OPPRESSION IN THE CHARACTERS CELIE AND NETTIE IN “THE COLOR PURPLE” BY ALICE WALKER

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Abstract

This thesis discusses about the oppression in the characters of Celie and Nettie in The Color Purple novel written by Alice Walker. The purpose of this thesis are to analyze the forms of oppression experienced by a female character who was 14 years old mistreatment of his father, Alphonso and to find the correlation between the oppression happened in the novel and theory postcolonialism by Frantz Fanon. The researcher used a qualitative data. The techniques are by reading the novel, underlining the keywords from the novel that can show the oppression forms, understanding the theory to find the correlation between the novel and the theory. Various forms of oppression character Celie as physical violence, verbal and emotional. The theory used to analyze this thesis is the theory postcolonialism explained by Frantz Fanon. In the theory, the oppression of human beings is destructive of the human mental. Based on the analysis of the authors that many forms of oppression experienced by the characters in the novel especially Celie and Nettie. It is concluded, oppression is a very destructive action of a character souls undergo such treatment.

Keywords: oppression, characters, mental destruction

Introduction

As we know, women sometimes became the target of the oppression. According to Irish (2004:4) oppression is a kind of violence, threats, or coercion to abuse or intimidate a person. This behavior can become a habit and involves an imbalance of power socially or physically. The oppression can include harassment verbally or threats, physical violence or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability. The act of oppression consists of four types, namely physical, verbal, emotional and cyber. Physical oppression is a kind of oppression that mostly visible and identifiable among the forms of oppression. Whereas, the verbal oppression is oppression in the form of words. The emotional oppression is weakening dignity victims of repression systematically through neglecting, isolation, exclusion avoidance. Meanwhile, cyber oppression is oppression that uses electronic means and internet facilities such as computer, mobile phone, camera, and via website or social media as chat rooms, e-mail, facebook, twitter and other source Coloroso (2007:47).

In The Wretched of the Earth (1961:8), the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon analyzed and medically described the damage of colonialism as essentially destructive. Its social effects—the imposition of a subjugating colonial identity—are harmful to the mental health of the native peoples who were subjugated into colonies. Fanon wrote the ideological essence of colonialism is the systematic denial of "all attributes of humanity" of the colonized people. Such dehumanization is achieved with physical and mental violence, by which the colonist means to
inculcate a servile mentality upon the natives. For Fanon the natives must violently resist colonial subjugation.

In this article, the researcher chooses the Alice Walker’s novel entitled The Color Purple. It is a narrative novel about Celie and Nettie, two African-American women who are struggling to deal with gender oppression in male dominated in early 19th century African-American society. Celie is a poor, uneducated, 14 year old girl and her younger sister Nettie 12 years old living in the American South. She wrote letters to God because the man she believed to be her father, Alphonso, beat and raped her. Celie then advised Nettie to seek assistance from a well-dressed black woman that she had seen in the general store a while back; the woman had unknowingly adopted Celie’s daughter and was the only black woman that Celie had ever seen with money of her own. Nettie was forced to leave after promising to write. Celie, however, never received any letters and concluded that her sister was dead. Time passed by and Celie met a very beautiful girl she ever met, Shug Avery. And they become good friend. One night Shug asked Celie about her sister, and Shug helped Celie recovering letters from Nettie that Mister had been hiding from her for decades. Olweus (1994:9) explained oppression as a negative action of a person or more, repeated and occur from time to time. On the other hand, according to Tattum (p.8) explains that oppression is a conscious and deliberate desire to hurt and to make people depressed.

**Theory of Postcolonialism**

From every oppression of any cultures and places, it gives the bad impact to the victim. It is shown by Alice Walker in this novel The Color Purple. Loomba (1998:12) argued postcolonialism or postcolonial study is an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse that analyze, explain, and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism.

**Frantz Fanon**

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Like the other novels, The Color Purple also has some elements. The following are in elements

**Characters**

All stories must have certain characteristics or elements. Character can be defined as any person, animal, or figure represented in a literary work. There are
many types of characters that exist in literature, each with its own development and function. The main character in novel of The Color Purple is a girl 14 years old named Celie. Her father name Alfonso or they call him Pa. Celie has only one sister sibling, Nettie who 12 years old. Another supporting characters are building the story are, Shug Avery the singer caffee, Harpo and Sofía, Squeak is Harpo’s ex girlfriend, Odessa is Sofía’s sister, Adam and Olivia are Celie’s children.

Plot
Plot in the novel of The Color Purple is flow forth. The writer Alice Walker wrote the story of the novel back and forward. It is shown by the story is sometimes tells about the main character Celie and then jump into few back years ago.

Setting
Through the story of the novel it is written if Celie lives in her home in Georgia, South of America. Then after their mother’s dead she and her sister Nettie moves to Memphis, Tennesse. While Celie stay in Memphis, Nettie goes to AfriCA as a missionaris with a pastor and his two children and wife. In her way to Africa continent, she transit into Europe in England.

Findings and Analysis
Main character is the center that builds the whole story. They are important figures of the story’s action or theme. The main character has an important role and dominates the whole story.

Here are the events that show that Celie got the oppression in the story.

Hurt a, i cry. He start to choke a, me, saying You better shut up b and git used to it. (letter :2)
This letter shows that Celie got the physic and verbal oppression from her father, Pa. The followings are the description : Hurt a according to enclopedia healthy is a verb, causing pain (sad, miserable, and so on). Choke a is holding and gripping the neck so that the grip is held and can not breathe. Shut up b according onto Oxford dictionary is a kind of abused.

Say im eveil b an always up to no good. He took my other little baby c, a boy this time. I dont think he kilt c it. I think he sold it to a man an his wife over Monticello. (letter :4)
Pa took her baby and then sold them to a man cross Monticello. These description shows Celie got the verbal and emotional oppression. According to Oxford dictionary, Evil b is profoundly immoral and wicked. Kill c is definition oxford cause the death of (a person, animal, or other living thing).

He beat a me today cause he say i winked at a boy in church. I may have got somethin in my eye but I didnt wink. I dont even look at mens. (letter :6)
On the next day, Pa hitted Celie, Here Celie got the physic oppression. Pa said that Celie glanced at the other men in the church as in the novel excerpt above. Beat a defined by oxford is an action to punish by hitting or whipping; flog.

He beat a me for dressing trampy b but he do it to me anyway. (letter :8)
Furthermore, the direct oppression of a stepchild Celie when she had become the wife of Mr, Albert, Celie was beaten by Mr Albert eldest son by a stone. Beat a defined by oxford dictionary is to punish by hitting or whipping; flog. Celie got the physic oppression by Pa shows in this letter.
The first time I got big Pa took me out of school. He never care that i love it. (letter :10)

In this oppression gives Celie damaged to lose her education, but in this novel show the readers how much she loves to attend school. This is a kinds of emotional oppression that happened to the main character, Celie. Took me out defined by oxford dictionary mean is capture or gain possession of by force.

You too dumb to keep going to school, Pa say. (letter :11)

In this sentence got oppression by Pa saying she is too idiot to get the knowledge from school. This is the verbal oppression. Dumb defined by urban dictionary, dumb is certain people who portray a level of retardedness vastly greater than the general populous.

He pick up a rock and laid my head open. The blood run all down tween my breast. His daddy say Dont do that! But thats all he say. (letter :13)

Celie got the physical oppression by Mr.Albert`s son, in the first time she moves to his home and meet his children, but there is nothing action from Mr.Albert to protect her. Through oxford dictionary throw is propel (something) with force through the air by a movement of the arm and hand.

Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr.Albert say, cause she my wif. (letter :23)

From this analysis, it is looks like man in this periode can do anything to woman he married. Man can slaved, abuse his wife because only she is his wife. Beat according to oxford dictionary is an action to punish by hitting or whipping; flog. These shows physic and verbal oppression.

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he dont never hardly beat them. (letter :23)

Phisycal verbal happened to Celie. Beat defined by oxford dictionary is to punish by hitting or whipping; flog.

Mr.Albert reach over to slap me. I jab my case knife in his hand. You bitch, he say. (letter :207)

In this sentence the writer tried to show the main character Celie tried to protect and fight against Mr.Albert, but we can see that he said the verbal oppression to her. Slap according to encyclopedia healthy is a method of striking with the palm of the hand. Bitch is literally meaning a female dog,or other carnivorous mammals, is a slang pejorative for a person, commonly a woman, who is belligerent, unreasonable, malicious, a control freak, rudely intrusive or aggressive.

Shut up Squeak, he sa. It bad hick for women to laugh at men. (letter :208)

It is forbidden for women laught at men. Shut up defined oxford dictionary is an informal stop (or cause someone to stop) talking. It shows the verbal oppression.

Celie got the verbal oppression by Mr. Albert by saying she is black skin, have no wealthy, not beautiful and because she is a woman, so Mr. Albert said she is nothing at all. These are the following description: black according to oxford dictionary is mean belonging to or denoting any human group having dark-coloured skin, especially of African or Australian Aboriginal ancestry. Poor is lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal in a society. Ugly is unpleasant or repulsive, especially in appearance.

In the Color Purple novel, there are oppression happened also to other characters, and I collecting and analysis them below.

Verbal oppression on Celie still spoken by Mr. Albert through words that,

I know you hate me for keeping you from Nettie, he say. And now she dead (letter : 39)

Nettie got abused by Mr. Albert saying she has dead without thinking she is still alive, this is one of verbal oppression. Dead defined by oxford dictionary is no longer current, relevant, or important.

Sofia knock the man down. The polices come, start slinging the children off the mayor, bang they heads together. Sofia really start to fight. They drag her to the ground. (letter : 90)

Hearing Sofia, Mayor was angry and he slapped Sofia so sofia reply to the mayor, and the police came to attack children and Sofia also attacked the mayor. This is the following description: drag according to oxford dictionary is pull (someone or something) along forcefully, roughly, or with difficulty. Sofia got the physic oppression.

Always going on over colored, said Mayor. Miss Millie say to Sofia, All your children so clean, would you like to work for me, be my maid? (letter :90)

Verbal oppression is oppression in the form of words, it could be a criticism, insults and criticisms cruel (Coloroso, p. 47). Maid defined by oxford dictionary is a female domestic employee, especially one who cleans reception rooms and bedrooms. It is very influential in figures Sofia in a few sentences above.

Well, sometime it might be a case of being undernourish, I say. She muse. He notes undernourish, she say. Who is not? I ast. Harpo. She say. Harpo? He eating more and more every day. Maybe he got a tape worm? She frown. Naw, she say. I do not think it a tape worm. Tape worm make you hungry. Harpo eat when he is not even hungry. What, force it down? This hard to believe, but sometime you hear new things everyday. Not me, you understand, but some folk do say that. Last night for supper he ate a whole pan of biscuits by himself. (letter :62)
Emotional oppression Sofia oppression systematically through such neglect on page 62. Oppression in this novel happens to Sofia psychologically is sacrifice five years is not allowed to see her children.

_Sheriff say, She a crazy woman, your boy's wife. You know that? Mr. ??? say, Yassur, us do know it. Been trying to tell Harpo she crazy for twelve years. Since way before they marry. Sofia come from crazy peoples, Mr. ??say, it not all her fault. And then again, the sheriff know how womens is, anyhow. Sheriff think bout the women he know, say, Yep, you right there. Mr. ?? say, We gon tell her she crazy too, if us ever do git in to see her. Sheriff say, Well make sure you do. And tell her she lucky she alive._ (letter :91)

Oppression verbal has been by the white man to a black nation also. When Mr.Albert came to see Sofia in prison, Mr.Albert asked permission to Sheriff, Sheriff is a white police officer. However, conducted by the sheriff and mr increasingly berate Sofia, saying that Sofia is crazy. Mr.Albert agree that Sofia is crazy women, and they put Sofia as a maid in prison. I put it on this finding above.

From letter 2 until letter 213 there are 21 oppression happened to main character Celie, they are 8 times physical oppression, shown in the words _hurt, choke, beat, beat, laid my head open, beat, beat_, and _slap_. 10 times verbal oppression the shown words _shut up, evil, trampy, dumb, she is my wif, bitch, shut up, black, pore, and ugly_. Emotional oppression shown in the words _took my other baby, kilt, and took me out of school_.

The result of oppression will be shown on diagram below

From the diagram above, the oppression mostly happened in physical and verbal oppression. All the oppression that happened in the novel of The Color Purple by Alice Walker is similar by the theory of Fanon because all the oppression according to Fanon’s theory that the damage of kinds of oppression as essential destructive. It is social that is harmful to the mental health of the victim who were subjugated into oppression. Meanwhile, postcolonialism is the anti conquest theory, where it is mean the colonize is not mean the oppression between country and colonizer country, but
it is about after the colonialism age. Where people keep thinking to oppress another by physical, verbal, emotional and cyber.

**Conclusion**

After analyzing all of the data which are underlined, reading the novel, materials, notion and comment of supervisor. There are various oppression found that can be regained and brought the destructive impacts to the victims and their health mentality. So that, the researcher can finally concluded that every person wants to feel free to run their own lifes. Wherever they live, whatever their gender are, how old their ages are, and whatever their skin colours are, all of the people have their willingness for living free from the oppression.

What are their position in a home are, in a village even in a country, if they are human being, they get their tight for living with happiness and building what they want. Oppression are never brings good influence for anybody. This research will be importance for the reader because it is about human life and can be teach how oppression is really destroy and it is a kind of negative action.

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