

## Violence and It's Impact as Seen in Alice Walker's The Color Purple

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**Abstract.** *This research intends to reveal violence and its impact in Alice Walker's The Color Purple. The design of this study is qualitative research that pictures the data in the form of words and quotations. The writer collects and selects the data from the primary source, the novel itself, and the secondary source, which includes books explaining research, literature, and some other references that are relevant and support the analysis. In analyzing the data, the writer uses an objective and mimetic approach to explore the literary work as a reflection of human life. The result shows that Afro-American women, as pictured in Celie's experience, are treated badly physically, sexually, and mentally by black men who are introduced as her stepfather and her husband. These bad treatments are caused by an internal factor that comes from Celie's plain character: a fear of fighting. Besides that, the external factor, which comes from social conditions at that time, also gives influence toward men's point of view about black women, in which for them, women are inferior socially so that they are usually the object of cruel treatment from white, even black men.*

**Keyword:** *Violence, impact, character*

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini bermaksud mengungkap kekerasan dan dampaknya dalam The Color Purple karya Alice Walker. Desain penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif yang menggambarkan data dalam bentuk kata-kata dan kutipan. Penulis mengumpulkan dan memilih data dari sumber primer, novel itu sendiri, dan sumber sekunder, yang meliputi buku-buku yang menjelaskan penelitian, literatur, dan beberapa referensi lain yang relevan dan mendukung analisis. Dalam menganalisis data, penulis menggunakan pendekatan obyektif dan mimesis untuk mengeksplorasi karya sastra sebagai cerminan kehidupan manusia. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa perempuan Afro-Amerika, seperti yang digambarkan dalam pengalaman Celie, diperlakukan buruk secara fisik, seksual, dan mental oleh laki-laki kulit hitam yang diperkenalkan sebagai ayah tiri dan suaminya. Perlakuan buruk ini disebabkan oleh faktor internal yang berasal dari karakter polos Celie: rasa takut berkelahi. Selain itu faktor eksternal yang berasal dari kondisi sosial pada saat itu juga memberikan pengaruh terhadap pandangan laki-laki terhadap perempuan kulit hitam, dimana bagi mereka perempuan adalah inferior secara sosial sehingga sering menjadi sasaran perlakuan kejam dari orang kulit putih. bahkan pria kulit hitam.

**Kata kunci:** Kekerasan, dampak, karakter

### INTRODUCTION

Alice Walker is an Afro-American novelist who is concerned with women, especially black women's experiences, so she calls herself a womanist writer. As pointed out by Vanspckeren (1994:108), "Alice Walker, an African-American and the child of a sharecropper family in rural Georgia, a womanist writer, as Walker calls herself, has long been associated with feminism, presenting black existence from the female perspective."

One of the best novels is The Color Purple. This is an epistolary novel that most likely contains violence toward black women. It also received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award in 1983. The Color Purple won the national award and a Pulitzer Prize and was shortly thereafter made into a feature film by Stephen Spielberg.

As seen in the novel, the author explicitly describes violence toward Celie, an Afro-American woman, as the main character. It continually happens to her since she was a child until she is a wife. As a child, she got bad treatment from her stepfather. He rapes her so that she is pregnant twice, and when she gives birth to the babies, he takes them and sells them. After that, he forced her to be married by a widower with many children whom she never loved.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **History of Afro-American**

Williams in Santosa (2010:16–17) stated that there were, of course, black or indigenous people in Australasia and North America long before there were whites. But some people believe that there were black people in Britain before the English (or Anglo-Saxons) arrived—black soldiers in the Roman army helped to pacify and civilize the barbaric natives. And there was a continuous black presence in Britain from the sixteenth century onwards. Sir Walker Raleigh's wife started a trend by having an imported African servant, and this became highly fashionable in the course of the next hundred years. Certainly there was racial prejudice at this time—wild nations about people who looked so obviously different and came from a world away. But racism—an ideology that combines prejudices into a package to prove that black people are inferior—didn't come about until it became economically useful for white people to believe such things. That time came with slavery. Slavery was an important sub-force because it seemed to be the ideal instrument, ready at hand and deeply rooted in the Southern past, to sustain white civilization.

Racism emerged out of the rise of the slave trade in the eighteenth century. Black people could be bought and sold like property and treated—or maltreated—as their owners wished because they were regarded as something less than human. In this era of slavery, a whole system of beliefs attempted to prove that blacks were less intelligent than whites, with smaller brains and a capacity only for manual labor. (Williams, in Santosa 2010:18)

### **Afro-American Women in the Nineteenth Century**

Afro American people had much suffering, and thus they have to struggle to get their independence today. They were considered slaves in America and were treated inhumanely by

white people. According to Howard (2004:152), slavery is inherently a system of brutality and coercion in which beatings and the breakup of families through the sale of individuals were commonplace. The racist system also very discriminated against blacks in the last quarter of the nineteenth century by applying a regulation called Jim Crow Law that "segregated public schools, forbade or limited black access to many public facilities, such as parks, restaurants, and hotels, and denied most blacks the right to vote by imposing poll taxes and arbitrary literary tests." (Howard, 2004:174)

Afro American women had the worst. They were also subjected to violence for being slaves; women were seen as inferior to men. They did not have many rights to be granted, and they have no equal rights as men. As Howard (2004: 138) notes, from colonial times, unmarried women had enjoyed many of the same legal rights as men, although custom required that they marry early. With matrimony, women virtually lost their separate identities in the eyes of the law. Women were not permitted to vote, and their education in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was limited largely to reading, writing, music, dancing, and needlework. In addition, Afro-American women or black women, in the eyes of white and black society, are considered inferior socially and legally.

## **Novel**

A novel is one of the kinds of literature. It has some elements that are built to work intrinsically. According to Funk and Wagnall (1967:866), a novel is a fiction prose narrative of considerable length, representing characters and events as they are in real life by a plot of scheme of action of greater or less complexity. It can be concluded that a novel is written based on men's experiences and the condition of the environment or society.

## **The Elements of a Novel**

### **The elements of the novel *The Color Purple*:**

#### **Plot**

Kelley Griffith (1986:44) says that "plot is a pattern of carefully selected, casually related events that contains conflict. The story is told by first showing Celie as the innocent girl who lives around harm. As a child, she directly saw how her father treated her mother. She is raped numerous times by her stepfather, sees her mother beaten and then dead, and fears for her sister Nettie's life. She was raped by her stepfather, and after giving birth to the children,

he immediately sold her babies. Soon enough, he sells her into marriage with an older widow with four children named Mr. Albert. Mr. Albert beats her, taunts her, and forces her to clean, cook, and look after her dirty and ungrateful children. Meanwhile, Mr. Albert lusts after Nettie until she runs away from the Reverend. Celie continues to write to God, explaining her miserable life with Mr. Albert and hoping to reunite Nettie as soon as possible. These events show how hard Celie's life is, but she never gives up in these complicated situations. It is proofed by the fact that she never stops sharing with God; she knows that God is the only way for her to get freedom. Suddenly Mr. Albert brings his mistress, Shug Avery, home with him, for she is ill with venereal disease and has no other salvation. Celie immediately finds herself attracted to the celebrated singer, speaking with her, bathing her, and worshipping her. They become close friends and even fall in love. It seems that the key to freedom is in her hands. The appearance of Shug gives her the opportunity to find her true life. Her relationship with Shug Avery finally brought her into a better life. Shug takes Celie, her new husband, Gradly, and Squeak to Memphis with her to escape the violent and cruel wrath of Albert. Eventually, Celie spent her life with Shug Avery, Nettie, and their children. Celie's life is now complete. Character, as stated by Callagan and Dobins (1996{232}), is the representation of a person in an imaginative work that we come to know from the word on the page."

### Character

Characters are very important in a novel. They were created by the author to support each other so that the story would become more interesting. In the novel *The Color Purple*, there are some characters, whether major or minor, who support each other:

**Cellie** is a protagonist. She begins as a young girl, raped by her stepfather, also known as **Alphonso**, and forced to give away her two babies, **Olivia** and **Adam** (both from incest), who are later adopted by **Samuel** and **Corrine**, the missionaries who take **Nattie**, Cellie's sister, with the family to Africa. Nettie also sent letters to Cellie and told her about her experiences in Africa. Cellie later was married to Mr. Albert, a widower with three children, and got violence from him.

**Harpo** is Mr. Albert's elder son and the one child with whom Celie associates the most. He is not as strong, independent, and 'manly' as other boys, thinks and acts with his heart, and falls in love young with a strong black girl named **Sophia** and marries her. Harpo spends a great deal

of time trying to get Sophia to obey him, just like Celie obeys his father, but he always fails because Sophia is not as weak as Celie; she does not allow anyone to beat her. Sophia cannot stand Harpo's temper anymore. She decides to leave him and moves to her sister, **Odessa**. After that, Harpo builds up a juke joint with his friend, **Swain**. One day, Miss Millie, the mayor's wife, asks Sophia to be their maid. But Sophia refused it. After the mayor of the town slaps her, she attacks him, and he finally sends her to jail.

**Mary Agnes**, also known as **Squeak**, is Harpo's girlfriend after Sophia leaves him. She is quiet and obedient, doing anything he asks of her. She is the complete opposite of Sophia. She is raped by Hodges (the warden in Sophia's prison), her white uncle, when she goes to ask him to move Sophia out of jail.

Henry Broadnax, the prizefighter, is introduced as Sophia's boyfriend after she leaves Harpo. They have a child named Henrietta. Shug Avery is the exotic singer and entertainer who steals both Mr. \_\_\_ and Celie's hearts instantly. She teaches Celie the beauty of femininity, love of relationships, and kindness. Even though she moves around the country and sleeps with many men, such as **Grady** and **Germanie**, she ultimately loves Celie with all her heart.

**Miss Addie Beasley** is the girls' grade school teacher in their rural town. She praises both Celie and Nettie. She pleads for Celie to be allowed to return to school, but ultimately gives up when she sees Celie is "big" (with a child).

**Kate** is the other of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s two sisters. She visits Celie alone and takes her shopping to buy a purple dress. She also gives her advice on how to survive in the masculine world.

**Old Mr. \_\_\_\_\_** is Albert's obstinate father. He shows no motion and constantly puts down his son. He never approved of Shug Avery and thinks Mr. \_\_\_ has done well by marrying Celie. He complains that his money and houses are going to bad people—his own son and grandson.

Tashi is a young African girl with whom Olivia and Adam play and learn, and finally she is married by Adam.

**Daisy** is the young new wife of Celie and Nettie's father. She is pregnant, uneducated, and unkempt.

## Setting

Setting is the other element of a novel. Griffith (1986:52) says that "setting includes several closely related aspects of a work of fiction. First, the setting is the physical, sensuous world of the work. Second, it is the time in which the action of the work takes place. And third, it is the social environment of the characters: the manners, customs, and moral values that govern their society. A fourth aspect, atmosphere, is largely but not entirely an effect of setting." The story in Walker's *The Color Purple* takes place in rural Georgia and Western Africa in a small village in the early 20th century. The book begins about 30 years before World War II. It covers the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as we follow Celie through thirty or forty years of her life. The setting of Celie's story is unmistakably among poor blacks in rural areas of the South. Having very little exposure to education or the outside world, Celie lives most of her life very isolated and ignorant.

Celie starts to learn more about herself and the world from people who enter her life from very different settings than her own. Shug Avery comes from the city of Memphis, Tennessee, where she lives a much more liberated life than Celie. Shug owns her own home, has a car, wears fashionable clothing, is outspoken, and thinks life is meant to be enjoyed. When Celie leaves home and joins Shug in Memphis, she also becomes more liberated.

Celie's world is also dramatically expanded as a result of her sister's travels in Africa. Living a poor, downtrodden life in the South, Celie had never stopped to consider her African heritage until Nettie sent a letter describing the West African village she's living in. Nettie describes her first experiences in Africa as marginal. For the first time, Celie (via Nettie's letters) comes to see black people not as downtrodden but as beautiful, noble, and proud. Celie learns that the first humans in the world were black people, originating in Africa. She also learns that Africans had an extremely rich culture, rather than thriving civilizations, far before Europeans did. Although the Olinkan village that Nettie lives in eventually is destroyed by Europeans, through the African setting, both Celie and Nettie begin to feel that their black heritage is a source of pride rather than a cause for shame.

Eventually, Celie can return to her home in Georgia from Memphis, taking with her what she has learned from Memphis and Africa. She goes home, but brings a sense of freshness and the lesson she has learned. In addition, she no longer lives in somebody else's home—not

Pa's home, not Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s home, and not even Shug's. Celie now has her own house, which she inherited from her mother, in which she can live life as she chooses.

The atmospheres of this story are when Celie gets sexually abused by her stepfather; her husband treats her hardly and separates her from Nettie; and when Celie realizes that all Nettie's letters were hidden by her husband, she becomes so angry, and this is the first time she is brave to speak out against her husband. This is the climax of this story, when she realizes that she has lived under the pressure of her husband.

### **Theme**

Griffith (1986:49) says that "theme is the central subject or idea of the work that the writer would like to tell the readers through the characters, plot, or setting. The theme of the color purple is very straightforward and simple. The color purple is dedicated to black women's rights. Much of the narrative in Walker's novel is derived from her own personal experience; growing up in a rural area inspires and motivates black women to stand up for their rights and against any violence. In short, the theme of this novel is violence, especially toward black women.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

In dealing with this study, the writer used qualitative research since the data collected were in the form of words and quotations.

### **Data Collection**

The writer collects and selects the data from the primary source, the novel itself, and the secondary source, which includes books explaining research, literature, and some other references that are relevant and support the analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the writer uses an objective and mimetic approach to explore the literary work as a reflection of human life.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Violence**

Celie lives under pressure of black men. Since she is young, she has the violent object of her father, who is finally known as her stepfather. Her family's life was always fulfilled by the sacrifices of her mother and stepfather. Unfortunately, this is witnessed by her, as Celie shares: "Last spring, after little Licious came, I heard them fussing. He was pulling on her arm. She said, Fonso, I ain't well." (Walker, 1982:11)

As a child, Celie directly witnessed the verbal and physical dispute over her patents. Whereas, parents should be the models for their children, so everything they do will influence their children's character. In this novel, Celie's parents give her a bad example by quarreling in front of her. This fact shows that Celie is grown up in a disorderly family or in a bad situation in her family. This bad situation has a bad influence on her. Her mother is too busy to serve her stepfather's biological needs, for she has to take care of her children so that Celie becomes the sexual object of her stepfather. He rapes her until she gets pregnant twice, and when she gives birth to the babies, he takes and sells them. Furthermore, she is taken away from her school by her stepfather, although she really loves it. After that, she is forced to marry the widower that she never loves and who never loves her. She never gets affection and protection from her husband. What she gets is only violence.

Based on the facts above, the writer concludes that Celie gets violence in her domestic area, where she gets violence from her father and husband. As stated by Poerwandari in Luhulima (2000:13), violence in a domestic area or personal intimacy relationship is a kind of violence that both the perpetrator and the object have in a personal or family relationship. The type of violence can be cruel treatment—in this case, beating the wife, children or stepchildren,

parents, sexual assault, or rape. This type of violence can be classified into three dimensions: sexual violence, physical violence, and mental violence.

### **Sexual Abuse**

As seen in *The Color Purple*, Celie gets sexual abuse from her stepfather. The major conflict occurs at the beginning of the story. When Celie is still a fourteen-year-old girl, her mother is sick and cannot provide the biological needs of her husband. One day, when she goes out to visit her sister doctor over Macon, he comes to Celie and tells her, "You're going to do what your mama wouldn't." (Walker 1982:11) And then he proceeds to rape her. When she cries, he chokes her and threatens, "You better shut up and get used to it. (Walker, 1982:11). It shows clearly that Celie is forced to serve her stepfather because her mother couldn't. She is not only forced; she is also threatened to shut up; thus, she never tells anyone except God.

This scene shows a major conflict because Celie believes this man to be her father, who should give her love, protection, and guidance, but the fact is just the opposite. A man she calls "Pa" obviously treats her cruelly and impregnates her twice. Her self-respect is lowered by this accident, which makes her miss her cheerful life as a young girl.

### **Physical Abuse**

Not only does Celie get abuse from her stepfather, but she also gets physical abuse from her stepfather and husband. Physical abuse, according to Poerwandri (2000:11), includes hitting, slapping, kicks, throwing something at someone's body, being hurt with or without a tool or weapon, and killing.

Father and husband are two figures of men in the family who share love, affection, and protection for their wives and children. But Celie never gets those figures from her stepfather or her husband. This novel pictures the bad father who not only rapes his daughter and impregnates her twice and then sells the babies just after she gives them birth, but also beats her just for inappropriate reasons, as Celie shared: "He beat me today because he said I winked at a boy in church. (Walker, 1982:15) He beat me for dressing trampy, but he did it to me anyway (Walker, 1982:17).

It shows that Pa not only hurts her sexually but also physically for trivial reasons. How come someone is beaten just because she or he is suspected of winking at somebody else or just because she dresses trampy? It's unreasonable. This scene also indicates that Cellie, as a

black woman, lives without freedom and under the pressure of a black man, namely her stepfather.

This bad treatment is continually happening to Celie until she is married to Mr. Albert. She gets as much violence as she ever felt before. On her wedding day, that should have been passed with happiness, but she just passed it with a bruised body. Harpo (Mr. \_\_\_'s son) refused her by throwing a rock at her, as Celie's share: I spent my wedding day running from the oldest boy. He is twelve. His mama died in his arms, and he doesn't want to hear anything about a new one. He picked up a rock and laid my head open. The blood ran all down between my breasts. His dad says, Don't do that! But that's all he says" (Walker, 1982:21).

It shows clearly how suffers Celie, who has to marry at a young age and has to spend her wedding day with a bruised body. Whereas, she should spend her wedding day with happiness. That's the ideal wedding day, but Celie doesn't get it. She is thrown by Mr. Albert's son until there is blood, but Mr. Albert just lets it happen. It also indicates that Celie's husband, Mr. Albert, does not care for her. He does not take a distinct attitude when his son hurts Celie.

Moreover, within their lives as husband and wife, Mr. \_\_\_ also often beats her as a child. But all she can do is receive all the treatments. She does not cry even less to fight: He beat me like he beat the children... it all I can do is not cry. I make myself wooden. I say to myself, Celie, you are a tree. That's how I know three fear men." (Walker 1982:30).

As a wife, Celie is even treated as a child by her husband. She is just a child. And what she does is just receive it, which makes her a tree. This is Celie's only way to protect her. On the other side, it also indicates her strength, namely, keeping silent.

### **Mental Abuse**

Celie's suffering life is continually happen. Not only sexual and physical abuse, but also mental abuse, she gets from black men who are her stepfather and her husband. As seen in the novel, Celie's stepfather not only impregnates her twice but also takes the babies to be sold without apology, as Celie shared: He took my other little baby, a boy this time. But I don't think he kilt it. I think he sold it to a man and his wife over Monticello. I got breasts full of milk running down myself." (Walker, 1982:13)

lost her right as a mother to love and share life with her children. She was separated from her daughter and even from her son, who was born next. But this time he preferred to sell it than kill it, as she guesses: He took my other little baby, a boy this time. But I don't think he kilt it. I think he sold it to a man and his wife over Monticello. (Walker, 1982:13).

This scene clearly shows how cruel Celie's stepfather is, who rapes his stepdaughter, impregnates her twice, and then separates the babies from their mother. Because no mother in this world wants to be separated from her newborn baby unless she has no feelings or instincts as a mother.

This mental abuse also occurs when Celie's stepfather offers her to marry Mr. \_\_\_\_; he describes the weakness of Celie. It seems that Celie is not appreciated in this family, and she is worse than her sister Nettie. She does not get an education, but Nettie does. She is not fresh anymore, but Nettie is. Pa preferred to defend Nettie over Celie. That is why he allows Mr. \_\_\_\_ to get Celie, although they do not love each other. Pa's offering such indicates that Celie means nothing to him and everyone could get her and do anything they want to her, as Celie shared: Well, he said, real slow, I can't let you, Nettie. She's too young. I don't know anything but what you tell her. I want her to get some more schooling. Make a schoolteacher out of her. But I can let you have Celie. She is the oldest anyway. She ought to be spoiled. Twice. But you don't need a fresh woman, no way. But you don't need a fresh woman, no way." (Walker. 1982:17)

This statement indicates the decrease in Celie's self-honor because of the rape. It makes her think that she is worthless and reasonable to receive all the bad treatment. Celie is also hopeless because she seems meaningless from Mr. \_\_'s point of view, as he says to Celie, "Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you are a woman. Goddam, he says, you nothing at all. (Walker, 1982:187).

The statement makes her think that she deserves to be treated like an impurity because she is ugly and black.

### **The Causes of Violence**

There are some factors that are considered causes of the violence toward Celie, such as internal factors that come from Celie herself and external factors that are out of her control.

The internal factor comes from Celie's character. Celie is a plain girl who fears God and always tries to be good. As the author shows, Celie's character at the beginning of the story:

Dear God

I'm fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me. (Walker, 1982:11)

She is always trying to live as the Bible says; thus, she keeps and never kills her stepfather and husband, although they treat her badly. I think. I can't even remember the last time I felt mad. I used to get mad at my mama because she put a lot of work into me. Then I saw how sick she was. I couldn't stay mad at her. I couldn't be mad at my daddy because he was my daddy. Bible say. Honor your father and mother, no matter what. Then, after a while, every time I got mad or started to feel mad, I got sick. I felt like throwing up. Terrible feeling. Then I start to feel nothing at all. Well, sometimes Mr. \_\_\_ git on me pretty hard. I have to talk to Old Maker. But he is my husband. I shrug my shoulders. This life will soon be over. I say. Heaven lasts in all ways. (Walker, 1982:47).

### **The external factors**

The external factors come from the people and social environment around Cellie. Social conditions also influence the occurrence of violence toward Cellie, such as social background at that time and human, in this case, men's point of view about black women at that time.

### **The Image of Afro-American Women as the Inferior Creature**

Afro-American women's position in white society was very low during the era of slavery in southern America. Besides having to work for whites as slaves, Afro-American women or black women have to be sexual objects. As sexual objects, black women are assaulted by white masters. For the masters, a sexual assault was not considered rape, as they considered black women to be property. With their property, white men could do as they pleased.

Even after the abolition of slavery, black women's status remained lower than that of white and black American men until the 1930s. They are considered minors by their husbands. Husbands always make their wives submissive to them, and beating is one of the ways to show control and authority. When a wife disobeyed, the husband would beat her to show that disobedience was bad. Disobedience was also an indication of the ability to fight against authority.

Celie's stepfather considered her biologically inferior, weaker, and less intelligent. He pulls Celie out of school because he believes that she is dumb. The first time I got big, Pa took me out of school. He never cares that I love it. You are too dumb to keep going to school, Pa says. (Walker, 1982:19)

Being regarded as inferior, women are placed at home, as Harpo said: "A woman needs to be at home. (Walker, 1982:82). And do the entire household job and become just as slaves who only do the superior's order, as Celie's stepfather tells Mr. \_\_ about Celie when he offers her to be married: She is ugly. He say. But she ain't no stranger to hard work. And she cleaned. And God has fixed her. You can do everything just like you want to, and she ain't going to make you feed it or clothe it. (Walker, 1982:18).

Nettie also revealed black women's life as inferior in Africa through the Olinka tribe's custom. As she shared in her letter to Celie, The Olinka do not believe girls should be educated. When I asked a mother why she thought this, she girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something. (Walker, 1982:144)

This shows that women were the inferior beings physically and socially at that time. Besides that, they are limited in their ability to develop themselves by other rules, as pictured in this novel, such as Afro-American women not enjoying and getting relaxation from the place of entertainment, as Celie shares when her husband prohibits her from going to Harpo's party: "Mr. \_\_ didn't want me to come. Wives don't go to places like that. (Walker, 1982:74) Women also cannot use pants, as Celie said: Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is not going to let his wife wear pants. (Walker, 1982:136)

Besides being prohibited from getting relaxation and using pants, women are also forbidden to look at men's faces while having a conversation: There is a way that the men speak to women that reminds me too much of Pa. They listen just long enough to issue instructions. They don't even look at women when they are speaking. They look at the ground and bend, then head toward the ground. The women also do not "Look in a man's face," as they

say. They look instead at his feet or his knees. And what can I say to this? Again, it is our own behavior around Pa. (Walker, 1982:149)

Besides that, women also cannot interrupt men's speaking, as Grady said: A woman can't git a man if people talk." (Walker, 1982:182), and they are forbidden to laugh at men while talking, as Harpo said: It's bad luck for women to laugh at men. (Walker, 1982:182)

Sofia, as the black woman, also clearly shows the condition of blacks at that time through her family, as she shared: She said that all my life I had to fight. I had to fight my dad. I had to fight my brother. I had to fight my cousins and my uncles. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men, she says. To tell the truth, you remind me of my mama. She is under my daddy's thumb. Now, she is under my dad's foot. Anything he says goes. She never said anything back. She never stands up for herself. (Walker, 1982:46)

### **The Impact of Violence**

After the cruel treatment from her stepfather, Celie develops a fear of men. This feeling makes her feel more comfortable being with women than with men. It is portrayed clearly when Celie is in the church and her stepfather beats her because he thinks that she winks at a boy. But actually, she does not wink at boys; she does prefer to look at women. He beat me today because he said I winked at a boy in church. I may have had something in my eye, but I didn't wink. I don't even look at men. That's the truth. I look like a woman, though, because I'm not scared of them. (Walker, 1982)

This fear also makes her want to protect her sister Nettie from their cruelty. She won't let Nettie suffer just like her. I see him looking at my little sister. She scared. But I say I'll take care of you. With God help. " (Walker, 1982:13)

Celie really cares of Nettie. Even though she loves her sister Nettie very much, she acquiesces to be replaced by a widower with many children, although she does not love him, and what she gets is only suffering.

The violence that she gets from her stepfather and husband invites attention and empathy from the other people around her, especially black women, such as Nettie (her sister), Shug Avery, Sofia, and Kate. They motivate her to fight every bad treatment from her husband. Though at first she couldn't stand fighting, by the time she finally was able to She is so angry

because the loss of communication with Nettie over a long time makes her believe that Nettie has died. Thus, with Shug's assistance, she can finally make an explicit decision to fight and leave her cruel husband. You, a lowdown dog, are what's wrong. I say. It's time to leave you and enter the creation. And your dead body is just the welcome madness I need. (Walker, 1982:181)

Celie's zest to move to Memphis with Shug portrays the Afro-American's willingness to seek a better life. In Memphis, Celie finally starts a business selling pants. She becomes a free woman and proves that women can stand and live without men.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Afro American women in nineteenth century were suffering from discrimination of whites even black men through physical, sexual and mental violence. This fact can be seen in *The Color Purple* which reveals the Afro American life and experience during 1930s.

She gets sexual, physical, and mental abuse by black men who are her stepfather and husband. These all bad treatment are caused by several factors among them are men's point of view about women especially to black women who are considered inferior socially and as the sexual object. In which, women are incapable and to get education, unable to work in the office, cannot interrupt men's speaking, and are forbidden to laugh at men while talking. They are also considered as the property of whites thus the whites even black men can do all the things they want as their pleasure.

### **Suggestion**

*The Color Purple* describes Afro American women's life through Celie's experience who is suffering by violence from the people who should give her love, care and protection, namely stepfather and husband.

Whatever the reason, violence toward children and women is the inhuman treatment. A father must give love, education and a proper life to his children. As a husband, also must give love, care and protection to his wife. The difference in social status and race should not make people underestimate each other. People should appreciate each other because all people are created by God.

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