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The Effect of The Author's Gender on The Representation of Racism in Alice Walker's "The Color Purple"

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Dedication

For the memory of my dear uncle

"Abdelkarim"

May Allah have mercy upon his blessed soul

"Our eyes cannot see you, but our hearts never stop loving you"

I would like to dedicate my modest work

To my tender hearts, to the candles who enlighten my life with their love and guidance

My dearest mother Djema and father Nacer

To all my lovely sisters and brothers

For the little rose of my heart "Fella"

Without forgetting my dears grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles, and all my relatives for their assistance, support and love

Last but not least, to my dear friends

Thanks going to Allah for your being part of my life

Asma.
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Abstract
General Introduction
General introduction

The black society has changed, new interests were brought to the Blacks different from older ones. A great change has been noticeable and crystal clear in black American literature. During the period that preceded the civil war, the black writers focus on the issue of slavery: accommodation, protest, and escape in the form of what is called slave narratives. Then, with the end of the civil war exactly at the turn of the twentieth century, many great writers like Richard Wright(1908-1960), Gwendolyn Brooks(1917-2000), and Ralph Ellison(1914-1994) change the focus to another direction. They instead dealt with issues of social segregation, the lacked equality between Blacks and Whites, identity, religion, racism, etc.

African American authors never store any efforts in portraying their lives and the life within their society in general. They fight to transmit and defend their issues in the world forums and the different human organization in a peaceful way. They were calling for equal rights among the different races, trying to break down the border lines that were drawn in early times and divide people under the prejudice of racism. This concept is considered as non-human, thus it must be defeated since nobody has the ability to choose the race in which he belongs. These new issues contributed in the promotion of African American literature.

Black men in multi-races societies suffer the harmful effects and sufferings of racism as a result of being blacks in a society its members believe in Whites superiority among the different races. For Black women, Whites are not the only threat. Males both Blacks and Whites constitute another threat as a result of gender discrimination. This problem occurred since early ages as Aristotle said: "The female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities." Another important philosopher said that woman is "an imperfect man." These definitions that given to woman in particular and females in general contributed in the marginalization of women on favor of men. Black American women writings tackled these issues extensively hoping to find solutions for their problems. While Black men suffer the oppression of White folks, black women suffer the double discrimination and oppression as a result of being black in American society dominated by Whites on one hand and being women in a patriarchy black community on the other hand.

In her most acclaimed novel entitled "The Color Purple" (Hence for the CP) written in 1982 and won the Pulitzer Prize in the same year, the black American novelist Alice Walker focused on Black women's double discrimination. The novel takes the form of letters (90 letters) in which she tells the story of Celie, a young woman who is sexually abused by her step father and
then forced to marry a man who physically abuses her. Women in black society as they are portrayed in Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" have a long-term deal in fighting with males. The story also deals with other issues and shows scenes of Black women's sufferings such as: White folks' racism, classicism, sexism, etc.

The theme of racism is widely dealt with in literary works especially the ones written by African American writers. The recent study is designed to investigate the same theme; although, it differs in terms of its focus. It aims to study racism as it is tackled in Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" and its relation with sexism as well.

Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" portrays different characters' lives males and females. These characters belong to two main races white and black living in the American society. Women of different races and from different places in the world were oppressed by men. Sexism is the only choice for Black men to overcome their loss of manhood. This tragedy came as a result to the power of racism. Beverly Guy- SHEFTALL a women's studies pioneer stated that the relation between race and sex was always present. Alice Walker and other black feminists focus in their writings on developing a theory which address the simultaneity of racism and sexism in their lives. They insisted on the fact that both racism and sexism must be confronted at the same time, since they perpetuate each other.

The motive behind conducting this study is the story itself and its characters. Most of Walkers' characters are oppressed. This oppression is the result of either their gender or race or both. Racism and sexism are two ways of oppression, the first privileged whites and the second privileged males. The great victim within this equation are Black women since they are neither Whites nor males.

The present study intends to answer the following questions:
To what extent does the gender of the author – being female- affect her way of representing racism in "The Color Purple".

Under this question we have two sub-questions:
1-What are the elements of racism and sexism in "The Color Purple"?
2-What is the relationship between racism and sexism in "The Color Purple"?

These research questions are going to be answered on the basis of the following formulated hypotheses:
1-The gender of the author affects her way of representing racism in "The Color Purple".

2-Black women in "The Color Purple" encounter double discrimination in the society.

3-There is an interlocking relationship between racism and sexism in "The Color Purple".

The recent study intends to opt for the black feminist approach or what Walker prefers to call "womanism" instead. Unlike feminism that focuses on women equality issues, womanism addresses many issues concerned women of color in general and Black women in particular. Racism and sexism are among the crucial issues of womanism. While Alice Walker's characters males and females suffer racism and its effects in their societies. Females in particular suffer double repression of whites' racism and males' sexism. This approach was found with the aim of addressing the ways racism, sexism, and other issues influence the lives of Black women. Black women's needs were ignored by the Black men and White women. They suffer in the lower part of society's hierarchy. Thus the recent study plans to study racism and sexism through the use of different elements that Walker includes in her novel such as characters, setting, themes.

This paper consists of two chapters. The opening chapter detects some stages concerning the development African American literature and the famous movements emerged in the twentieth century. As far as our study is concerned with gender, we are going to speak about Feminism and its main approaches. We intend also to see how Black women react to Feminism and what makes them thinking about generating their own theory which they called black feminism. Alice Walker's life and her theory of womanism which comes as an alternative or to fill the gaps that Walker sees in the black feminist theory will also take a part within the first chapter. Concerning the second chapter It will be a practical one through reviewing Alice Walker's master piece "The Color Purple" in terms of its plot summary, characters, setting, etc. Then, departing from this review we planned to extract the different elements of both racism and sexism in "The Color Purple" and see how the writer portrays them and how they are related to each other.
Chapter One

African American Women's Literature and The Emergence of a Theory
Introduction: 

1. Early African American women's literature

2. Literary movements of the twentieth century America
   2.1. The Harlem Renaissance
   2.2. The Black Arts Movement

3. Feminism
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Introduction

African American literature achieved great celebrity during the twentieth century among other literatures of minorities. What makes a such achievement are the writers themselves and their choice of topics. Black women writers in particular have their great contributions in this accomplishment. There is an agreement that any literature is affected by and has its effect on the society where it is written. This is an important feature of black literature in general and black women's literature in particular. Political and social issues are brought to works of literature.

As far as our study is concerned with gender particularly feminine gender, the focus during this theoretical chapter will be on black women's literature rather than men's one. In this first chapter we intend to trace back the early beginning of this genre and its development during the twentieth century America. Feminism, its main approaches, and its relation to the term gender are also subjects of discussion in this chapter. Besides the black women's reaction to the former. Finally, Alice Walker's womanism and its main issues of concern as an alternative to feminism and black feminism will be tackled at the last part of the first chapter.

1. Early African American women's literature

African American literature was defined in The Norton Anthology of African American Literature as "an imaginative writing in English by persons of African descent in the United States"(Gates and McKay; 1997,p.XXXVI). Its origins as Dickson Bruce said involve "a process in which black and white writers collaborated in the creation of ...an African American literary presence in the United States"(Graham & Ward; 2011,p. 03).Thus, in addition to the black writers many include the white writers, writing about the black characters with understanding of the black experience (Gibson; 2012).

The mid-eighteenth century northern mainland colonies witnessed the emergence of the earliest productions of African American literature. Lucy Terry (1730) is considered as the first known writer of African descent in the United States. Her poem "Bars Fight" was written in 1746, did not appear in print until 1893. Its greatness as many critics agree lies in what it says
about its writer and about its literary creation rather than its poetic virtues (Bruce & Dickson; 2001).

Phyllis Wheatley (1753-1784) with her first published writing, the poem "On Messrs, Hussy and Coffin" that appeared on 21 December 1767 in the Newport Mercury has been subscribed as the author of the first published book by an African American. In her writings, she challenged the Enlightenments' notions of Africa as a sort of human zero (Lauter;2010). In her poetry such as "To the Right Honorable William Earl of Dartmouth" she suggests that she understands the natural law metaphors of tyranny and slavery used by the colonists in their struggle with English crown precisely because of her slave status, race, and continent of origin, not inspired of them(Ibid,p.564).

2. The literary movements of the twentieth century America

Politics has great relationship with art. As a result of twentieth century political circumstances such as the civil rights movement in 1950 which emerged to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and to secure their rights as American citizens. The movement was characterized by non-violence, civil disobedience, Christian love, and moral suasion (Gates & McKay;1997). By 1960's and with the assassination of many leaders such as John F. Kennedy in 1963. Malcolm X in 1965 and Martin Luther King in 1968 the movement turns into Black Power Movement. These movements had their great effects in art in general and literature in particular.

2.1 The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance or what white Americans had referred to "The New Negro Renaissance " is the term used most often to identify the cultural awakening of which these artists – black American artists – were part.

Williams (2011) defines The Harlem Renaissance as the following:

The Harlem Renaissance – also known as the New Negro Movement – was a cultural phenomenon that arose from
specific historical and political events culminating in the 
self-definition and further development of African 
American throughout literature, music, theatre. The Harlem 
Renaissance was not limited to Harlem, New York, but 
much of the demonstrable out growth from the movement 
was found there.

(105)

According to many scholars, the beginning of the movement traced back to 1903 when Du 
Bois' "Souls of the Black Folk" was published. During the movement art, music, literature, and 
politics also thrived in cities like Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and Washington, DC, Thus, 
New York's Harlem the national cultural capital, became the cultural capital of African-
Americans during 1920's (Mitchell & Taylor; 2009).

Although the word renaissance in Webster's New Dictionary was defined as "rebirth" or 
"revival", some historians and critics believe that what took place during the Harlem Renaissance 
years was not a rebirth as such, but only another stage in the evolution of American and African 
American art that had begun with the inception of Africans presence in America (Ibid).

The Harlem Renaissance was not restricted to men as Cheryl A. Wall (1995) argues that 
"The Harlem Renaissance was not a male phenomenon. A substantial number literary women 
played significant roles" (Mitchell & Taylor; 2009, p. 230). In addition to the major and minor male 
artistic, visual, critical, and literary voices of the Harlem Renaissance such as: W. E. B. Du Bois, 
Languston Hughes, Alain Locke, Marcus Garvey, James Weldon, Johnson and others. There 
were a number of female figures who could leave their golden touch within this movement. 
Among the female writers in particular we can mention some of the better-known writers such as 
Hurston, Fauset, and Larsen. There are also a host lesser-known poets, Marta Bonner, Alice 
Dunbar-Nelson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Anne Spencer. Besides a few women who published 
in extant journals and magazines. All of these women and others had their great and specific 
contributions as members of the movement.
2.2. The Black Arts Movement

The Black arts movement is placed in the time period from 1965 through 1976. Its starting point was generally referred to the assassination of Malcolm X on 21st February 1965 (Labish). Malcolm X was fierce, proud, and unafraid to name the wrongs done to blacks by white America. He called for black people to defend themselves against racial tyranny while speaking directly to blacks (Williams, 2011). According to Ya Salaam its formal beginning traces back when Amiri Baraka the most important figure for the movement moved from Manhattan's lower Eastside uptown to Harlem, founded the Black Arts Theater which was a key institution of the movement (cited in Labish). The movement launched as a reaction to political ongoing, working as an identification point for the African American citizens in the United States. It is considered as the artistic branch of the Black Power Movement as Larry Neal (quoted in Abrams:1999) States: "The Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America" and "to the Afro-American desire for self-determination and nationhood" (p.24).

Artists of the movement reject the idea of black art dependent, instead they focus on building an art that divorced itself from European models and embraced an Afrocentric aesthetic (Walters, 2007). Larry Neal, for example proposed that Black artists should "reject white ideas and white ways of looking at the world" and create "a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology" (Ibid). The artists not only believed necessary to acknowledge the spiritual and cultural needs of the black community but also saw it their responsibility to respond to those needs through their art (Williams, 2011).

The movement inspired poets who received inspiration from it and from Amiri Baraka. Poets such as Evans (1927), Sonia Sanchez (1934), Nikki Giovanni (1943), Don L. Lee, Haki R. Madhubuti (1942), and David Nelson(1944) have rejected the white American dream 'The white man's heaven is the black man's hell' (Gray, 2004). Black women and authors in particular proved that the female presence was vital to the movement's artistic and political endeavors (Bosswell & Rollyson; 2002). They wrote about incest, rape, insanity, and Black male abuse of Black Women. Thus, the movement gave them a greater publishing opportunities (Walters; 2007).
The artists of the Black Arts Movement made great achievements. One of the greatest fulfillments is that writers appreciate black cultural works. Therefore, Black culture is able to be mass-produced and marketed nowadays, with music, visual arts, and literature being open for business and whites buying African-American art (Labish). Another notable change attributed to the movement is the alternation of the use of the word 'Negro' to 'Black' in order to separate from the racism of the past. Inspired by their African culture and race, they have chosen to be identified as "Blacks" (Williams; 2011).

3. Feminism

Feminism originates in the late eighteenth century Europe and America as a reaction to women's consciousness of their oppression (Ebunoluwa; 2009). Ruth Sheila (1980) emphasizes that feminism may be "a perspective, a world-view, a political theory or a kind of activism." (quoted in ibid, p. 228).

There are many attempts to define the former "feminism". The following are some of them (quoted in ibid, p.227). Barrow and Millburn (1990) define it as "a label for a commitment or movement to achieve equality for women". J.A. Cuddon (1991) regards feminism as "an attempt to describe and interpret(reinterpret) women's experiences as depicted in various kinds of literature". Maggie Humm (1992) defines it from a sociological perspective. She says "the word feminism can stand for a belief in sexual equality combined with a commitment to transform society." Those definitions agree on the point that feminism revolves around the female experience rather than the male one. It discusses the superiority and centrality of men in favor of women and aims to fight and break this superiority (Mojica; 2011).

3.1. Feminism and gender

Gender is a key term within Feminism. Thus we are in need to understand what is meant by the former gender and its distinction from sex. While sex is the biological, physical, and genetic differences that distinguish males from females. Gender differences, those that society associates with men and women, have no necessary biological difference instead gender roles are set by convention and other social, economic, political, and cultural forces (Andrews & Foster &
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African American Women's Literature and The Emergence of a Theory

Harris;2001). Feminist theories claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed (Butler;1990) while sex is based in nature; gender is based in culture. According to Eagleton (1991) feminists stress the distinction between 'sex', a matter of biology and 'gender', the social construction of our concepts of masculinity and femininity (227)

Feminism highlights various forms of oppression which the female gender is subjected to in the society. Followers of the mainstream view that male domination is found in virtually all important aspects of life. Collins (2001) speaks about three major areas within the feminist agenda.

First, the economic status of women and issues associated with women's global poverty, such as educational opportunities, industrial development, environmental racism, employment policies, prostitution, and inheritance laws concerning property, constitute a fundamental women's issue.

Second, political rights for assembly, travelling in public, office holding, the rights of political prisoners, and basic human rights violations against women such as rape and torture constitute a second area of concern.

Third, marital and family issues such as marriage and divorce laws, child custody policies and domestic labor. Women's health and survival issues, such as reproductive rights, pregnancy and sexuality.

Feminists therefore seek to remove all the barriers to equal social, political and economic opportunities and object the notion of women's inferiority as a result of their gender. Thus, feminist scholarship is aimed at 'deconstructing' the established predominant male paradigms and 'constructing' a female perspective which foregrounds the female experience (E bunoluwa;2009). Approaches to feminism emerged. The following are the main ones.

3.1.1.Liberal Feminism

Eagleton (1991) defines it as "a reformist position, working within existing political structures to secure equal rights and equality of opportunity for women" (p.228). It emerged in
the late eighteenth and nineteenth century with the rise of liberal voices that conducted the empowering process of previously excluded people who Western women were a part of. They suffered the lack of a complete political rights since they have not given the right to participate in government. Liberals argued that all citizen should participate in government and that all should be treated equally under the law (Malpas & Wake: 2006, p.91).

Liberal feminist theory is developed out of liberal political philosophy with the argument that gender justice can be achieved through legal and political avenues of the mainstream. Betty Friedian a liberal feminist argued that women should seek full political and legal equality and that would remove their inferior status in society. Thus the liberal feminist approach was built on the idea that the inferiority of women is solely a function of their political and legal status (Ibid 92).

3.1.2. Marxist/Socialist feminism

Women were granted the franchise by the first decades of the 20th century, but their hopes to achieve equality have gone and their political, legal, economic, and social inferior position resumed.

Marx's theories, power resides with those who control the means of economic production; consequently changing locus of that power will change the structure of society, were used by a number of feminists to formulate Marxist/Socialist feminism. While liberalism locates power in the government, Marxism locates it in economy.

Marxist/Socialist feminists focus on the overhauling of capitalism and patriarchy as systems inherently exploitative. Engels argued that capitalism was not the solely oppressor for women, patriarchy constitute another form of oppression. This phenomenon is what Juliet Mitchell refers to dual –systems theory. Liberation in this case can be achieved through the attack of both patriarchy and capitalism.
3.1.3. Radical Feminism

Shulamith Firestone's "The Dialectic of Sex" 1970s was one of the first clear statements of the radical feminist position (Malpas & Wake). Radical feminists view that even if legal, economic, and political barriers to women equality were broken, women's status of being mothers keeps them in subordination. In arguing their views Firestone states "it is the fact that women bear children and are responsible for rising them that keeps women in subordinate position" (Ibid 92).

In her analysis of women Simone de Beauvoir began with saying that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". Therefore, radical feminists do not believe on or account for male\female discrimination on the basis of biological differences. It is the roles devoted to each of them that baved the way towards gender discrimination. Radical feminists focus their attention on the practices surrounding mothering, sexuality, and the definition of gender roles, believing that change will be an impossible matter at the recent time, rather in case when existed a social order based on woman-centered values and methods of organization (Eagleton; 1991).

While Liberals and Socialists calls for equality which is defined in terms of women being equal to men, radical feminists in contrary emphasize difference. They claim that women are different from men, not a negative but a positive sense. They want to positively affirm women's difference and, most importantly, to remove women's subordination without erasing their difference (Malpas & Wake).

3.2. Black women and Feminism

Under patriarchy, woman is seen as opposite to man who occupies the highest part in the society's pyramid. Feminists could overcome patriarchal policy, instead they built their dominance at the expense of women of color who were at the bottom of the social ladder. Black women and other women of color are seen as the other by white women who regard themselves as the norm and see the women of color in terms of their origin, race, ethnicity, and class. In this context Michie contends that "white feminists wanted to preserve their position of speaking subject and that they marginalized colored women because they did not fit into the prescribed
norms" (quoted in Izgarjan & Markov). Elizabeth Spelman (1988) asserted that in feminist theory using the concept 'women' necessarily privileges a certain definition of woman, in this case white heterosexual middle-class women, and defines all other women as different and hence deficient (Malpas & Wake: 2006, p. 97). Thus racism becomes part of feminism.

In their movement white women do not account for the needs and goals of colored women. In this context Liu states (quoted in Izgarjan & Markov, p. 306).

A key aspect of white women's privilege has been their ability to assume that when they talked about themselves they were talking about all women, and many white feminists have unthinkingly generalized from their own situation, ignoring the experiences of black women, or treating them as marginal and "different". Many have also projected western concerns and priorities onto the rest of the world, measuring "progress" according to western liberal standards and identifying a global system of patriarchy through which "difference are treated as local variations on a universal theme".

From its early beginning the division between white and colored women in the feminist movement was crystal clear. Its primary goal was to achieve equality and suffrage for women, but white women refused to stand side by side with women of color in their struggle for their rights. Black women were not satisfied with the movement and its goals. It was criticized for being elitist and narrow. By the nineteenth century black women founded their own movement "The Black Feminism". According to Eagleton (1991) Black Feminism explores the specificity of black women's experience, critiques the racism it finds in the work of white feminists and deconstructs our understanding of racial terminology (p. 226).

3.3. Racism, Sexism and black women

Douglas (1979) uses "white supremacy" as a synonym to "racism" and "male supremacy" to refer to "sexism". She defines the first as the belief that whites are superior to other races and
the innumerable institutions enforcing white domination, or the attitudes and actions that foster white supremacy. Sexism on the other hand is the attitudes and actions that foster male supremacy. It refers also to an ideology which assumes women's inferiority, and which legitimizes discrimination against them on the basis of their sex and feminine gender (Nain;1991,p.5).

Black women in the United States' societies constitute a minority, they are the victims of racism on one hand and sexism in the other hand. Black women are always located within the bottom part of the society's hierarchy. Unlike white women and black men who examined one type of oppression either through being blacks or females; black women are marginalized within both groups. Pointing to this issue hooks (quoted in king;1988) states "when black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women"(p.43).

Beale (1972) coined the term "double jeopardy" to describe the double discrimination of racism and sexism that subjugate black women. She wrote "As blacks they suffer all the burdens of prejudice and mistreatment that fall on anyone with dark skin. As women they bear the additional burden of having to cope with white and black men"(Ibid, p. 46). The notion of double jeopardy was originally developed to describe the experiences of African American women. Not only were Black women thought to suffer from racism at the hands of Whites, but sexism at the hands of both White and Black men (Oskamp;2000).

4. Alice Walker's theory of "Womanism"

Walker had been involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, she also became a leading member of the women's movement in the 1970's, defining a particular brand of black feminism(Doonelly:2010).

As one of the black women, Walker was not satisfied with the mainstream feminism, its concerns, and the term they use to address themselves as feminists. She thought they ignore the particular problems and experiences of women of color. In her 1983 essay collection entitled "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens", Walker proposed the term "womanist" instead of feminist to
address those problems and experiences. She also defines womanist as black feminist or feminist of color. In talking about the origin of this word Walker says(quoted in Tally,p.215).

].[ It has a strong root in Black women's culture.  
It comes (to me) from the word "womanish", a word  
Our mothers used to describe, and attempt to inhibit  
Strong outrageous or outspoken behavior when we  
Were children ]...[

Walker emphasizes on "womanism" as a part of the black women's heritage. The resemblance made by Walker between womanist, black feminist, and feminist of color validates Beverly Guy-Sheftall's opinion that Walker is feminist, her "womanism" is just a term to relate the mainstream feminism to black women(Ibid). African American women see this interchangeable use of terms as an evidence of the common features between them; both support a common agenda of black women's self-definition and self-determination. Barbara Omolade one of those women points out that both of the terms are concerned with black women's struggles against racism and sexism and their efforts to achieve equity and liberty(Collins:2001).

Walker sees an advantage in using womanist instead of feminist or black feminist. Since the word is taken from her own black culture, there is an implicit "Blackness" within the term itself. Thus, she sees no need to preface it with the word black. This is what whites felt when they adopt the term feminist without prefacing it with the word white because it is coming out of their white culture(Ibid).

Walker defines womanist in four points. Each point discusses some aspects of this term. At the same time she indirectly distinguishes between her womanism and whites' feminism. The several parts of the definition are quoted in (Tally, p. 217-219).
1: From womanish. (Opp. Of “girlish,” i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, “you acting womanish,” i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered “good” for one. Interested in grown up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: “You trying to be grown.” Responsible. In charge. Serious.

According to Collins(2001) in this first entry Walker implies that black women are somehow superior to white women through the opposite descriptions she gave to both. She freed womanish girls from the conventions long limiting white women when she describes their way of acting as "outrageous, courageous, and willful ways". She also attributes them maturity when she describes them as "responsible, in charge, and serious". Being opposite to womanist, feminist is seen by Walker as "frivolous, irresponsible, not serious" girlish. Collins(2001) regards this meaning of difference and superiority of womanism to feminism as stemming from black and white women's different histories with American racism, historical circumstances have always foster maturity and responsibility onto black girl /women at early age (Tally, p. 218)

2: Also:A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women’s strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally a universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our
cousins are white, beige and black?” Ans. “Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented.” Traditionally capable, as in: “Mama, I’m walking to Canada and I’m taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.” Reply: “It wouldn’t be the first time.”

The black feminist Katie Geneva Cannon’s (1988) sees that Walker’s womanism shows its rejection of all forms of oppression and commitment to social justice (Collins;2001). In the second entry of her definition Walker expresses non-separatist attitude three times. Womanists according to her are "commited to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female". Unlike feminism which is exclusively for women and aims to attack and eliminate men, womanism appears to provide an avenue to foster stronger relationships between black women and men as another very important issue for African American women (Ibid). She also says literally "womanist are not separatist." The third attempt of non-separatist is through the example she provided . she resembles the people of different colors to a garden in which those different colored people are flowers. According to Collins this metaphor given by Walker in which men and women of different colors coexist like flowers in a garden retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity instead of separation.


In the third entry Walker accounts for what womanists like such as music, dance, love, folk, herself, etc.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.

In her metaphorical definition” Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender” she distinctly extols womanism and sets it apart by comparing it to the strong color of purple which is often described as the royal color(Izgarjan & Markov). Lavender as paler color is also cleverly
associated with the notion that feminism is related more to white women than colored, while womanist concerns represented by the rich and undiluted color purple (Ibid).

5. Womanists' issues in literature

Womanism as an alternative theory is distinguished by its focus on the Black female experience with writings detailing racial issues, classist issues, and sexist issues (Eburnoluwa:2009). bell hooks (1998) insists that: (quoted in Ibid).

Racism abounds in the writings of white feminists; reinforcing White supremacy and negating the possibility that women Will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries. To womanist writers, racial and classist oppression are inseparable from sexist oppression. Many womanist writers even portray racial and classist oppression as having precedence over sexist oppression. This is because the Womanists believe that the emancipation of Black women Folk cannot be achieved apart from the emancipation of the Whole race [...].

The needs of black and white women are different from one another and this difference in needs is what make womanism and feminism different. Feminists on one hand are concerned with sexist oppression as a main concern while womanists recognize the triple system of racial, classist, and sexist oppression of Black women. As far as race is inseparable part from womanism, their methodology of ending female oppression differs from the feminists one. Collins (2001) states: "womanism seemingly supplies a way for a black women to address gender oppression without attacking black men" (p.11). i.e., they accept male participation in the struggle for emancipation. This is one aspect of womanists as being not separatist.

The triple system of oppression also makes womanists reorder their needs in terms of priorities. This is what Ogunyemi (2003) illustrates in her quote: "recognition of the impact of racism ... economic instability, and psychological disorientation on black lives, when
chapter one

African American women's literature and the emergence of a theory

Superimposed on the awareness of sexism that characterized black women's writing, makes concern about sexism merely one aspect of womanism" (p.72).

Alice Walker the founder of womanism says that black women are famous for their double identity, because they are the victims of racism and sexism. In describing those women she says: "oppressed almost beyond recognition-oppressed by everyone" (quoted in Shalini:2014). Besides their consciousness of sexual issues, black women writers battle also with the dehumanization resulting from racism and poverty (Ibid).

In womanists' literature the conflict between the white and black positions is concretized in Black women's antagonism toward their Whites counterparts (Ogunyemi:2003, p.70). It shows in the consistently unsympathetic portrayal of White female characters in novels by Black women writers(Ibid).

The ultimate aim of womanism is the unity of Blacks everywhere under the enlightened control of men and women, they are not limited to issues defined by their femaleness but attempt to tackle questions raised by their humanity(Ogunyemi:2003). All in all unlike feminism, womanism accounts for the centrality of family, community, and motherhood in its discourse (E bunoluwa: 2009)

Conclusion

Black women subscribed the emergence of their folk's literature in America. Wheatley is considered as the first Black American who publishes a work of literature in the United States. Affected by political and social circumstances black literature in the twentieth century America witnessed great changes. Literary works devoted to serve political and social issues this is mainly mirrored in the literature of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement.

Feminism emerged as a movement to achieve equality for women and secure their rights. Black women show dissatisfaction with the goals of the movement. It seems for them to be racist since it does not account for their experience. As a reaction Black women found their own movement in which issues of racism and sexism are taken into consideration. In her theory of "womanism" Walker coined the term "womanist" as an alternative to "Black feminist" or

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"Feminist of color". Applying her theory of womanism The second chapter will discuss issues of racism and sexism in Alice Walker's "The Color Purple".
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Racism and Sexism in "The Color Purple"
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Introduction

"The Color Purple" is an epistolary novel written in 1982 by Alice Walker. It is a story of individual and a whole community. Walker adopts a series of characters males and females, those characters are divided into two categories either as "oppressor" or "oppressed" under the two systems of racism and sexism.

Racism and sexism are two main issues opened to discussion in this novel. Thus walker adopts characters, settings, and some of relationships among these characters in order to detect those issues. This practical chapter is devoted to the investigation of racism and sexism in "The Color Purple" through extracting those elements and analyzing them. And see how they embodied the two themes. Furthermore, we are going to determine the relationship between racism and sexism as it is set by Walker.

1. The corpus

Walker has been such prominent figure in the contemporary African American literature. During her career she has written several novels. Beginning with "The Third Life of Grange George Copeland" in 1970 and ending with "Now is the Time to Open Your Heart" in 2005. Her works in general are closely related to issues of race and gender.

"The Color Purple" written in 1982 is her most acclaimed novel. It is considered as a historical and autobiographical novel. She adopts her place of birth and living rural Georgia and her continent of origin Africa as two main setting to the story. Alice Walker also includes some of the characters and events from her family life. Celie her protagonist is seen as the model of her great grandmother; a slave raped by her own owner at the age of twelve. Also Walker's grandfather, Henry Clay Walker, was in many ways the model for Mr.____ who had a lifetime passion for a singer named Shug (Donnelly:2010).

Our choice of this corpus rather than others is because she has revealed "womanist" features through it. The issues of racism and sexism that concern our study are discussed together within the novel in addition to other issues.
1.1. Plot summary

Celie is a fourteen years old girl living in rural Georgia. She is uneducated and ugly girl offended by her father Alphonso who beats, raped her, and stole her two babies a boy and a girl and sold them. The ill Celie's mother died, Alphonso remarried a girl of fifteen but his abuse to Celie continued. He threatens her not to tell anyone, thus she resolves to write letters to God in which she asks for His explanation and help. Mr.____a widower with four children, his wife was shot by her lover, wants to marry Celie's pretty younger sister Nettie but Alphonso refuses and offers him Celie instead. After a period of thinking and hesitation he marries Celie and takes her to his home. Celie's sufferings resumed with her new life as a result of Mr.____and his son's bad treatment. Running away from Alphonso, Nettie takes refuge in Celie's house. Mr.____desire towards Nettie leads her to leave the house again. Celie never hear any news about her sister makes her assumes her death.

Mr.____elder son Harpo falls in love with a strong spunky girl named Sofía. Their marriage is objected by both his and her father who ashamed Harpo's mother death. Despite their objection Sofía becomes pregnant and the two got married. The blues singer and Mr.____'s lover Shug Avery comes to the town, but Celie does not get the opportunity to see her. Shug falls ill and Mr.____takes her to his home and asks Celie to take care of her. At the beginning Shug treats Celie in a rude way and by the time they become friends much more lovers. Harpo's attempt to subordinate Sofía makes her moves out and takes her children with her. He later opens a juke joint where Shug sings nightly. He meets Squeak and become friends.

In town the mayor's wife Miss Millie admired the way Sofía's children are dressed and cleaned, she asks her to be her maid. Sofía rejects and answers with a sassy "Hell no", then she enters in a fight with the mayor who slaps her, in return she knocks him down. Sofía sent to jail, then she sentenced to work as a maid in the mayor's house for twelve years.

Shug and Celie discover that Mr.____hides dozens of Nettie's letters in his trunk. While reading the letters Celie knows her sister still alive. Nettie informs Celie that she travelled with Samuel, Corrine, and their children Olivia and Adam to Africa in a missionary work. Samuel tells his story to Nettie, she realizes that Olivia and Adam are Celie's children and Alphonso is not their real father. This is what Alphonso confirms to Celie later.

Samuel's wife Corrine dies. Celie, Shug, and Squeak move to Tennessee where she starts her business of making pants. In her visit to Georgia Celie finds many changes. Her step-father
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Alphonso has died and now she and her sister own the house and the land. Nettie and Samuel marry and Adam also marries Olivia's Olinka friend Tashi. Mr.____also change and becomes friends with Celie. Sofia remarries Harpo and starts working with Celie in her clothing store. At the end Nettie, Samuel, Olivia, and Adam reunited with Celie.

1.2. Characters

"The Color Purple" is the story of both individual and a whole community at the mean time. Walker makes a collection of lively and interesting characters mixed of males and females. These characters serve in the revelation of different themes and reflect certain issues within their society.

**Celia**: the protagonist of the story. A black girl from rural Georgia. Her letters to God and her sister Nettie make up the big part of the book. At the beginning of the story Celia was a fourteen years old girl. She was described as dumb, useless, and ugly by her father. She encounters different types of abuse; her stepfather raped her and sold her two children. She got married with Mr.____who is cruel man. Celia falls in love with Shug Avery who teaches her how to love herself. She started her own clothing company after moving to Memphis with Shug.

**Nettie**: Celia's younger sister who in contrary to Celia was described as bright, attractive, and strong. Her letters to Celia reflect her high level of education. She leaves her home and moves to live with Celia and her husband, but later on she escapes and moves with the minister's family in a missionary to Africa. She marries Samuel after his wife's death. At the end of the novel she returns with her husband and her sister's adult children.

**Fonso**: Celia and Nettie's step father, shortly after their father is killed, he marries their widowed mother. He raped Celia and sold her babies to Samuel and Corrine. Celia and Nettie did not know that he is not their real father antil when Nettie was in Africa with the minister's family. He dies nearly at the end of the story.

**Mr.____**: a widower with four children, Celia's husband, and Shug's lover. His first wife was shot by her lover and died. He wants to marry Nettie, but Fonso refuses and gives him Celia instead. He beats her and treated her as slave. When he grows older and lost he people around him he discovers the importance of kindness. At the end of the novel he and Celie became friends.

**Shug Avery**: is a blues singer known as "Queen Bee". She become Celia's admirer before she met. In their first meeting Shug was very ill and Celie helped her to recover. Celie and Shug
become lovers. Shug married Grady, then separates from him. She takes up with a much younger man named Germaine.

**Harpo:** Mr. ___eldest son. His mother died in his arms. He was raised by Celie. Unlike the other male characters in the novel, Harpo is reported as weak and independent. He got married with Sofia after leaving him, he made a relation with another girl named Squeak. At the end of the novel he made a good relationship with his father and reunited with Sofia.

**Sofia:** Harpo's first wife, she is a strong woman. Her father objects their marriage because of his mother's shameful death. Sofia refused to be the mayor's wife maid and strikes the mayor. She serves in the mayor's house for almost twelve years.

**The mayor's family:** a white family represent the racist whites in the novel. The family members treat Sofia aggressively except the daughter Eleanor Jane who shows sympathy with her.

**Squeack:** Mary Agon, Harpo's girlfriend. She is mixed-race woman. In attempt to help free Sofia she was raped by her uncle. She helps Harpo raise his children while Sofia in prison. She becomes a singer and makes a relationship with Shug's husband Grady.

**Samuel and Corrine:** the missionary and his wife who adopt Celie's children Olivia and Adam, and take Nettie with them to Africa. Samuel and Nettie got married after Corrine's death.

**Olivia and Adam:** Celie and Fonso's two children. Fonso takes them when they are babies and sold them to Samuel and Corrine.

**Tashi:** an Olinka woman, Olivia's friend with whom Adams falls in love.

We have also other characters such as; Shug's husband Grady, Mr. ___ex-wife Annie Julia, Mr. ___sisters Kate and Carrie, Sofia's sister Odessa and her husband Jack, Squeak's uncle Bubber Hodges, Harpo's daughters Suzie and Henrietta, and others.

**1.3. The setting**

"The Color Purple" takes place in rural Georgia. It takes a long period of time, about forty years, portraying the life of Celie from a girl of fourteen years old when she was an adolescent to womanhood. The story starts when people were riding wagons, by the end of the story people are riding cars.
1.4. Form and style:

Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" breaks the familiar narrative's arrangement and organization of chapters that most of the novelists uses in their writings." The Color Purple" was written in an epistolary form; a novel in the form of letters (Cudden;1977,p.279). This form was known in English language literature from early ages, but" The Color Purple" was considered as an unusual epistolary novel since this kind of novels is often involve an exchange between two or more people. In Walker's novel the recipients are either supernatural, God, so will not answer the letters written to Him, or presumed by the writer not to receive the letters sent. Those letters are organized as the following: Celie to God, Nettie to Celie, Celie to Nettie. Celie the innocent abused fourteen years girl decided to write to God from the beginning of the novel. Celie wrote to God "I am fourteen years old. I am I have always been a good girl. May be you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me"(CP,p.1). Through her letters to God Celie wants to complaint at the meantime to know why all of this is happening to her and she is only fourteen.

The style of the novel is also a point of difference. The novel was written in what Walker has called folk language, contains a strong and sustained sense of naturalness throughout (Rose;1986,p.7). Celie's letters either to God or her sister Nettie are not written in standard English. Celie's letters are told mostly in her rural Georgia dialect. In her writings to God that she considered as her friend Who she trusts, we notice the use of words "titties", "pussy", and "his thing" without any feeling of embarrassment. The dialect differs in level between letters. Thus we can notice that the letters written by Nettie are more advanced since Nettie is more educated than her sister.

1.5. The epistolary novel and focalization

Focalization or what is also called the point of view is defined as the choice of perspective from which the story is told. The French narratologist Gerard Genette (1972) made his own classification of focalization. The epistolary novels are included within" the internal focalization" which Genette defines as "the focalization that comes from one fixed character or variable or multiple characters: they only know what they are able to know as characters"(Kheven;2009,p.288). In this type of focalization the person who sees, the focal character, and the person who speaks, the narrator, merge into one person (Ibid). Thus in Celie's letters both to God and her sister Nettie, and Nettie's letters to Celie there is an internal focalization.
1.6. Review of the novel

Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "The Color Purple" gains popularity and received so much international attention. The novel gains the appreciation and criticism of many male and female writers, critics, journalists, etc.

Mel Wet Kins appreciates both the narrative style of the epistolary novel and the use of folk dialect. In the New York times, he called Walker "A lavishly gifted writer". In Newsweek Peter Prescott also praises her, he called the book of "permanent importance". Rita Mae Brown a novelist found the book more personal. She states" when you close the book you will be left with your own heart beat . . . It is a work to stand beside literature from any time and place. It needs no category other the fact that it is superb" (quoted in Doonelley;2010,p.98).

In addition to those praises and appreciations, the novel received criticisms from both males and females who were offended by the monstrous black masculinity. They suggest that the novel provides a negative portrait of black male sexuality. Walker herself in her autobiography wrote that many critics accused her of hating black men and attacking the black family(Kheven;2009). The African American author Ishamael REED criticized her portrait of male characters. He believed her depiction of them was biased, sexist, and demanding(Boswell & Rollyson;2002). Few female critics criticize Walker for not revealing an accurate picture of African American life. They were not satisfied by her definition of women identity in relationship to sexual experiences(Andrews & Foster & Harris;2001). Mr. Reed, and David Bradley agreed that her writings were troubling they suggested that she had "a high enmity toward black men"(kheven;2009,p.26).

2. The elements of racism

When she sets the origin of the term "womanist" as being driven from the black culture, Walker adds an advantageous feature to "womanists". She appreciates them for "not being separatist", this feature to "womanist" is in the contrary neglected in the choice of white women who lead their movement to call themselves as "feminists" in which they separate themselves from Black women and other women of color. Walker also neglects the term" Black feminist" since she defines "womanist" as having a set of instinctive women's values. Those values are not restricted to Black women. Thus we can say that "womanist" encompasses "feminist". However womanists are not separatist, but they are not safe from Whites' racism either males of females. In her novel Walker deals with the issue of racism. It seems that racism cannot be separated from
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Black writers' works. Racism in "The Color Purple" is addressed as a secondary issue. Walker's choice of some elements within the novel such as characters, setting, themes, etc helps to reveal this theme.

2.1. Characters

Walker's choice of characters helps in reflecting racism within the society. She creates a set of characters of both races whites and blacks. White characters like the mayor's family, the polices, the white merchants, and the clerk stand in a position from where they can oppress Black folks.

The mayor's family

Is consisted of four members, three of them we can take as an example of white racists. The mayor, his wife, and his son treat Blacks in a racist way.

Miss Millie

The mayor's wife asks Sofia to be her maid when she says:

to Sofia. All your children so clean, she say would You like to work for me, be my maid?"

(CP,p.53)

The request of Miss Millie seems to be an order more than a request. She assumes she is doing Sofia a favor since in all Whites' opinion it is an honorable matter for a Black woman to be a White woman's maid. In the contrary Sofia regards it to be a shortage in her honor. So the request itself is an indication of racism. A racism of White women toward Black women.

Some of Miss Millie's ways of treating either Sofia or other black characters remind us with the "Jim Crow Laws" of the nineteenth century America. Those laws are designed to keep Blacks and Whites separated in civic, social, and economic life(Donnelly:2010). In one of Nettie's letters to Celie she mentions:
"The mayor's wife was shopping – going in and out of the stores- and her maid was waiting for her on the street and taking the packages "

(CP,p.74)

While she is shopping; her maid Sofia is waiting for her outside the stores. This is one of the Whites' attempt to keep Blacks away from them. Blacks are not allowed to join Whites inside the stores while shopping. The same intention from the same character occurs in the novel, but in a different position.

"She say, have you seen a white person and a colored
Sitting side by side in a car, when one of ’em wasn't
Showing the other one how to drive it or clean it?"

(CP,p.61)

Miss Millie in this scene refuses to sit side by side with Sofia because she is white and Sofia is colored so they must be separated. She also refuses to be alone with Jack because he is Black man. It is a kind of racism of white women to black men.

"...Oh, she say, I couldn't ride in a pick –up with a strange Colored man."

(CP,p.62)

**The mayor**

The mayor reacts to Sofia's objection to be his wife's maid in a cruel and severe way. He uses the force with her

"Mayor look at Sofia, push his wife out of the way.
Stick out his chest. Girl, what you say to Miss Millie? He slaps her."

(CP,p.53)

Sofia expresses her right for not wanting to be a white woman's maid. Her objection does not satisfy the mayor who thinks that Blacks have no right to reject Whites' requests. His reaction indicates also that Miss Millie's request is in fact an order which comes in the form of request. It is a way of racism from White men to Black women.
The mayor's son

However he is only six years old child, the mayor's son shows great hate and lack of respect to Sofia who is a young married woman.

"Throw me the ball, say the little boy, with his hands
On his hip. Throw me the ball Don't you hear me
talking to you, he shout."

(CP,p.60)

The racism between White children and Blacks indicates that it can be transmitted through generations. The child here is still innocent, what he is doing is imitating his parents' way of treating Blacks. It is the racism between two generations of Whites and Blacks.

The polices

Polices as they portrayed in "The Color Purple" represent a symbol of injustice, unfair, and illegal violence. Not all citizens are treated in the same way by police but only Black people suffer their segregation

"The polices come, start stinging the children off the
Mayor, bang they heads together. Sofia really start
To fight. They drag her to the ground."

(CP,p.53)

Either Black men or Black women even children are oppressed by Polices. The Polices system in "The Color Purple" is found for Blacks' oppression.

"Polices have they guns on him any way. One move,
He dead. Six of them, you know."

(CP,p.53)

In prison also Sofia was not safe from violence and segregation.

"They crack her skull, they crack her ribes. They tear
Her nose loose on one side. They blind her in one eye.
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She swolled from head to foot. Her tongue the size of
My arm, it stick out between her teeth like a piece of
rubber. She can't talk. And she just about the color of a
eggplant."

(CP, p.53-54)

In these extracts there are obvious examples of racism. This racism occurs in the
authorial system itself. While this system is founded to safe some citizens' rights, it excluded the
rights of others at the meantime. It treats them as aliens or different species instead of human
beings. Within this authorial system Blacks, men, women, and children as well are example of
oppressed and excluded citizens. It is an authorial racism toward Blacks.

The white merchants

The white merchants feels jealous and angry with Celie's father's business success and
progress. They accuse him of destroying their business by stealing their customers Whites and
Blacks. They have also decide to use the force in order to stop him.

And so, one night, the man's store was burned down,
his smithy destroyed, and the man and his two brothers
dragged out of their homes in the middle of the night and
hanged.

(CP, p.90)

The Black man's business is destroyed. He and his two brothers are murdered for no
reason only because they are successful Blacks. Blacks in all fields are not allowed to make
success even if they do they are not allowed to compete with Whites. If they dare they will be
punished in a severe way. It is White men's racism toward Black men.

The clerk

Unlike all clerks who are supposed to be polite and respectful in order to attract the
customers, the clerk in the store shows no respect to neither Corrine nor Celie since they are
Blacks. Although they are both women he dares to call them "girl" and "gal".

He say, girl you want that cloth or not? we got other
customers sides you.

( CP, p.17)

He adds addressing Celie

He look at me. You want something gal?

( CP, p.17)

He also exceeds his role when he obliges the Black customers to buy things which they do not need only to get benefits.

He say, you need thread?
She say, Naw suh. He say, you can't sew thout thread.
He pick up a spool And hold it against the cloth. That look like it bout the right color.

( CP, p.17)

The clerk's way of dealing with Black customers and the words he uses to address them are indicators for the feeling of racism he has toward them. It is a White men's racism toward Black women.

2.2. The setting

In "The Color Purple" the description of some settings and scenes such as the prison and the train reveals notions of racism and segregation toward blacks.

The prison

The scene in the prison as Sofia describes reveals the great sufferings of the Blacks behind bars. While we do not expect prisons to be good and comfortable places, but Sofia does not make a sin in order to be treated more worse than animals.

Everything is nasty here, she say, even the air. Food bad enough to kill you with it. Roaches here, mice, flies, lice
and even a snake or two. If you say anything they strip 
you, make you sleep on a cement floor without a light. 

(CP, p. 55)

This scene shows an example of racism. This racism is preached by the authority. The 
prisons are built by the authority and the laws of punishment which is applied within it is also its 
design. However Sofia was only defending her right; her blackness increases the degree of her 
punishment.

The train

In one of Nettie's letters to her sister Celie she describes the train they takes in order to go 
to New York. Her description takes us back again to the nineteenth century America. It draws 
back the notion of "Jim Crow Laws" that aims to separate blacks and whites.

What can I tell you about New York - or even the train 
That took us there! We had to ride in the sit-down section 
Of the train, but Celie, there are beds on trains! And a 
Restaurant! And toilets! Beds come down out of the walls 
Over the tops of the seats, and are called berths. Only 
White people can ride in the beds and use the restaurant. 
And they have different toilets from colored.

(CP, p. 75)

In this example there is a kind of racism which is applied by the authority toward colored 
people. The train which is a means of transport is designed to support the separation between 
white and colored people. This separation in itself makes the supremacy of Whites over Colored 
people.

2.3. Themes

Slavery

While she is speaking to her son and complaining about the bad treatment she receives 
from the mayor's family members, Sofia considers herself as a slave. They do not appreciate 
what she does for them.

I'm at they beck and call all night and all day. They won't
let me see my children. They won't let me see no mens.  
Well, after five years they let me see you once a year. I'm 
a slave, she say.  

(CP.p.61)

Sofia's feeling as being slave comes from her lack of freedom. She cannot even see her children only once in five years. Slavery in fact ends with the abolition of slavery, but whites do not end their bad treatment to Blacks as slaves. Whites are always looking for ways to keep Blacks inferiority through oppressing them in different ways.

In addition to Sofia's feeling of slavery, the story of Celie's two babies who are taken by Alphonso and sold to Samual and Corrine also simulated the salvation of slaves in earlier times(Rose:1986).

**God**

At the beginning Celie writes letters to God asking for His help. Celie draws a picture of God in her mind. She thinks about him as:

He big and old and tall and grey bearded and white.  
He Wear white robes and go barefooted.  

(CP.p.97)

As Celie grows up, her sufferings continued, and she received no answers or explanation from Him. In addition she sees how Whites treat and oppress Blacks, she contradicts her definition of God.

When I found I thought God was white, and a man, I lost interest. You mad cause he don't seem to listen to your prayers. Humph! Do the mayor listen to anything colored say?  

(CP, p. 98)

She adds:

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I know white people never listened to colored, period. If they do, they only listen long enough to be able to tell You what to do.

(CP.p.98)

Celie's loss of faith in God is derived from her wrong picture she draws to Him. At the beginning she sees him as white because she knows only Whites has power. By the time she lost her faith on Him because she realizes that God is like Whites even if He is powerful He does not use this power to serve Blacks.

Taxes

As a way of Whites' oppression to keep Blacks inferiority, they obliged them to bay taxes. These taxes come in different forms.

...you got to give 'em something. Either your money, your woman or your ass. So what I did was just right off offer to give 'em money.

(CP.p.93)

Black's fear of Whites' power keeps them oppressed and under their merciful hand. Black folks find no way to escape the Whites' punishment only by doing what they ask them to do.

3. The elements of sexism

Alice Walker describes womanist as (quoted in Tally,p.216)"A word that said more that they choose women over men. More than they choose to live separate from men." Alice Walker's quote indicates the difference between Walker's womanist, black feminist, and feminist. While black feminists and feminists reject men, womanists instead put them in a second phase. The men that Walker cites are both of blood relationships fathers, brothers, and sons and men who are not technically kin (Ibid) these women choose their relation to each other over their relation with men which is built on men supremacy that keeps women's inferiority. In her novel Walker tackles the issue of male supremacy in which most her female characters in this novel tend to be the victims of violence. The dominant male characters Alphonso, Mr.____ and Harpo attempt to exert their dominance over women by beating and raping them.
3.1. Sexual orientation in "The Color Purple"

The story includes several scenes of rape and sexual abuse. Rape and sexual abuse in the story occur either in the relationship between husbands and wives or between the relatives such as the father and the daughter, the uncle and his niece.

**Alphonso/Celie**

Celie's step father Alphonso raped her in order to nourish his sexual hunger. Celie's mother is sick she becomes unable to feed this desire so Alphonso finds no refuge other than the fourteen years old Celie. In her first letter to God Celie describes the scene of her rape and how the person whom she thinks to be her father treats her in inhuman way.

> He never had a kine word to say to me. Just
> say you gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.

*(CP,p.8)*

Alphonso continued his abuse to Celie. Celie wants to talk to her mother and tells her what has happened to her, but he has warned her saying:

> You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill
> your mammy

*(CP,p.7)*

The rape and abuse Celie encountered happened within her family. It comes from a man who she knows as her father. In this case Celie is the victim of incest because she is raped from a person who has a blood relationship with her.

**Squeak/the prison warder**

Squeak's white uncle Bubber Hodges is the warder of the prison where Sofia is imprisoned thus she is chosen to be the mediator between Sofia and the white warden. Squeak approaches her uncle in an attempt to get Sofia released from jail. Her uncle represent the kind of abusive men however she is his niece he thinks that it is not a sin to rape her since she is black.

> He took my hat off, say Squeak. Told me to undo my
dress. She drop her head, put her face in her hands.
My God, say Odessa, and he your uncle.

(CP,p.58)

Squeak becomes like Celie, she suffers rape from a person of her relatives. What makes the difference between the two is Celie is abused by black man while Squeak is abused by white men. Thus black women are oppressed by both black and white men.

Mr.____/Celie

In "The Color Purple" Mr.____ is another example of the abusive man. Love is a missing element in his relationship with his wife Celie. He sees her everything but not a woman. In describing their sexual intercourse Celie says:

Just do his business, get off, go to sleep

(CP,p.49)

Mr.____ sees Celie as a legal tool to feed his sexual desire no more. He does not care about her feeling as a woman. Husbands' sexual abuse of their wives is another form of male's oppression to keep their supremacy over women.

3.2. Physical violence

Sexual abuse is only one way for Mr.____ to keep male supremacy and female inferiority. In addition Mr.____ suggests physical violence as another solution for men in order to support their power over women. His advice to his son is:

Wives is like children. You have to let 'em know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating.

(CP,p.29)

Women in "The Color Purple" have a long deal in fighting with men. Sofia for example has to fight her family which most of its members are men. Untill the last moments of her bachelorhood she has to fight her father who refuses her marriage. In her complaining to Celie, Sofia says:
Chapter two  

Racism and Sexism in "The Color Purple"

All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my cousins and my uncles. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men.

(CP,p.31)

With her marriage Sofia thinks that her fight against men achieved its end thus her sufferings on the hands of males go with it. She and her husband love each other. Both of them fight their fathers in order to be together. By the time and with his father incites Harpo starts looking for a way to make Sofia minds. He asks both Celie and his father to advice him.

Besides the sexual abuse of her step father and her husband, Celie suffers the physical violence of her husband. It is Mr.____ cruelty in treating Celie that changes Harpo's mind toward Sofia. Mr.____ treats Celie in an aggressive way. In the novel Celie describes one of those scenes. She says:

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie git the belt. the children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how I come I know trees fear man

(CP,p.22)

4. The relationship between racism and sexism

Racism and sexism are two systems of oppression. The first is adopted by Whites and the second is adopted by both White and Black men. Racism and sexism are resembling in terms of their division of groups. While racism divides people into dominant Whites and inferior Blacks, sexism alienates women and keeps them in an inferior position. In contrary, it promotes men's position as superior to them. Thus having a superior and inferior group is a shared feature between the two systems. In addition to this feature Walker in her novel makes other common features and relationships between the two. Those relationships are the results of our analysis to the elements of racism and sexism in "The Color Purple”. While analyzing the characters and the relationship between them we could extract the main common points Walker has made between racism and sexism in "The Color Purple".
In this chapter and while discussing racism and sexism we have seen both issues within two different generations parents and children. The mayor's son six years old child speaks with Sofia and treats her in impolite way. Unconsciously, he acts in this way as an imitation to his parents’ way of dealing with Blacks. He even does not know what is the reason behind their actions. Harpo and Sofia got married after a love story. He objects his father in order to be with her. Seeing his father beating Celie and abuses her in different ways, does not lead him to ask why he does so. Instead he looks for a way to treat Sofia the same; however he is not in need to do so. The mayor's family, Mr._____,and Harpo bring to our minds an idea about how both racism and sexism are transmitted through generations. Both of them come as a result of unconscious imitation of children to their parents then when those children grow up they become racist and sexist intentionally.

The events in "The Color Purple" story take place in two main places. The story of Celie takes place in rural Georgia where she lives. Rural Georgia includes both Whites and Blacks this mixture in society structure leads to the emergence of racism as a way to oppress Blacks. As a result of racism, Black men feel the lost of their manhood. In an attempt to redeem the situation they take refuge to sexism as an alternative to retrieve this lost. In a missionary trip, Celie's sister Nettie moves with Samuel's family to the Olinka in Africa. In her letters to Celie, Nettie tells her some of the Olinka's traditions. She also talks about some aspects of their lives and the relationship between their women and men which is built on men's fear. One of those aspects is education; the Olinka as Nettie says do not believe girls should be educated. They also believe that the girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something. These attitudes come from their convention of male dominance over females. The Olinka as an african trip is also dominated by Whites who come from Europe and America. They experience the racism of those Whites within their land. The lives in both Georgia and Africa resembles each other. By using both of the places Walker indicates the simultaneity of racism and sexism occurrence. It seems that wherever exist Blacks and Whites, racism and sexism are likely to occur.

Celie's daughter one of Walker's minor characters makes the most powerful statement about the relationship between racism and sexism. Olivia asks Nettie about the reason why her Olinka's friend Tashi cannot join the school. When Nettie answers her that the Olinka do not believe in educating girls. Olivia's reaction comes quick as flash she says:

"They are like white people at home who don't want
Colored people to learn."
Through the character of Olivia, Walker makes another relationship between racism and sexism. Both of them are systems of oppression. While racism is a means of oppressing Blacks, sexism is a means of oppressing women. Their harmful effects are obvious in the lives of both Blacks and women. Unlike all women, the life of Black women in "The Color Purple" show the double sufferings of racism and sexism at the meantime.

In addition to the fact that racism and sexism divide people into two groups, in which one is superior while the other is inferior, Walker in her novel makes three extra types of relationship between the two. First, both of them follow the same process in their transition through generations. They start unconsciously as a result of imitation by the time their practice becomes conscious. Second, the simultaneity in occurrence. In the novel wherever we find blacks and whites living in the same place we find racism and sexism. Finally, Walker resembles their function as two systems of oppression.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presents an analytical study to "The Color Purple" in which we have seen some elements of racism and sexism and how including them helps Walker addressing both issues at the meantime. In "The Color Purple" Walker also makes a set of relationships between the two, she resembles them in their nature as two similar systems of oppression, their simultaneity of occurrence, and the process of their transition through generations. With those relationships that Walker has built between the two, it seems that she makes her own representation of racism in relation to sexism as another system of oppression. Unlike Walker male writers do not refer to sexism as Walker does as far as they are not concerned with its bad effects.
General Conclusion
General conclusion

African American literature tackles different and important issues. Those issues are derived from the societies and the lives of their writers. Among those issues we can mention racism and sexism. Racism on one hand is the attitudes or the ideology that entails the superiority of whites over the other races, sexism on the other hand is an ideology that entails the superiority of males over females. While black males writers take racism as a primary concern in their writings, black females writers tackle the double jeopardy of racism and sexism and its harmful effects on their lives.

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the existence of any effect derived from the gender, as a sociological category rather than biological one, on the writer's way of representing racism through applying the womanist theory which believes in the nature of racism and sexism as two interrelated ways of oppression in Black women's lives.

Departing from their definitions we have extracted a common feature between racism and sexism as two ideologies entail the superiority of one group over the other either whites or males. Walker in her novel has made extra common features and relationships between the two. The first one lies in their process of transition through generations; both of them start as a result of unconscious imitation by the time they become conscious and deliberate. Second, there is a simultaneity of occurrence between the two; wherever exist blacks and whites racism and sexism are likely to occur. This phenomenon is what Walker justifies with the need of black men to recapture their masculinity by oppressing women. The last one is their nature as two systems of oppression. In her novel Walker implies that racism and sexism are interrelated and perpetuate the inferiority of both blacks and women.

The relationships Walker create between racism and sexism in her novel makes her representation of racism different from male writers such as Ralph Ellison who do not account for sexism in their writings since its effects concern females rather than males. All in all we can say that the relationship Walker has built between the two ideologies is in itself comes as an effect of her gender. Thus we can confirm our first hypothesis which assumes the existence of a relationship between the gender of the writer and the way of representing racism.
The answer to our research question offer insights for further studies. While this study was concerned with gender of the writer, the modern reading theories such as reader-response theory takes the gender of the reader into consideration. Thus future studies may be conducted to investigate the ways readers of both genders males and females respond to such a work of literature.
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Abstract

The American society is composed of people of different races. Thus racism is a widespread issue within it. The recent study aims to investigate this issue in Alice Walker's most acclaimed novel "The Color Purple". During this study we are going to opt for the womanist theory in order to investigate to what extent does the gender of the writer affect her representation of racism in "The Color Purple". According to womanists the black woman in the American society encounter double oppression as a result of being blacks and women at the meantime. This study is divided into two chapters theoretical and practical. The theoretical chapter studies the beginning and the development of this genre in the twentieth century in addition to the study of the adopted theory while the practical chapter is devoted to the analysis of the novel's content in order to find out answers to the proposed questions.

Key terms: African American literature, womanism, gender, racism, sexism.

Résumé

La société américaine est composée de gens de races différentes. La récente étude vise à étudier cette question dans le roman le plus acclamé de Alice Walker "La Couleur Pourpre". Au cours de cette étude, nous allons opter pour la théorie de womanist afin d'examiner dans quelle mesure le sexe de l'écrivain affecte sa représentation du racisme dans "La Couleur Pourpre". Selon womanists la femme noire dans la société américaine rencontrer double oppression à la suite d'être noirs et les femmes au temps. Cette étude est divisée en deux chapitres théoriques et pratiques. Les études de chapitres théoriques Le début et le développement de ce genre dans le XXᵉ siècle, en plus de l'étude de la théorie adoptée alors que le chapitre pratique est consacrée à l'analyse du contenu du roman dans le but de trouver des réponses aux questions proposées.

Mots-clés: la littérature afro-américaine, womanism, sexe, racisme, sexisme.