literary portrayal of such linguistic impact is carefully depicted in *The Color Purple*. Celie, the muted, victimized woman in the subaltern society, writes in her own dialect. By means of using her own language, she explains her sorrows. Celie unconsciously adopts her own language as a medium to express herself when it comes to narrate her life story. Such return to her own native language is an indicator of liberation from the colonial legacy. The two girls that come and help her with sewing are quite aware of the fact that language determines people's positions in the world, so they try their best to teach Celie the standard English language to hide and mask her so-called uncivilized identity:

Every time I say something the way I say it, she corrects me, until I say some other way, pretty soon it feel like I can't think, my mind run up a though, get confuse, run back and sort of lay down ..., look like to me only fool want you to talk in a way that feel peculiar to your mind (Walker, 2004, p. 195).

Celie does not recognize the power of depriving people of speaking their language. To happily accept the colonizer's language is to admit the fact that your language is not as prestigious

as the colonial language. Speaking in such context, McLeod puts it: “Colonialism establishes ways of thinking. It operates by persuading people to internalize its logic and speak its language, to perpetuate the values and assumptions of colonizers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world” (McLeod, 2012, p.20). Examples of this in the novel is Nettie, who is an imitator of colonial language. She surrenders to standardized language and a system that colonizes Africa. Nettie, the first black female missionary, who visits Olinka with two other black missionaries, believe that they can help African people and treat them better than white people. This is supposedly because they are not white and have already suffered under the White supremacist rule. Therefore, the paradox emerges out that the first thing Nettie teaches Olinka’s children is English language and history. Reversely speaking, Celie’s use of her own native language marks her social status and racial identity, while Nettie’s language appears indistinguishable from the white people who always consider her as “the unknown other” while being defined through White supremacist codes that the figure of the colonized is simultaneously known and unknown for the colonizer.

2.5 Resistance: An Act of Self-Representation

Given the fact that literature is a space where alternative realities are offered, it also often serves as a resistance tool when it comes to standing against the colonial paradigms. Walker’s *The Color Purple* falls into this category that it is also an attempt to rewrite the conceptions put forward by the colonial pre-assumptive modes. According to Barbara Harlow, resistance literature is “a particular category of literature that emerged significantly as part of the organized national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East”. For

her, literature can proceed along with armed revolution for independence, and national language is a conditional tool for resistance literature (Harlow, 1987, p. xvii). However, Ahmed states that the concept of resistance, when interacted with literature, may proceed to “enjoy more freedom and a broader understanding” and the fact that a text written not in one’s native language could be “stepping beyond the idea that nations and peoples should only use their native languages to resist the systems of domination through their creative writings” (Ahmed, 2022, p. 7). In addition to this, Paulo de Medeiros argues: “literary representation” as well as “the poetic voice” act against the dominant power for ‘denounc[ing] the abuses of power that constantly threaten to engulf human societies” (Medeiros, 2003, p. 82). In resemblance to such notional views of resistance, Walker’s *The Color Purple* illustrates the resistance of black women against both the patriarchal and the colonial system. Even though it was written in English – not in Walker’s “original” African language – it represents a pure domain where resistance takes place, a fictional battleground where the rights of black women are defended.

Women in *The Color Purple* are divided into two groups: a group of rebellion and resistance that are Sofia, Shug, Nettie, who are always resisting the oppressions and help other women to speak out and appear vocal, and the group of Celie and Mary Agnes, who belong to the obedient and voiceless circle that finally turn unmuted and recover their true identities and natural voices. Sofia and Tashi are two significant figures of resistance in the novel. When Tashi is asked to marry Adam and leave for England with him, she decides to defy the white imperialist culture and symbolize the struggle of cultural values against the legacy of colonization, and she undergoes painful traditional customs like mutilation and putting scars, tribal marks on her face. Sofia again

has marks on her body after leaving the jail because of the violence she has received. These marks remain as a reminder that resistance is costly; however, combating cultural and institutional racism is timely and necessary in order to rewrite the history of silencing and turning the untold stories into vocal and outspoken ones.

Conclusion

This paper examined Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* in the light of postcolonial theories. It analyzed the way it acts as a pure reflection of various postcolonial concepts. It put the novel in discussion with arguments such as that of double oppression, discussing in detail the levels womanhood is exposed to racism and marginalization and the way the novel falls into the category of subalternity. The novel's characters such as Celie, the protagonist, and most of other characters, are examples of double oppression of women by the patriarchal society and the colonial system.

Apart from the presence of double colonization, the research examined in the novel the issues of self vs other, slavery and self-image, the language usage with relevant to woman's status and also the notional views of women resistance. The paper investigated how language, being an integral part of postcolonial debates, is portrayed in *The Color Purple* that determines one's position in the world and his/her world visions for domestic and external audiences. Therefore, the major argument of the paper centered on the way the colonizer's mode of perception acts as a constructional paradigm of racism and systematic discrimination; "the white" is superior and embodies the ego of "the self", while "the black" always remains "the other" and supposedly "inferior". *The Color Purple* highlights the impacts of slavery on family structure and self-image of black women. As a response to feminism, which is criticized for deserting black women throughout its white feminist discourses, *The Color Purple* gives an upper hand to sisterhood, an ideological move that demonstrates the postcolonial feminist demands. Finally, the paper analyzed that the novel is so multifaced in addressing various postcolonial questions and concerns that black women's resistance to both patriarchal culture and the

colonial power is part of postcolonial literary function. The novel, thus, plays the role of true literary sense that it teaches the arts of black women resistance in the face of oppression and policies of silencing. The paper briefed the idea that Walker's *The Color Purple* engenders the method of expressing out and rendering the voiceless out-loud speaker of the rights of the marginalized and the victimized as being constructed in the wake of colonialist approaches.

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پوختە

ئەم توڭزىنەۋەيە كار لەسەر مەزىراندنى رەخنەي ئەدەبىي پۇستكۇلۇنئال دەكات بەمەبەستى شىكارکردنى دۇخى كىشەدارى ژىبۇون، كە پىنگەي سوبالتىرنى بەرجەستەدەكات لە كۇمەلگەي كۇلۇنئاليزەكراۋ، لەرپىگەي رۇمانى كەلەر پىرپىل (۱۹۸۲)ى ئالىس ۋۆكەر. لەم سۇنگەيەۋە، لىكۇلئىنەۋەكە شەنوكەۋى ۋىناكراۋە پۇستكۇلۇنئەكان دەكات ھەرۋەكو لە رۇمانەكە نەخشەكىشراۋن. ئەم توڭزىنەۋەيە ئەۋە دەردەخات كە دروستكراۋەكانى كۇلۇنئاليزەكردنى دووسەرە ۋ ستەمى جووتجەمسەرى شوپىنگەي ژنى كۇلۇنئاليزەكراۋ لە كەلەر پىرپىل كىشەداردەكات، كە تىايدا زۆربەي كارەكتەرە ژنەكان لەژىرسايەي سىياسەتى جووتجەمسەرى دەئالئىن كە لە دژيان ۋەگەرخراۋە. ژنان، لە رۇمانەكەدا، لە يەككاتدا رۇوبەروۋى ھىزى كۇلۇنئاللى ۋ سىستەمى نىرسالارىي پىكخراۋ دەبنەۋە. لەھەمانكاتدا، توڭزىنەۋەكە، لەرپىگەي شىكارکردنى جىكارى ۋ جەمسەرگىرىيە دروستكراۋەكان لەنىۋان دوانى نايەكسانكراۋى رەشىپىستى ۋ سىپىپىستى كە نىشانىدەرى سوبژىكتەي ناسنامەيىيى دروستكراۋن لە رۇمانەكە، بەۋوردى رەخنە لە سىياسەت ۋ دىئابىنىي رەگەزخۋازى دەگرىت. لەژىر رۇشنايى ئەمەشدا، باسەكە رەھەندە ۋىناكراۋەكانى كۇيلايەتى لە كەلەر پىرپىل دەخاتەبەرچاۋ، بەخستەپروۋى ئەۋەي كۇيلايەتى پىكھاتەيەكى شاراۋەي بونىادنانى خىزانە ۋ ھەلدەستىت بە شوپىنزرکردنى خود-ۋىنەي ژنانى رەشىپىست. توڭزىنەۋەكە ھەرۋەھا دەرىدەخات كە مېتۇدەكانى بەكارھىنانى زمانىي كارەكتەرەكان ئامرازىكى ترن بەرەۋ بىرپاردان لە ناسنامەي تاكەكان ۋ دىئابىنى ۋ شوپىنگەكانيان لە جىھان. لەكۇتايىدا، ئەم باسە دەرىدەخات كە چۇن كەلەر پىرپىلى ئالىس ۋۆكەر رەخنە لە فېمىنىزم دەگرىت بۇ ئەۋ نادىدەگرتانەي دەرھەق بە

ژنانى رەشپېست پيادەى دەكات لەسەر وەختى بەرگريکردنيان بەرانبەر
ستەم و زۆردارى.

وشە كىلىيەكان: كەلەر پېرپىل، پۆستكۆلۇنيالىزم، ژنبوون، ستەمى
جووتجەمسەرى، خوشكايتى، بەرگرى

المخلص

يطبق هذا البحث النقد الأدبي ما بعد الاستعمار لفحص الوضع الإشكالي للنسوية باعتبار ان هذا الوضع يشغل موقع التبعية في المجتمع المستعمر وذلك عن طريق التحقيق في كتاب "اللون الأرجواني" (١٩٨٢) ل أليس والكر. بالنظر إلى هذا، البحث يستكشف مفاهيم ما بعد الاستعمار كما ورد وتم استخدامه في الرواية. لذلك ، تجادل هذه الدراسة بأن مفاهيم الاستعمار المزدوج والقمع المزدوج تشكل إشكالية لوضع المرأة المستعمرة في "اللون الأرجواني"، حيث تعاني معظم الشخصيات النسائية من سياسة ذات حدين التي تم سنّها ضدهن. تتعرض النساء في الرواية بشكل منهجي لكل من السلطة الاستعمارية والنظام الأبوي في ان واحد. في هذه الأثناء، ينتقد البحث بدقة السياسة والعقولة العنصرية، وبالتالي يحلل التناقضات والاستقطابات الخطابية بين ما يسمى بالقُطبين غير المتكافئين من السواد والبياض التي تشير إلى المكوّنات الهوية المبنية في الرواية. في ضوء ذلك، يعرض البحث فكرة العبودية المصورة في "اللون الأرجواني"، مما يدل على أن العبودية تعمل كهيكل خفي لبناء الأسرة وتشوش الصورة الذاتية للمرأة السوداء. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تؤكد الدراسة أيضًا أن أساليب الشخصيات في استخدام اللغة هي وسيلة أخرى يتم من خلالها تحديد هويات الأفراد ووجهات نظرهم للعالم ومواقعهم في العالم. أخيرًا، يجادل البحث بأن كتاب "اللون الأرجواني" ل أليس والكر، يحاول انتقاد الحركة النسوية لإهمالها حقوق النساء السود عندما تكون مقاومتهن للقمع هي القضية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللون الأرجواني، ما بعد الاستعمارية، النسوية ، القمع المزدوج ، الأختية، المقاومة.



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