

CELLIE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY IN ALICE WALKER'S *THE COLOR PURPLE*

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Abstrak

The Color Purple meneliti tentang posisi, peran perempuan yang diabaikan berjuang untuk melawan ketidaksetaraan gender. Cellie sebagai karakter utama mampu mengubah statusnya dari seorang budak wanita yang dilecehkan secara seksual dan akhirnya berhasil membebaskan diri secara ekonomi dan secara fisik. Cellie melawan ketidaksetaraan gender dengan memperoleh kesadarannya yang membawanya ke kebebasan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: (1) Menggambarkan ketidaksetaraan gender di Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, (2) Mengungkap Perjuangan Celie melawan ketidaksetaraan gender di Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*. Dalam mengeksplorasi penelitian, menggunakan beberapa konsep feminisme menjadi kunci untuk menganalisis apa yang tersembunyi di dalam cerita seperti kekerasan, patriarchy dan gender, dan hal lain yang berhubungan dengan penelitian ini.

Analisis ini menemukan bahwa novel ini menunjukkan penderitaan yang dihadapi oleh cellie sebagai karakter utama yang menghadapi penderitaan dari peindasan, pria dominasi, diskriminasi, kekerasan, ketidakadilan gender. Dia diabaikan oleh laki-laki hitam, terutama Pa dan suaminya. Namun, dengan memiliki hubungan yang baik di antara perempuan yaitu Nettie, Sofia, dan Shug Avery, dia bisa mengembalikan kesadarannya yang membawanya ke dalam kebebasan. Hidup dalam masyarakat patriarkal, Celie harus bertahan penindasan dan kebodohan dari karakter laki-laki. Dia harus patuh pada Pa dan suaminya. Selain itu, ia juga didiskriminasikan oleh suaminya menjadi seorang istri. Keberhasilannya menjadi independen dipengaruhi oleh hubungan baik dirinya di antara perempuan dalam masyarakatnya (Shug).

Kata kunci: feminisme, kekerasan, patriarchy, dan ketidaksetaraan gender

Abstract

The Color Purple examines about the positions, role ignored women who struggles for independency of gender inequality. Cellie the main character is able to change her status of a sexually abused slave woman and free herself economically and physically. Cellie against gender inequality by gain her consciousness that bring her to independence. The purposes of this study are: (1) Depicting gender inequality in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*; (2) Revealing Celie's Struggle against gender inequality in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. In exploring the study, some concepts of feminism becomes the key to analyze what are hidden in the story such as *violence, patriarchy and gender*, and any other article which are related with the study.

The analysis finds that the novel shows miseries faced by Cellie as the main-character who face sufferings from abused, male domination, discrimination, violence, gender inequality. She is ignored by black men, especially her Pa and her husband. Yet, by having good relationship among women namely *Nettie, Sofia, and Shug Avery*, she could gainher consciousness that brings her into independent. Living in patriarchal society, Celie must endure oppression and ignorance from the male characters. She must be obedient to her Pa and her husband. In addition, she is also

discriminated by her husband of being a wife. Her success of being independent influenced by her good relationship among women in her society (Shug).

Keywords: feminism, violence, patriarchy, and gender inequality

INTRODUCTION

Essentially, men and women are created in pairs, they created in same level, the dignity of the same despite having different functions whose purpose is to complement each other. But many people's journey and status change the role of both, especially in a society which gradually become habitual and entrenched. It triggers the creation of discrimination against either sex.

Gender explained that men and women term of values and behaviors are considered to positions and roles. Women are considered inferior and always underestimated by many existing civilization. On term of roles, women and men have different roles in the family. Women's roles are often considered lesser. Women are traditionally the ones to stay at home and take care of the family and do the household chores. The men traditionally work outside the home in the paid workforce. The notion of women's work as lesser stems from this gender based division of labor in the family. Women who work outside the home have been subjected to domestic and service sector labor.

All the cases above are men and women roles in general but gender issues here will discuss how women's role as a housewife who is dominated by her husband through Cellie's characterization in *The Color Purple*. In *The Color Purple* convey Cellie as women was exploited, who is married off to Albert to look after his children and is expected to work on the farm and submit without objection to all of Albert's demands and those of the children. She is also meant to accept Albert's affair with Shug Avery, which extends even to him sleeping with her under the same roof. In fact fidelity is not seen as an important quality by men. Using feminist approach, Cellie in *The Color Purple* struggle to gain her consciousness to brings her into independence and fight her status as a woman in family and social status.

RESEARCH METHOD

In producing a good understanding of Gender Inequality, this study applies feminism approach in analyzing the problem. To portray the first statement of problem about gender inequality, close reading on the play is chosen. The theory of feminism gender theory is taken.

While to reveal second statement of the problem, this study discuss the struggle against Gender Inequality. By concept, Marx's struggles make her get the independence. In further

discussion about the problem above, this study takes Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* as the data source. The data used in this study are in form of quotations taken from the play related Alice walker's *The Color Purple*. In conducting this study, there were some steps taken. First reading was the first step to do to gain the idea of the novel intends to convey. Having got the idea to analyze, close reading was the next step to hold. This step employs to find quotations related to the topic and the which are going to analyze. Close reading was done many times. The first close reading was to understand how the story means and then find the quotations related to Gender Inequality through its plot. The data got from the novel were analyzed according to the statement of the problems. It is synchronized with theory of Gender Inequality and the concept Gender taken from books, critical essays and some other references. The synchronized data were useful to take the final conclusion. Therefore, the significance of the study can be achieved well.

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, this study will discuss and analyze the problem of this study how cellie as the main character is describe towards gender inequality. In this study reveal gender, sexual, male domination, patriarchy. Furthermore, in order to ease the analysis, the term of gender inequality will be continued by evaluating the impact of gender inequality to others character.

Some feminists seem to explain the oppression of women from the relations of production associated with the patriarchal system. Many theorists seek an explanation of male dominance within the framework of exploitation of labor, from orthodox Marxists who associate with women's subordination to capitalist radical feminists who believe that modern society production process involves both capitalist and patriarchal relations (Jackson, 1998). This chapter will explain more about the feminism of the status of women under male dominated which is make gender inequality towards female character reflected to Cellie. The next are the discussion which will be explored more about women's struggle against gender inequality of the listed problems.

Gender Identity and Gender Role.

Based on a psychological theory that women will give birth needs attention because it helps women in childbirth. It shows cellie role as a mother and also a father for her baby.

Harpo, she say. Harpo the oldest boy. Harpo, don't let Celie be the one bring in all the water. You a big boy now. Time for you to help out some. Women work, he say. What? she say. Women work. I'm a man. (Walker, 2003: 12)

As a son harpo should do a job helping his mother but Harpo as a boy let Cellie working alone. Except harpo still a little kid he musn't doing a little bit hard job. Harpo is a big boy and grow up become mature person but he don't helping for Cellie. Harpo thought as a men he don't need to work and doing hard job whereas as a men he must help his mother doing a work. In his mind women and men have a different class in working and men only controlling and seeinbg. Here gender inequality aim to work class. The novel's message is that women must stand up against the unfair treatment they receive at the hands of men and that they must do this by helping one another.

Principles of women lead them to power of structures, women more weak than men but in this context walker show Cellie as a strongger women in class of work. Men should do what Cellie has done like bring all the water. Based on power structures man more strong than women.

Well that's no excuse, say the first one, Her name Carrie, other one name Kate. When a woman marry she spose to keep a decent house and a clean family. Why, wasn't nothing to come here in the winter time and all these children have colds, they have flue, they have direar, they have newmonya, they have worms, they have the chill and fever. They hungry. They hair ain't comb. They too nasty to touch. I touch 'em. Say Kate. And cook. She wouldn't cook. She act like she never seen a kitchen. (Walker, 2003: 10)

Women are exploited very seriously, especially Celie, who is married off to Albert to look after his children and is expected to work on the farm and submit without objection to all of Albert's demands and those of the children. Cellie works cleaning the house, prepare food for Albert and his children. As usually children sometimes getting sick, so as a mother Cellie have to treat them till they get well. In this context before Cellie married to Albert, his children never got attention from Albert. They doing what they want to do, but after married they are more dicipline then before. Their tousled hair comb by Cellie. Their food, fever, colds, school, cleaning their clothes Cellie take responsibility for all those as a new mother for the children.

Gender Inequality

Stereotypes

Negative Stereotype of Women

The second result of gender inequalities found in

the color purple is the negative stereotypes. Here are the details.

An Ideal Woman Is Physical Beauty.

One of the characteristics of an ideal African woman that walker emphases throughout the novel is a physical beauty. We can see that Walker places several beautiful women opposite Cellie; such as Shug Avery, Nettie. Each of these women is considered ideal and even Cellie forces herself to accept that Shug is more deserving of and more likely to receive Mr. Albert's affections seeing from her beauty.

All the men got they eyes glued to Shug's bosom. I got my eyes glued there too. I feel my nipples harden under my dress. My little button sort of perk up too. Shug, I say to her in my mind, Girl, you looks like a real good time, the Good Lord knows you do. (Walker, 2003: 44)

Though Celie compares herself to males in that she's attracted to Shug, Walker makes it clear that Celie is in no ways masculine. Celie is sexually excited by Shug in ways very specific to females.

She go with me in the store. I think what color Shug Avery would wear. She like a queen to me so I say to Kate, Somethin purple, maybe little red in it too. But us look an look and no purple. Plenty red but she say, Naw, he won't want to pay for red. Too happy lookin. We got choice of brown, maroon or navy blue. I say blue. (Walker, 2003: 11)

According to Cellie the appearance of women whoe named Shug was outstanding views that Shug's appearance looks like a queen. Like the queen wearing a fancy dress. According Cellie appearance also support a woman's beauty. Here cellie also want look like Shug. Cellie realized she was not like Shug which beautiful and admired by many men including her husband Albert then when she was with shug in store cellie even want the same as Shug.

Subordination

Women Inferiority: Domination of man

One of the forms of the subordination is the domination of males over females. Example for this is the actions of Mr. Albert, which indicates that the african women in *The Color Purple* was that of male domination, in which woman tends to be controlled by man. It can be proved from the novel's narratives exposing both Mr. Albert attempts as well as success in dominating Cellie, both physically and mentally. For clearing instance, here is the excerpt

describing such control of the male over the female characters of the novel:

Well, you know wherever there's a man, there's trouble. And it seem like, going to Memphis, Grady was all over the car. No matter which way us change up, he want to sit next to Squeak.

Mr.??? try to act like he don't care I'm going.

You'll be back, he say. Nothing up North for nobody like you. Shug got talent, he say. She can sing. She got spunk, he say. She can talk to anybody. Shug got looks, he say. She can stand up and be notice. But what you got? You ugly. You skinny. You shape funny. You too scared to open your mouth to people. All you fit to do in Memphis is be Shug's maid. Take out her slop-jar and maybe cook her food. You not that good a cook either. And this house ain't been dean good since my first wife died. And nobody crazy or backward enough to want to marry you, neither. What you gon do? Hire yourself out to farm? He laugh. Maybe somebody let you work on the railroad. (Walker, 20003: 111)

Further on Mr. Albert decidedly uses his dominance to put Celie down. Obviously, this quote illustrates well how Mr. Albert is domineering his wife and weakens her position and individuality. His superiority over her is once again symptomatically expressed by him. In one of her letters to her sister Nettie, Celie describes the difficulties with the male sovereignty with these words: "Well, you know wherever there's a man, there's trouble". Certainly, it illuminates well her experience of patriarchal oppression and subordination. Celie opposes her husband's critical views about her decision to leave by responding "The jail you plan for me is the one in which you will rot". For Celie, the experience of the limitations that the patriarchal oppression has effected upon her is so strong that she compares it to a jail.

When cellie told that she would go, Albert asked if cellie will going back home. It is proved that as a man and husband Albert needed a companion at his side, and take good care of him. This can be seen clearly through albert statement "You'll be back, he say." Basically being a wife in the family is very important, especially the role of the wife is cooking, babysitting, serving her husband. Cellie was doing his duty as a wife during her stay with albert. cellie Role in stereotype as a figure whose hard work, perseverance, self-contained and has a high devotion to the family especially albert.

The Absence of Equal Education

One of the significant forms of subordination on women is that women of Victorian have no equality in getting education. According to the novel, it is true that only women of the higher class who have a chance of getting better education. While the poor are usually sent to a charity school, a kind of school that was originally a type of elementary school for poor children, established in a variety of parishes, by the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants. Nevertheless, Cellie Who never get beter education because of her situation that raped and contoling by her step father. Cellie never took school, cannot write and read, so it make Albert force and oppress her by her education background. Look at the following except: She ain't smart either, and I'll just be fair, you have to watch her or she'll give away everything you own. But she can work like a man. (Waker, 2003: 4)

Albert degrading cellie through education by saying cellie not equal smart either. Albert statement by saying Cellie ain't smart is one of subordination that cellie was not an educated woman. This evident see from Cellie's family background from the lower classes. Cellie as women should have an education in schools. Educational background cellie affect Cellie ability in various aspects of life especially as a wife. Albert stated that cellie will not be able to work like men. Here show very clear educational differences lead to men dominance of degrading women who are not educated and considered cellie as weak.

Violence of woman

In this part the problems of this study will be analyze. There are many violence occur towards the main character and other character. There is not only violence but also the effect that impacts her life.

"He [Pa] never had a kine word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't. First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it. But I don't never get used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook." (Walker, 2003: 2)

The quotation above reveals that Pa commits several forms of violence against Celie. Clearly, he's physically violent to her by raping her. He also causes emotional damage by never showing any respect for her as a human being; he orders her around without ever saying anything kind to her. Finally, he also emotionally

separates her from others by forcing her to keep quite about the way he's treating her.

Cellie's Struggle Against Gender Inequality Revealed In Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

After having recognized the result of the analysis, concerning to gender inequalities in *The Color Purple* and their effects to women in general exposed in the novel, the writer also wants to present the main result of the study relating to how the main character's struggle towards the gender inequality. Cellie, based on the story, as the main character of the novel is described as an ugly, Suffered, uneducated and plain woman. Thus, it really supports her in establishing her notion and opinion towards the gender inequalities what they should behave and be in that time.

In this case, most of Cellie's struggle towards the gender inequalities concludes to three point, they are her refusal against the subordination on women, negative stereotyping on women and her struggle against the violence on women. The gist is that most of her rejections towards the gender inequalities in the *Color Purple* is just in according to Mary Wollstonecraft states that can be summed up to five aspects women must have independence, women should not associate with hypersensitivity, extreme narcissism, and excessive self-indulgence, women must have an equal education, women should not be inferior to men, women should not be perceived as object or property (Tong, 1998). Explicitly, the following is the finding of the analysis in detail.

Cellie's Struggle Against "the Subordination on Women"

Women must Have Equal Education

One of the most significance having the same perception towards liberal feminist thought by Mary Wollstonecraft is the depiction of Walker that Cellie Struggle against the subordination on women which have no equal education.

In this case Cellie was born in poor family and raped by her Pa. When Albert want to marry her sister Nettie she refuses for Albert's desire. Cellie wants Nettie got education, go to school and make a school teacher. Here is the passage proven:

Well, He say, real slow, I can't let you have Nettie. She too young. Don't know nothing but what you tell her. Sides, I want her to git some more schooling. Make a schoolteacher out of her. But I can let you have Celie. She the oldest anyway. She ought to marry first. She ain't fresh tho, but I spect you know that. She spoiled. Twice. But you don't need a fresh woman no how. I got a fresh one in there myself and she sick all the time. He spit, over the railing.

The children git on her nerve, she not much of a cook. And she big already. (Walker, 2003: 4)

Albert put a feeling for her sister Nettie before he married to Cellie. After they are marrying Alberts still want Nettie. Cellie always thought about Nettie that when albert trying to asking Nettie to marry him cellie struggle fight Albert.. Nettie is not old enough to get married and still have to go to school.

Cellie's Struggle Against "Domination to Self freedom"

The Color Purple tells a story about a black woman who is sexually and physically abused, as well as verbally dominated for close the three decades. Walker has risked exploring subjects and talk about issues which are generally unacceptable to many readers. She seems to have no qualms about exposing any problems which stand in the way of people's freedoms including sexism and racism.

Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* uses dimensions of black women's oppression, racism, and sexism to show a young black woman's fight against domination in order to find her own independence. To clarify Cellie's struggle of domination will be explain here:

But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive". (Walker, 2003: 9)

Celie is the speaker in this quote. She's in Mr. Albert's house with her sister Nettie. This quote is significant because it shows how Celie views herself as an insignificant person and she doesn't believe in violence. Nettie is advising Celie to take matters into her own hands and fight back her abuse with Mr. Albert and his children. Celie doesn't have enough self esteem to believe she can defend herself. Her father's abuse of her both physically and sexually and his threats has made Celie afraid of men in general and she can't break free of that hold on her psyche on her own. This quote is also significant because it shows that Celie is a pacifist and that she is also scared of retaliation from Mr. Albert should she decide to fight back. She's still like the fourteen year old girl that was raped and she couldn't fight back then and she can't fight back now. No matter how much Celie wants to be free, as long as she's being beaten and there is no one to help her, she'll just take the abuse and leave the rest to God.

Cellie's Struggle of "Independency"

In the color by Alice Walker the struggle for identity is shaped at both the personal level, by the individual preferences, and at wider level by social, historical and expectation. Thus, for much of the novel, there is a struggle for Cellie between her desire to escape

from Mr. Albert to Shug, and the expectation that she will obey the man she has been forced to marry.

On the other hand, her identity as a black woman and poor he want rejected Mr. Albert vioaltion towards her. Here cellie struggle for identity in attitudes toward gender and sexuality, social class, and status under male domination in patriachy system which is trigger inequality.

In finding the identity trough her independency, Cellie ecounters with Shug Avery. Shug Avery is a great woman who influences most in Cellie's life. When Cellie wants her freedom He start to fight Albert like quotes below:

"Celie is coming with us, say Shug.
Mr.???s head swivel back straight. Say what? he ast.
Celie is coming to Memphis with me.
Over my dead body, Mr.??? say.
You satisfied that what you want, Shug say, cool as clabber.
Mr.??? start up from his seat, look at Shug, plop back down again. He look over at me. I thought you was finally happy, he say.
What wrong now?
You a lowdown dog is what's wrong, I say. It's time to leave you and enter into the Creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need.
Say what? he ast. Shock.
All round the table folkses mouths be dropping open.
You took my sister Nettie away from me, I say. And she was the only person love me in the world." (Walker, 2003: 106)

Shug shug have a very important role in helping to find Cellie's identity as a woman who against male domination starts from her father who raped her until her husband treatments Albert. As the quote above states cellie has the courage to take a decision to go from albert, shug role very important to tell what Cellie do in decide to be free from the bondage of her husband. Cellie admiration for Shug is one trigger for Cellie can rise up and fight against albert.

Cellie will do what is shug taught because according to Cellie that Shug is right. Cellie as a woman who suffered much during her stay with Albert decided to leave and go with Shug to Memphis and continue his life. Based on stereotype Cellie as a woman believes that after she release from albert there will be no one can force her in the future. Shug and her idea have a central position in the text. Her idea becomes main idea of emancipation and ideology is showed in the story.

According to Shug women should have their own choice and decision and release them from the inequality culture role that make women become an obedient wife and just follow, accept and serve husband's demand. Women consciously have to struggle inequality to get their rights as an individual, self-esteem and position. Cellie have to do that because she have equal

position with the men. Cellie have freedom to marry everybody whom she love. Shug also shows us her idea about women's struggle to face male domination that leading to gender inequality.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing and interpreting the obtained data in the previous study, it is found that there are many forms of violence, marginalization and subordination reflected on the novel. To make them clear, here, the researcher explores each point.

The Color Purple tells us the inequality conflict between Cellie as main woman character and Mr. Albert, from this conflict which is caused inequality culture. Walker has provided the reader with gender inequality throughout the story exposed on *Cellie*, which covers several significant points, first of which is the negative stereotype on women. In this case, includes five crucial points. First, the idea of ideal women is physical beauty. Second, women are perceived as weak and fragile. Third, women are perceived as an object or a property. Fourth, woman must have feminine skills. And the last, women are stereotyped as having hypersensitivity, extreme narcissism, and excessive self-indulgence.

Second point is subordination, this means respectively the inferior position of female before male, the absence of the independency in addition to inequality of education for women. The novel's narratives exposing how Mr. Albert attempts as well as success in dominating, oppress celie trough degradation that Cellie cannot become a good wife because Cellie background education.

Next point is violation, form of violence described by the novel can be found out in the way how Mr. Albert treated his wife, Celie has been beaten so much, she has become numb to life. Violence against women is caused by gender inequality including unequal power relations between women and men, rigid gender roles, norms and hierarchies, and ascribing women lower status in society.

Promoting and achieving gender equality is a critical element of the prevention of violence against women.related to Cellie status in society as a lower person, Cellie not only got the physical violation but also degradation from albert. Albert never give an attention to Cellie, he always anger, deemed cellie as unfortunate women that cannot cook, doesn't smart either, all cellie's shortage encourage him to oppress Cellie.

On the other hand, Celie tells God that she has been raped by her father and that she is pregnant for the second time with his child. Celie's mother is quite ill and after cursing Celie, dies, leaving Celie alone to face her father. Celie then turns her attention to protecting her sister, Nettie, from her father's sexual advances. Celie soon marries Mr. Albert after her father strikes a bargain with the older widower, and Celie finds herself in a loveless marriage, caring for her husband's four children and being regularly raped and beaten. Celie becomes

fixated on Shug Avery, a glamorous blues singer who is her husband's mistress.

In addition how Cellie facing all her misserable life start from her father raped her until she got married to Albert and how Albert treated her are very extraordinary. Cellie struggle against of gender inequality explained how she struggle over subordination. In this case Cellie refuses for her sister marrige with Albert wherever her sister Nettie still young enough to get married. She wants her sister going to school then get good education and fullfill Nettie's ambition become a missionary.

Other Cellie's struggle is against Albert oppression toward her to gain her power intend for self freedom. Cellie views herself as an insignificant person and she doesn't believe in violence. Nettie is advising Celie to takematters into her own hands and fight back her abuse with Mr. Albert and his children. Celie doesn't have enough self esteem to believe she can defend herself. Cellie decided go with Shug and said that shug is a woman would treat him properly.

Cellie struggle to get her freedom and achievement against violance committed by Albert and her father had been influenced by people who closest to her, she is Shug avery. Shug presence beside her getting bolder and strongger until finally she dared to take the decision going away from Albert and continue her life. Previous cellie is quiet person doesn't daring to fight Albert but to encourage her freedom and her feeling to shug make her willing to take decision and wants to fight for freedom from albert desire.

Shortly this novel described the power of woman to get their freedom by struggles against gender inequality aspect. Automatically, this case also removed the opinion that woman are equal, and finally she get her goal from her struggle against that are the freedom and the equal between man and woman as the feminist's goal.

Additionally, after knowing about the refusal of Cellie through this study, the writer could draw a conclusion that Cellie was succeed getting her freedom from violence, male domination and abused . Cellie went against all that was known and understood *The Color Purple*. She spoke her mind, had original thought and strived for equality. Cellie was the model of feminism, giving us the idea that maybe one day if there are more people like cellie that the world will be a different place. In the end, that is just what happened, since it is proven that Cellie's thought has already been tracked by other figures who struggle for the gender equalities by developing the concept of feminist.

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