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**Women Resistance in Alice Walker's:
The Color Purple**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the forms of female resistance that appear in the novel The Color Purple and the extent to which the female characters in the novel portray female resistance. It focuses on African-American women's struggle against exploitation by both the whites and black men. The main purpose of this research is to analyze the tragic experiences of black women in racist societies and their struggles for survival. The female characters have masculine characteristics such as dynamism, boldness, and physical strength. Sophia's strength, Shug's sexual confidence, and Harpo's insecurities are prime examples of the disagreement between the characters' genders and the traits they portray. The results of this study indicate that female characters show active and passive resistance to various forms of oppression experienced. They endure sexual harassment and physical violence. The resistance of women is explained by the actions of several female characters who finally free themselves from the problems they face. Alice Walker fights against the way black women are being discriminated. Discrimination is on two layers, one being black, another is being female.

Keywords: Resistance, Feminism, Oppression, Discrimination, Women.

مقاومة المرأة في رواية أليس والكر: "اللون الأرجواني"

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الملخص:

يسعى البحث الحالي إلى استكشاف كيف تكسر الشخصيات النسائية الأفريقية الأمريكية في رواية أليس ووكر، اللون الأرجواني، حدود الأدوار التقليدية للذكور أو الإناث. عادة، يركز على كفاح النساء الأمريكيات من أصل أفريقي ضد الاستغلال من قبل كل من الرجال البيض والسود. الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الورقة هو تحليل التجارب المأساوية للنساء السود في مجتمع عنصري ونضالهن من أجل البقاء والكمال. الشخصيات الأنثوية لها سمات ذكورية مثل النشاط والجرأة والقوة البدنية إن قوة صوفيا وإصرار شك الجنسي وانعدام الأمن لدى هايبر هي أمثلة رئيسية على هذا التفاوت بين جنس الشخصيات والسمات التي تظهرها. لتحليل كيفية تسبب التخريب في أدوار الجنسين في حدوث مشكلات في بعض الأحيان، فإن الأداة المستخدمة لمنهجية البحث الإطار النسوي. تهدف فرضية العمل إلى توضيح كيف ترغب ووكر في التأكيد على أن الجنس والجنس ليسا بالبساطة التي يعتقدونها الناس. يفسد والكر ويتحدى الطرق التقليدية التي يفهم بها الناس أن النساء نساء وأن الرجال هم رجال. انها تحارب الطريقة التي تتلقى بها النساء السود طبقتين من التمييز؛ أحدهما هو كونك أسود والآخر لكونك امرأة. ترسم والكر بدقة الشخصيات النسائية السوداء القوية بما يكفي لقيادة حياتهن. تكمن حادثة البحث في تخريب الأدوار التقليدية بين الجنسين على أساس اللون والجنس، وإعادة تحديد دور النساء من أي لون ومجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مقاومة، النسوية، القهر، التمييز، المرأة.

1. Introduction

The writings of Alice Walker's centers on the struggles of African American women. Her novel *The Color Purple* was a Pulitzer Prize-winning epistolary novel in 1993. Alice Marcinia Walker was born in Georgia, USA in 1944, and is a black feminist, a "womanist" who appreciates female culture, emotional flexibility, and strength, and is a commitment to the survival and wholeness of all mankind, including men and women. ("Alice Walker-biography", 2018). She projects a racist, sexist, and violent society. *The Color Purple* is also known as "the perfect expression of what makes Alice Walker, Alice walker" (Bradley, 1984, p. 30). Walker's female characters demonstrate strength, endurance, resourcefulness, creativity and unselfishness as they face and overcome oppression, racism, and sexuality in their lives. The novel tells the story of a fourteen-year-old black girl suffering not only from a racist white culture, but also from a patriarchal black culture. As the novel begins, Celie is a young girl living in early 20th century in Georgia. She is an uneducated girl who writes letters in common dialect. Celie was raped by her step father who killed both her children. She has nobody to write to, so she writes to God. Of course, she loves her sister Nettie, but she's too young to understand. Celie slowly grows into a confident woman. Celie has been her husband's slave for her long time. Later, her husband's mistress, Shug Avery, joins them in recovering from her illness, and Celie takes care of her. She inspires Celie to become strong and stand up for herself. Simultaneously, her daughter-in-law, Sofia, encourages Celie to fight against her prejudices and injustices. Eventually, Celie hires her husband as an assistant in her own business. African-American female characters subvert traditional gender roles and resist traditional patriarchy by creating their own worlds and ways of working.

2. Problem Statement

Alice Walker talks about black people's plight and struggle for freedom. She focuses on black women and what they did to get to their position today. They suffered not only for being black but also for being women. As a researcher I want to examine the lack of self-recognition and the lack of human rights towards black women. The main focus of research will be on the novel *The Color Purple*, mainly representing the women's forms of resistance in different parts of the world.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of this research are to achieve:

1. Women's struggle to be freed from male oppression.
2. Cruel treatment of female characters by male characters in the novel *The Color Purple*.
3. The women's resistance is described through the image of some characters in the novel *The Color Purple*.

4. Research Work

Alice Walker is perhaps best known for her novel *The Color Purple*, a well-known story about oppressed colored women. This is a story about women's struggle to resist the exploitative and oppressive chains of a male-dominated and manipulated society and to be recognized as individuals with their own identity.

In patriarchal societies, women are depreciated as emotional, irrational, weak, compassionate and submissive. In the novel, Walker rebels against this patriarchal convention and assigns men's roles to women. Thus, her characters withstand such patriarchal notions and subvert traditional gender roles. Sofia and Shug Avery play key roles in

the course. Not only do they act unconventional, but they also inspire Celie to transform from a weak female character to an aggressive one.

In the novel, Sofia is portrayed as energetic and courageous, in contrast to the other women. She doesn't accept bad comments about herself. On one occasion, Sofia's lover, Harpo, introduces Sophia to his father, Mr. __, and talk about his marriage. When Mr. sees that Sophia is pregnant, she speaks badly of her. Harpo sits still speechlessly, while Sofia talks back to the bad comments about her. She's mad at Harpo and Mr. __, she says:

What I need to marry Harpo for? He still living here with you. What food and clothes he git, you buy? Well, nice visiting. I'm going home. Harpo you stay here when you are free me and the baby be waiting. (p. 33)

Sofia is a woman who works on her own terms. She refuses interference from others. But her husband, Harpo didn't like that attitude, having grown up in a patriarchal culture that celebrated male dominance. They quarrel constantly. Harpo even tries to control her by beating her, but she fights back . Celie explains:

He try to slap her, what he do that for? She reach down and grab a piece of stove wood and whack him across the eyes. He punch her in the stomach, she double over groaning but come up with both hands lock right, under his privates. He roll on the floor. (p. 39)

On the other hand, Shug Avery transcends the boundaries of female gender roles through sexual confidence. She almost never plays the role of a woman as defined in a patriarchal society. She is neither shy nor dependent on men. She is independent and motivated. Although she is a mother, she acts like she has no one or nothing to look after her. When she is asked if she ever gets lonely when isn't with her kids, she says that she doesn't miss anything.

“My kids with they grandma, she say. You miss'em? I ain't I don't miss nothing. (p.52)

Unlike conventional women, Shug distances herself from her children. By leaving her children with her grandmother, she distances herself from her home and engages in male activities in the outside world. She is bold, courageous and energetic. She sings in Harpo's "Juke Joint." Her outfit greatly violates traditional female norms. In addition, she is a very confident woman sexually as she constantly changes lovers for sexual gratification.

5- Methodology

The present study is based completely on text reading of *The Color Purple*, which are grounded in theories of gender roles and sexuality. An analytical study of the characters, the story, and the setting of Walker's novel *The Color Purple*, demonstrating African-American women's resistance to gender hierarchies. The methodology for conducting this research is the analysis of the text from Feminism. In addition to the intensive study of the text, methodological tools also come from various theories regarding the situation of women, especially in patriarchal society. To collect relevant materials, library articles, websites, and journals are used as minor sources for discussing the concept of feminism.

6- Conclusion

Traditionally, men and women are classified by gender. But in *The Color Purple*, Walker represents a character who is completely disconnected from traditional gender roles, whether male or female. Walker's female characters transcend traditional patriarchal beliefs. The female bond in her novel is so strong that you don't have to worry about losing something important to strengthen the knot of femininity. Walker gives the black female characters in her novel the ability to sew, which ultimately becomes a means of being independent. Sewing in the novel symbolizes the power women gain from channeling their creative energies through productivity. Women's encouragement and bonding are means of challenging traditional gender roles. Traditionally, women have been defined by patriarchal societies. In the novel, Celie, with Shug's assistance, redefines God. This reinterpretation of God symbolizes Celie's evolution from a weak character to an independent woman, in contrast to traditional patriarchal beliefs. It also shows her ability to stand alone. By the end of the novel, male characters are under female leadership. They also go far beyond traditional gender roles. By doing so, Walker proved that the traditional concept of gender roles is artificial. It does not have any meaning and therefore it is unreal.

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