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**Womanist Mechanisms of Empowerment:
A Psychoanalytic Study of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple***

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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Dedication

Dear God, First and foremost, I am extremely grateful to Allah who helped me to finish this modest work.

I would like to dedicate my Thesis to my beloved mother who never doubted me and provided me with unwavering moral and emotional support and raised me to be the person I am today. I am on my way to realize her dream.

To my father; the most ambitious writer, dreamer, guider I know, whom I am following his path today to make him proud dad. I am pleased of being his daughter.

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to examine the womanist mechanisms of empowerment and self-recognition that the protagonist Celie uses in her process of growing up in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982). On the basis of psychoanalysis and womanist strategies, the study attempts to analyze Celie's stages of metamorphosis as well as the womanist strength that is achieved from three sources. Female solidarity provides her with unity and support with other women and creates a harmonious world that encourages her to overcome all the obstacles that come into her way. Letter writing, comes as a catalyst for Celie's breakout for her self-enclosure. Lastly is quilting, which functions as an alternative methodology of speech that enables Celie to break out the silence and speak up for herself. Therefore, the study aims at scrutinizing the central character's process of rejecting her status as oppressed and a victim woman to adopt after the tragic experiences the role of fully independent woman. Walker believes that the patriarchal evils of racism and sexism are the cause of oppression from which Afro-American women suffer from. Thus Walker quoted the term 'womanism' as a reaction to this double oppression as well as to feminism that fails to address black women's sufferings.

Key words: Racism, sexism, womanism, feminism, Alice Walker, psychoanalysis, Freud.

Résumé

Cette étude vise à examiner les mécanismes féministes d'autonomisation et de reconnaissance de soi que la protagoniste Celie utilise dans son processus de croissance dans *La Couleur Pourpre* (1982) d'Alice Walker. Sur la base de la psychanalyse et des stratégies féministes, l'étude tente d'analyser les étapes de métamorphose de Célie ainsi que la force féministe qui s'obtient à partir de trois sources. La solidarité féminine crée un monde harmonieux qui l'encourage à surmonter tous les obstacles qui se présentent à elle. L'écriture de lettres, vient comme un catalyseur pour l'évasion de Celie pour son auto-enfermement. Enfin, il y a le quilting, qui fonctionne comme une méthodologie alternative de la parole qui permet à Celie de briser le silence et de s'exprimer. Par conséquent, l'étude vise à scruter le processus du personnage central de rejet de son statut de femme victime à adopter après l'expérience tragique le rôle de femme indépendante. Walker croit que les maux patriarcaux du racisme et du sexisme sont la cause de l'oppression et de la souffrance des femmes afro-américaines. C'est ainsi que Walker a cité le mot 'womanism' en réaction à cette double oppression ainsi que le féminisme ne tient pas compte des souffrances des femmes noires.

Mots clé : Racisme, sexisme, womanisme, féminisme, Alice Walker, psychoanalyse, Freud.

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Introduction

Womanist Mechanisms of Empowerment are the challenging strategies used by black women to overcome everyday hassles and horrific forms of oppression against them during the time period of the twentieth century. Actually, these mechanisms play major role in the quest for selfhood and the shaping of the identity of Afro-American women being challenged by hard life conditions. Alice Walker through her works exhibits her commitment to depict the authentic situations of the real black woman; she believes that black women's sufferance comes in part, if not fully, from the notions of racism and sexism. As a result of this, Walker suggests womanism as an ideal. In fact, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) is a novel that is about the marginalized life of black women, the racism that they suffer from, and the sexual abuse that they experience in their African-American community. Women's power was firmly produced as a reaction of double oppression from the white society and the black patriarchal society. Therefore, this novel depicts women's power and strength as means to protest against male supremacy in order to maintain the feminine existence on the basis of womanist mechanisms. The ultimate reason behind the choice of this work specifically lies on the strong desire to explore the role of womanist mechanisms in empowering black women in proclaiming their liberties.

This research is a depiction of the protagonist's quest for selfhood and how she challenges all types of oppression and submissiveness to come out with her own terms of independence and fulfillment in a society ruled by male sexist order. The main aim behind this study is to demonstrate the womanist mechanisms of empowerment such as female bonding, letter writing and the process of quilting and their impact to shift the life of the protagonist. Moreover, it shows the role of these womanist strategies in the character's voyage of self-discovery, by which she stands up with her own voice. Thus, it sheds light on

the obstacles which the protagonist faces in her everyday life. Besides, the study focuses on how the main character fights back for herself through her process of psychic growth and the womanist bonding with other females in the novel.

The study is read from a psychoanalytic perspective, which uses theories of Freud and Lacan to detect any psychological traumas that Celie faces during her process of self-development and growth. Moreover, since Walker is credited with coining the term womanism, this study aims at tackling the issues that the main character endures from a womanist perspective. The research focuses also on the sufferings that Celie undergoes and how she overcomes these issues through creating a community of sisters during the quilt-making as well as the process of writing as concepts related to womanism. Walker stresses Celie's transformation from a naïve young girl to a fully independent woman to inspire black women to go through a journey of self-discovery and affirmation suggesting in this way her views on womanism. It is important to note that this study follows the 8th edition of MLA.

The study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical foundation of the general context of the novel. It also discusses womanism and the psychoanalytic theories which are used in the analysis of this work. The chapter is split into two sections; the first section of the chapter introduces the socio-historical context of the African-American community during the twentieth century and its impact on the part of women. The second section tackles the two theories that are used for further examination of the work. The first part of this section tackles the psychoanalytic concepts that are used in the analysis of the novel. Starting with Sigmund Freud's studies of trauma in his *Studies On Hysteria* (1895) to analyze Celie's past event that causes her trauma and its relation to the process of remembering this traumatic event. This part also questions the concept of Narcissism in Freud's essay *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914). Through which, the study attempts to study the main character's inward and outward desire. Freud differentiates between the sexual

desire directed towards the self as primary Narcissism and the one directed towards the other as secondary Narcissism. Jacques Lacan's paper "*The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*" (1977) is used as a last concept in this part to clarify that the mirror scene is an important stage for Celie's self-recognition. The second part of this section uses the womanist theory and defines Alice Walker's own definition of the term in her collection of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983).

The second chapter of the dissertation is an analysis of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. It seeks to analyze the main character's behaviors using certain psychological theories of different psychologists to give a subtle explanation for different decisions she makes throughout the novel. This chapter is divided into three sections; the first section portrays the traumatic dilemma which the main character goes through during her everyday life. The section is discussed from the psychoanalytic perspective to detect any psychological traumas which the protagonist faces during her process of maturity. First because she has a maternal gap due to the absence of her mother, then as a subject of rapes by an alleged father and later as a servant of a husband's children. This led Celie to shift to an adulthood at an early age. The second section stresses the psychoanalytic model of growth to analyze the psychic progress of the protagonist. This section adopts the Freudian belief of Narcissism which the main character inadvertently follows in her process of self-definition. The third section deals with mirroring the body as the protagonist's crucial scene in discovering her stolen and fragmented body.

The third chapter of the dissertation demonstrates the process of a woman's quest for her self-appreciation, and how she liberates herself physically, sexually and economically to lead a life of her own. In this respect the study is discussed from a womanist perspective since the novel holds some womanist aspects, as far as the protagonist's journey of self-discovery is concerned. The chapter consists of three sections. The first section of the chapter deals with

female bonding as a womanist strategy and its role in Celie's self-assertion. In *The Color Purple*, female characters get along with each other through narrating their stories and experiences. The aim of this section is to describe the magical tie between black women and its role in achieving their freedom. The second section of the chapter subsequently seeks to emphasize the process of writing as a crucial step towards self-liberation. The third section of the chapter delves into the act of quilting and its association with discourse among women and the written form of the letters.

The conclusion is to exhibit the role of womanist mechanisms in the process of empowerment. Walker shows the amount of violence an Afro-American woman goes through. By the end, her message and vision are that women have all the powerful strategies that enable them to stand up against patriarchy through supporting each other via sisterhood. Walker suggests an alternative methodology of speech for the protagonist to pour her anger and pain through the pen and the needle.

Chapter One: Theoretical Foundations

The first chapter is a theoretical foundation of the general context of the novel and it attempts to discuss the womanist and psychoanalytic theories that are used in the analysis of this work. The chapter is split into two sections. The first section introduces the socio-historical context of the African-American community in the twentieth century to portray the status of African-American women and how they were oppressed for being both black and female which helps in understanding the context of the novel as far as the double oppression of women is concerned. The second section, however, aims at highlighting womanism and psychoanalytic theories to provide a basis in which further examination and analysis relies on. The first part in this section explores the concepts that make the novel a psychoanalytic one. Three concepts will be discussed in this chapter. The first one is Freud's theory of trauma. The second one is about Freud's stages of narcissism, and the third one is Lacan's the mirror stage. The second part in this section discusses the concept of Womanism which comes as a response to black women's double marginalization. Feminism movement was unable to represent the blacks' sufferings, because it tackles the issues of white females only. Alice Walker is credited for coining the word "Womanism" to announce that feminism fails to address black woman issues of both racism and intra-racial racism who carries two concerns, being black and being female. Walker's own target is to liberate women who have been programmed to accept oppression of different kinds. Through her womanist belief, she wants to depict the hardships that women of all races and colors go through. Therefore, this section includes Walker's own definition of the term which will be explained in detail.

I. The Socio-historical Context: Black Women's Struggle against Racism and Sexism

Living in a society where you value as a human based on their gender, colour of the skin, cannot be easily. It is not a judgment thereby, when we look profoundly to the situation, one can be certain that it is definitely devastating. For a sensitive creature like women, the situation may drive her to adopt two extreme positions; either a very rebellious and resisting woman, or a meek and broken-self woman.

Being black and female is the identification of black women as both Afro-Americans and women (Torfes 14). By the time when the African-American community becomes more stable and frees itself from the shackles of slavery, the case of black women was not part of the change, the status of these women was challenging.

Black women in America were vulnerable to different kinds of humiliation and discrimination on the one hand, as part of an odd race and culture and on the other hand for being simply women. They were regarded as weak, ugly, dirty and their role in life is no more than nursing children and doing house chores. In her (2009) article "*Black Women's Identity: Stereotypes, Respectability and Passionlessness (1890- 1930)*", Mahassen Mgadmi asserts that "Black women were conceived and pictured as primitive, lustful, seductive, physically strong, domineering, unwomanly and dirty... stereotypical perceptions of Black women, which placed them outside the enclave of delicacy, femininity, respectability and virtue" (40). Hence, women are dependent on males since their freedom is restricted under the notions of submission and obedience. As they are forced to hard labors such as working on tobacco, plantations among others, black women were seen as animals as Collins describes: "economically exploitative, physically demanding, and intellectually deadening—the type of work long associated with Black women's status as 'mule'" ("Black Feminist Thought" 48). That is to say, women were the victims of regression and aggression that were inherited inside

the blacks since ages, so they grow up silent, indecisive, and living their lives with absolute obedience and with no questioning, the thing that worsened the situation even more.

It is known that African-American people are susceptible to the act of racism. In this context, a common misconception is that black women are less influenced by racism than men. But, in fact, it is the black women who are the worst affected and at the brink of society and at the receiving point of every type of oppression as they were double oppressed which has been called by Frances M. Beal 'Double Jeopardy'¹ (King 46). In his pamphlet *Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female* (1979) cited in Deborah K. King's article "*Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology*" (1988). She argues that: "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" (Beal qtd. In King 46). Therefore, the pressure of such double oppression was making the life quite hard for Afro-American women to handle, because black women were not only assaulted and oppressed within the white society in which the white racist managed to violate and dehumanize them, but also within the black society by the men of their own race. That is to say, black women are undeniably different from their counterparts; on the one hand, from black males, and on the other hand; from their white females. As Showalter points out, for both Afro-Americans and white women, the black woman is "the Other Woman, the silenced partner" (qtd. In Torfes 14). They were double oppressed by both societies. Many years ago, black women fought against "the sexism of black literary history" as well as "the feminist literary history" (qtd. In Torfes 14). Thus they were 'doubly marginalized' (Ward and Herndl qtd. In Chapagain 116). They fight against sexism within the same community and racism from outside, as Chapagain in this context suggests that: "to be black and female is to suffer from the twin disadvantages of racial discrimination and gender bias" (116). By putting in this position, black women found

themselves at the margin of the society since they are neglected from both societies (Smith 315). Thus, their experience of oppression is different and unique because the problem was actually that women had to face racism from the whites, and sexism from both the whites and the blacks themselves who were practicing power on the weakest person they had to feel their manhood, due to the deep scars and complexities that the whites caused to them. Smith acknowledges: “black women experience a unique form of oppression in discursive and nondiscursive practices alike because they are victims at once of sexism, racism and by extension classism” (317).

Similarly, Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1989 essay, “*Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*”, suggests that black women’s experience is very different from that of black men and white females. Thus, they encounter double-discrimination. She assumes that:

Black women can experience discrimination... similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men. Black women sometimes experience discrimination... similar to white women’s experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-discrimination on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. (149)

In other words, black women are in-between two discriminations; racism from one side and sexism from the other. Therefore, they were caught between double edge and crossfires discrimination, from both the blacks and the whites which was for them a bitter truth that they had to accept it anyway. Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality of racism and sexism was always linked to the black feminist thought in the movement as Patricia Collins believes that the black feminist thought comes as a reaction to the intersectional oppressions that black women suffer from, she points out that: “If intersecting oppressions did not exist, Black feminist thought and similar oppositional knowledges would be unnecessary [...] Black

feminist thought aims to empower African-American women within the context of social injustice sustained by intersecting oppressions” (“Black Feminist Thought” 22).

African-American women were at the high extreme of racist assaults within the white society, for they were called “niggers” and “black bitches”. They became as an example of ugliness and abhorrence. While white females were considered as symbol of beauty and purity. According to Thomas S. Szase :“Americans have used this blackness and madness as their standards and transcendent symbols of evil, and whiteness and sanity as their standards and transcendent symbols of good” (qtd.in “African American Women”). This white standard of beauty puts women in a more subjugated and oppressed position as far as they became regarded as inferiors than their counterpart black men. Hence, black women were neglected in the American society because of their skin color. Maria del Guadalupe Davidson in her analysis of the article “*The Occult of True Black: Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies Womanhood*” written by Ann duCille in 1994. Through which DuCille questions the interest of the white society on the black women other than white women (Karpetova 22). Based on this question, Davidson states that: “Why have we—black women—become the subjected subject of so much contemporary scholarly investigation, the peasants under the glass of intellectual inquiry in the 1990s?” (qtd. In Karpetová 22). Later in her article, Davidson answers herself that black women not only perceived as inferiors, but they are not perceived at all and this is because they their experience is more tragic and different (22).

Seemingly, Afro-Americans were either conceived through stereotypical images, or not conceived at all. In other words, they were invisible. Black females being part of this invisibility made them lose the sense of the ‘I’ or the self, especially as being part of a black race which was already regarded as problem, apart from being a woman in the first place. Consequently, the notion of invisibility drove women to lose their individuality; hence, they were considered as a property the thing that affects their own reflection to their selves.

Additionally, besides the psychological distress that they felt inside due to acts of harassment each and every day, black females would have developed a sense of disappointment towards their race and nature, especially after specifying characteristics of beauty only for the whites, so black females image to themselves and their nature was shacked, Hill Collins confirms:

Prevailing standards of beauty claim that no matter how intelligent, educated, or “beautiful” a Black woman may be, those Black women whose features and skin color are most African must “git back.” Within the binary thinking that underpins intersecting oppressions; blue-eyed, blond, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without the Other Black women with African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair. (“Black Feminist Thought” 89)

In other words, black women were rated for their skin color not for their intelligence, education....Collins also believes that Female standards of beauty not only restricted to the American features of blue eyes, blonde skin, but also it includes the African touch of black skin color.

Therefore, black women’s image to their identities was shaped by principles of the white so they started to feel distorted and not regular which negatively affected their self-identities recognition and belongingness to the black race, the thing that created a complexity and hatred towards themselves and to their race, it is important to mention that this case actually was portrayed in different literary works that mirrored the psychological problems and complexities of the black females, such as Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. Others may be affected in another better way in which black females transform the whites’ sexist attitudes into positive vibes which carries within a glorification of the black heritage; which leads to what is known as the Black Nationalism.

While black women worked hand in hand with black men to resist and fight all types of racism, they found themselves following a different path because afterwards this resistance

lead to the construction of patriarchal society and turned against them. Bell Hooks argues that despite the same conditions that black women and men face “political leaders upheld patriarchal values. As black men advanced in all spheres of American life—they encouraged black women to assume a more subservient role” (4). To make it clear, after the slavery time when the black men took a specific roles in the Afro-American society, they still have an inferior look to the black women as submissive and servants.

African-American women’s issues do not end with the issue of racism, they encounter another form of oppression based on gender which is sexism. African-American women not only lead their lives as black, but also as females. Being black and female in a white dominated society means being in a hard position. Lorraine Bethel in this respect writes to explain black women’s sufferance from both racism and sexism, she states:

Black women embody by their sheer physical presence two of the most hated identities in this racist/sexist country. Whiteness and maleness in this culture have not only been seen as physical identities but codified into states of being and world views. The codification of Blackness and femaleness by whites and males is contained in the terms “thinking like a woman” and “acting like a nigger”, both based on the premise that these are typically negative Black and female ways of acting and thinking. Therefore the most pejorative concept in the white male world view would be thinking and acting like a “nigger woman” (qtd. in “African American Women”).

Being black and woman has double edge; that is being defined under the negative connotations of blackness and femaleness.

Afro-American women had to cope with a society where their voice was not allowed to be heard, their access to language is only through expressing agreement about something they were asked to do, and which was expected from them to do anyway. In her book *Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan describes the situation of black women inside their houses

as follows: “The very condition of being a housewife can create a sense of emptiness, non-existence, nothingness in women” (264). Hence, through silencing women and marginalizing them, the patriarchal society was indeed creating some psychological traumas and complexities, among them the loss of sense of identity, because originally, black women were often rejected on the social level by virtue of their race and their gender, and were often conceived as men-like women who must not be treated as any other women, so this double oppression created a sense of displacement which in turn led to low self-esteem. It is important to mention that the loss of identity is strongly related to the concept of double oppression, because as mentioned above black women are vulnerable to discrimination both of racism and sexism, and since these two concepts are slightly intertwined, black females cannot in many ways understand what was exactly wrong with them, or what was exactly causing them much problems in their lives, hence they became lost and agitated. “The combination of being a woman, having greater stress, and facing greater racial discrimination predicted increased psychiatric symptoms for African American women” (Thomas et al. 307-8). Thus, this situation would have led Afro-American women to have some psychological disabilities especially when these women were subject to sexual exploitation, rape, violence, and forced labor.

Strangely enough, besides of all kinds of oppression and violence over black women, Afro-American men hankered after white standards of beauty and left their black women victims of both racist and sexist assaults. Cleaver, a black leader believes that white women are symbol of beauty and they are more beautiful than black females, he suggests that: “A white woman is beautiful, even if she is bald-headed and only has one tooth.... There is softness about white woman, something delicate and soft inside. But a niggerbitch seems to be full of steel granite hard and resisting, not soft and submissive like white women” (qtd. In “African American Women”).

Although black men were somehow in the same position just like their counterpart of black women and they have been always fighting racism within the white society, they themselves have an inferior look to their black women with the same intensity as white men. Walker as cited in Sojourner claims that: “They [Black men] never examine their relationship to black women and rarely to black children. Because their whole thing is to be manly. Not only to be men. Their whole number is to be white men” (qtd. In Chapagain 116). Therefore, black men have the same white stereotypes over the black women and children.

To maintain their control over black women, black males used all types of oppression and domestic violence within the black homes. In this context Carol J. Sheffield in her article “*Sexual Terrorism*” (2014) explains how men use violence as a tool to frighten women and to use them for their own needs. She argues that: “The intention is to make women frightened, and therefore it is easier to dominate them physically and psychologically” (qtd. In Hellene 46). She also adds “Violence and the threat of violence against females represent the need of patriarchy to deny that a woman’s body is her own property and that no one should have access to it without her consent” (qtd. In Hellene 46). Black males maintain their power to dominate women’s bodies, and to physically and psychologically violate them as their own property.

Although gender and race discriminations are cruel issues, Afro-American women feel that sexism seems to be more sustained than racism whether physically or psychologically since it is an oppression that occurs within their own community. so, they have no other choice just to live with it. whereas, racism for them although, it is another way to dehumanize them, they believe that they are able to reduce it especially with the black movements, black women became aware how to impose themselves within the white society when they accept it as a fact that those who believe in it, they would never change their minds

and accept them. Therefore, what matters for them is black male superiority where they can be oppressed within the same community.

Therefore, instead of keeping silent and waiting for a miracle to happen to free them, black women believed in their abilities to liberate themselves from the shackles of oppression. They started participating in social movements calling for women's rights with some female figures such as: Anna Cooper, Maria W. Stewart, and Sojourner Truth² and others.

II. Psychoanalysis and Womanism: A Comprehensive Overview

II. 1. The Psychoanalytic Concepts

II .1.1. The Theory of Trauma

Trauma theory can be referred back to the earlier works of the great master of psychology Sigmund Freud. Its initial research object is the study of Shock and Hysteria in the late nineteenth-century. Jean-Martin Charcot, a French neurologist is considered as the pioneer in the study of hysteria after Paul Briquet. Jean-Martin Charcot in his study of hypnosis and hysteria, his primary interest was female patients. As a neurologist, he believes that hysteria is a neurological disorder; it damages areas of the brain which in turn produces physical symptoms in the patients' movement. Pierre Janet is another psychological figure whose concern is on hysteria's symptoms, he distinguishes between five symptoms of hysteria; amnesia, anesthesia, abulia, motor control diseases and character change. He believes that these symptoms can occur due to the split and dissociation of the patients' consciousness. Researchers continue to study the concept of hysteria, in addition to Charcot, Janet and Freud, include Joseph Breuer, Hermann Oppenheim, Abram Kardiner and Morton Prince (Balaev 361).

Inspired by Charcot and Janet's work on hysteria, Sigmund Freud developed their studies on hysteria in his *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), in collaboration with Joseph Breuer, and later in his published paper of eighteen case studies entitled "*The Aetiology of Hysteria*"

(1896), he points out that hysteria is a condition of psychological trauma (Herman 12). Freud argues that the patients' neurosis which he calls 'hysteria' results from a repressed and early experience of sexual abuse during the childhood period (Balaev 361). Freud and Breuer emphasize on this idea in their previous work *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) that "the original event was not traumatic in itself but only in its remembrance. Because the original event continues to inflict harm" (Balaev 361). When the patient makes traumatic memories, reoccur by talking and expressing the intense emotions resulted from these past events, hysterical symptoms can be alleviated through the talking therapy as Freud and Breuer name it 'abreaction' and later Freud rename it 'psycho-analysis' (Herman 12). Through the case studies of hysteria, Freud discovers that under each study, "there are *one or more occurrences of premature sexual experience*, occurrences which belong to the earliest years of childhood" which can't be reached only through his work of "psycho-analysis" ("The Aetiology of Hysteria" 203). That is to say, the events which were unbearably traumatic in the childhood (sexual assault, incest, rape...), require the talking cure to relate past events to reality and gain freedom from its hysterical symptoms (Balaev 361).

According to Freud and Breuer, the traumatic memories cause psychological disorder. However, they also helped to discover the past events stored in the unconscious (Balaev 361). Thus, trauma is highly related to the memory as the past event stored in the unconscious, it inflicts an altered state of consciousness i.e. a split on the part of consciousness which is called by Janet 'dissociation' (361). Freud and Breuer hold similar view to Janet that the concept of trauma inflicts the psyche which in turn causes the split in the state of consciousness through their belief of the later effect that the original event produces. This later harm weakens the psyche and can cause dissociation or what Freud and Breuer calls 'double consciousness', are the principles and the effects of trauma which Freud explores throughout his career (361). Therefore their definition of dissociation goes as follow:

The longer we have been occupied with these phenomena [hysterical] the more we have become convinced that the splitting of consciousness which is so striking in the well-known classical cases under the form of ‘double conscience’ is present to a rudimentary degree in every hysteria, and that a tendency to such dissociation, and with it the emergence of abnormal states of consciousness (which we shall bring together under the term ‘hypnoid’) is the basic phenomenon of this neurosis. (“Studies on Hysteria” 09)

That is to say, the hysterical phenomenon is the result of dissociation which continuously wreaks havoc and fragments the psyche to produce an altered state of consciousness.

Central to any study of ‘traumatic neurosis’ is Freud’s later work “*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*” (1920). His interest in the notion of trauma had led him to explore the problem of traumatic repetition in which he believes that the conflicts caused by traumatic experiences are repressed on the patient’s unconscious and continuously reappear later often in dreams. Conflicts of the painful events marked the appearance of ‘traumatic neurosis’ (Balaev 362).

Freud argues that the mind has a protective barrier against the external danger. However, ‘Fright’ takes place which is the state that one encounters while unprepared for it, unlike fear and anxiety which denote a preparation on the patient’s mind to protect him from unexpected danger. Thus, the absence of fear and anxiety can produce the so called ‘traumatic neuroses (Balaev 362). Anxiety is like a prediction which comes as a defense mechanism to protect the mind from unpredictable traumatic neurosis. While, fright has no defense structure, it causes the widespread destruction of the protective shield (362). Freud in Balaev argues that: “We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield ... in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli” (362). As Freud describes it, the external stimuli are powerful which are able to

destroy the protective barrier of the mind and cause shocks and traumatic neurosis to the unprepared subject. However, when anxiety occurs the internal defense mechanism is undertaken against these external stimuli.

Patients who suffer from traumatic neurosis are “repetition-compulsion” of traumatic event that happens in the past through dreams. Fright occurs as the patient return to the moment of the traumatic event in his dreams, so he repeats the trauma in order to “master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis” (Freud qtd. In Balaev 362). So, the lack of anxiety is the first reason of traumatic neurosis. Therefore, Freud concludes that patients who suffer from ‘traumatic neurosis’ have no control over their past events memories since such painful memories are stored in the unconscious (dream) state. He suggests “patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident...they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it” (“Beyond the Pleasure” 12-13).

In his discussion of the process of remembering, Freud suggests that the patient is unable to remember the real traumatic event. However, what he can remember is only the effects of that experience which he calls (past event) (Balaev 362). He argues that the patient “cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him, and what he cannot remember may be precisely the essential part of it”. Instead, the patient “is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary event instead of, *as the physician would prefer to see, remembering* it as something belonging to the past” (qtd.in Balaev 362). Thus, unlike the talking therapy, traumatic memories according to Freud are unauthentic since it lacks the sense of narrative of the actual event. Because the process of remembering was and remains something belongs to the past (362).

A number of scholarships arise to establish the Freudian notion of trauma. The American Scholar Cathy Caruth appears as one of the prominent figures of the 1990s to lead

the authority of the term 'trauma theory'. In her *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), Caruth takes a further study of the psychological trauma, mainly the effects of traumatic experiences on the individual and its role in literature on the basis of Freud's trauma theories. She categorizes 'trauma theory' as "a sudden, disastrous, unavoidable experience", and the subject's reaction to the traumatic event can be seen as: "a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or set of events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts, or behaviors stemming from the event... not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly in its repeated possession of the one who experienced it" (05). Caruth's definition shows the psychological symptoms of trauma similar as Freud's belief of the latency period; in which he argues that the effects of the original event are the ones that produce trauma like dreams, memories,.... Thus, Caruth takes a particular interpretation of Freud's latency period, through her concept of 'belatedness'. In which she believes that trauma is a belated uncontrollable reaction to the original event through hallucinations and other intrusions. She further adds that trauma is "not locatable in the simple violent or original event in the individual's past" (17). But, it is only defined through "the way it is precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on" (04). That is to say, the real event is not traumatic in itself, but rather its later effect. In addition, she examines the effects of the conflicts produced by traumatic experiences on both sides; on the consciousness and on a specific text because to her, trauma is not a pathological problem rather it is narrating the past event through the process of narrative.

Trauma that Afro-American women suffer comes from both sides; from the white society and within their own community. Black females were oppressed because they are blacks and women at the same time. Thus, they suffer from double oppression and serious physical and psychological damage. To defend their masculinity and to show how strong they

are, black males used all types of oppression and domestic violence over the black women Chapagain argues that: “Patriarchy is the ideological foundation of sexism in almost all societies. The focus of patriarchal ideology is the superiority of men and the inferiority of women” (47). The inferiority over black women is not surprising given a particular nature of patriarchy as the reason of this kind of oppression. Thus, Black women’s trauma not only due to the act of racism, but also the sexism caused by the balck society.

II.1.2. Sigmund Freud’s Stages of Narcissism

Sigmund Freud is considered as the founding father of the psychoanalysis Therapy to the discipline of psychology. He emphasized on the mind as the one that is responsible for the conscious and unconscious decisions on the basis of human’s desires and drives that guide people to act and behave in a certain way. He believed that there are three concepts stored in the mind of the individuals to help them shape their personalities; the Id, Ego, and Super Ego. Based on sexual energy or what he calls “libido”, Freud published his essay “*On Narcissism: An Introduction*” (1914). He argued that narcissism is “libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation” (Freud 74). That is to say, all humans have impulses to take care of themselves and to protect their lives from unexpected danger; these drives towards the self are totally related to our sexual desires towards others. Thus, we cannot separate our inward desire from the outward desire to care for ourselves. Freud calls this sexual desire directed to the self as “Primary” or “normal” narcissism.

Donald C. Abel in his book *Freud On Instinct and Morality* (1989) asserts that Freud differentiates between two types of narcissism; primary narcissism and secondary narcissism. In each of which the individual’s sexual desire (libido) is focused on the self rather than the object (Abel 34). He states that: “Primary narcissism refers to the libidinal state of an infant at the beginning of its life; all its libido is directed toward itself ” (Abel 35). “Secondary narcissism is a possible later development. Shortly after birth, an infant begins to direct its

sexual energy away from the self and invest it in external objects. But later on some individuals withdraw their libido from objects and reinvest it in themselves. This redirection of libido to the ego constitutes secondary narcissism” (Abel 36).

Freud believes that people are born without the ego and during their childhood stage they start to shape it through the process of acquisition in their society, in this context he hypothesises that: “ I may point out that we are bound to supposed that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed”. (Freud 76-77). Primary narcissism can be considered as the libido that directed its energy to the ego, the thing that makes the “ego-libido” full of energy, then it causes it to shift its energy to the object; or what can be defined as “object-libido”. Hence, Freud’s distinction between the self (ego) as love object and others’ love as an alternative was explained by Symington as:

In all theoretical models within the psychoanalytic literature, narcissism occurs when the ego takes itself as erotic object or, to put it in classical Freudian terminology, when the libido takes its own self as a love object[...] This suggests that there is an alternative: this may sound obvious, but this alternative is seldom focused on clearly. If there is some other object that the ego can take rather than itself, what is it? Logically, if Narcissus can fall in love with his own reflection, the alternative is that he can fall in love with another. (29-30)

That is to say, “loving oneself” is a narcissists’ primary love, the thing that makes others’ love an alternative choice., When the love of the self is outward of itself or in other words, when the “ego libido” invested to the “object libido” . The return of the “object libido” to the “ego” constitutes” narcissism”, at the same time, it causes pathologies in different states of individuals’ personality; among this, schizophrenia which the individual’s libido withdraws from objects and produces megalomania. In this regard Freud states:

The libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism. But the megalomania itself is no new creation; on the contrary, it is, as we know, a magnification and plainer manifestation of a condition which had already existed previously. This leads us to look upon the narcissism which arises through the drawing in of object-cathexes as a secondary one, superimposed upon a primary narcissism that is obscured by a number of different influences. (Freud 75)

On the light of this quote, Freud explains that his interest in schizophrenia has led him to explore narcissism. The narcissism of schizophrenia shows a secondary phenomenon in which a subsequent redirection of a charged sexual energy from the external objects in world to the ego by the same path but this time in the opposite direction (Sandler et al. x). This type of narcissism of the mentally ill, as Freud refers to, is a magnified, extreme manifestation of primary narcissism which exists in children and primitive peoples. This is the so called “Secondary narcissism”.

II.1.3. Jacques Lacan’s Theory of the Mirror Stage

Jacques Lacan is one of the theorists whose name is always related to psychoanalysis. In his critical reinterpretation of Freud’s narcissism, Lacan based his work on the physiology and psychology of infants and animals through his published paper “*The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*”(1949), published in his book *Ecrits*. His works focused on the human infants’ stage of looking to the mirror in order to see their reaction when their reflection of body image appeared in the mirror. According to him this experience is very important in recognizing and building the child’s concepts of “self” which Lacan calls “I”. Lacan believes that children from age six till eighteen months start to discover themselves through looking to the mirror. He offers a vivid example of the child in his process of learning how to walk in front of the mirror, when the

child sees his movements in the mirror, and in doing so, he recognized the reflection of his body image. Lacan believes that this process of self-discovery can be generalized to all humans not only children, that is by looking to the mirror, as Lacan says we: “the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment” (Lacan 02). This latter is helped in the formation and construction of the self. He further adds that the mirror stage develops the ego as dependent on the other in different social relations.

II.2. The Theory of Womanism

The need for the concept of Womanism arised from the feminist movement led by white middle-class women which advocated changes in the lives of women. However, the movemet focused primarily on gender-based oppression and neglected a more sever oppression based on racism suffered by black women. As Hooks argues that the first problem that the black woman faces is that society “Perpetuates racism in that, it denies the existence of non-white women in America” (8). Since feminism doesn’t satisfy the black’s needs. Alice Walker is credited with introducing the term Womanism in her Collection of essays “*In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose*”(1983). The first appearance of the term was in 1979 in her short story “*Coming Apart*”.It was the first time for Walker to mention this word, she writes: “The wife has never considered herself feminist-though she is, of course, a “womanist”. A “womanist” is a feminist, only more common” (Phillips qtd. in Andersen et al. 17). Walker is not satisfied with feminist ideals because it defines white women and doesn’t mean black women. But, it “teaches white women that they are capable whereas my tradition assumes I’m capable (Bradley 36).

Walker believes that even black feminism does not represent all African-American women’s tragic experiences. She would rather like “to have words that describe things correctly” to refer specifically to black women which “black feminist does not do that” (Bradley 36). Thus, walker is in need of an exact term to represent the black women’s

sufferance, which comes from the Afro-American culture (Bradley 36). Hence, the word Womanism is the one that suits the black women and culture which it comes into being.

In its general focus, Womanism deals with issues of race, skin, and color discrimination regardless of sex, in the sense that, it tackles issues of both genders males and females who suffer from the same racial problems. In this regard, Womanism deals with the wholeness and universality since it doesn't address a particular group of people: "She explores the individual identity of black woman and how her identity and bonding with other women affects the health of her community at large. Alice Walker describes this affinity among women as Womanism. For her, womanist is one who is committed to the survival and integrity of the entire black race" (Sree 16) . This concept of universality layered in its meaning the survival of the whole community as Walker puts it: "Survival and wholeness of entire people and love for the folk" (Walker xii).

Womanism based on the fact that both genders are victims of patriarchy and works hard to show that African-Americans can be involved within the same community with whites as insiders, not as foreigners. Womanism doesn't see men as a threat to women as long as both male and female groups live under the same conditions. Unlike feminists, "Black women, [...] are not the enemies of black men" (Lorde 144). Patricia Collins in her book *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (1998) presents her beliefs of womanism in which it doesn't attack black male it is just "A way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking black male" (63). Thus, womanism primary focus is racism. While, in its narrower definition and as its name suggests, Womanism shows how women from different cultures, colors and races are experiencing the same sufferings. Alice Walker provides four major definitions of Womanism which come as an epigraph of her acclaimed volume of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983), she writes that the word womanist means:

Womanist 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 great 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*.

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 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.”

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. *Loves* the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. *Loves* the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless*.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender. (Walker xi-xii)

In the first definition, Walker provides the etymology of the word womanism; this term is derived from the black folk language, its adjective ; Womanish (Torfs 18), which means that you are grown up as a woman since Walker herself says this in the beginning of the entry “womanish” is opposite of “girlish”, i.e., “frivolous, irresponsible, not serious” (Walker xi). Hence, womanism needs a responsible, serious and therefore, a grown up woman. It is used

by black mothers to their daughters (Torfes 18). Collins in this regard states: by “[t]aking the term from the Southern black folk expression of mothers to female children (...), Walker suggests that black women’s concrete history fosters a womanist worldview accessible primarily and perhaps exclusively to black women” (qtd. In Torfes 18) .

According to Walker being womanish may refer to three other folk expressions: “outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior” (Walker xi). These adjectives show how black women step onto the stage of courage and strength to fulfill their desirable aim; to live free from all shackles of racism. All in all, these folk expressions emphasized on the mature side of women (Torfes 19).

In the second definition, Walker’s womanism embodies with the sexual or non sexual relationships that can occur between women. “A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually” (Walker xi). Sexually; it refers to lesbian relationships, non sexually; refers to loving things that women share between each other, loving things that make them female, more than that she used the word “prefer”; that is to say adoring their female spectrum (Torfes 19). As Linda Abbandonato states: “spans the whole spectrum of women's friendships and sisterly solidarity” (298).

The definition to which a woman “Loves music. Loves dance... the moon...the Spirit. Loves love... Loves struggle. *Loves* the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless*” (Walker xii). Walker lists a lot of things that women shared to love, things that help them to speak up their liberated thoughts and moving from victimized stage to a self liberated one. Among these: music, dance as symbols of joy of life , as well as loves the moon and the spirit ; a symbol of beauty and femininity and pure souls. Moreover, loves struggle; in the sense that women do not surrender easily whenever they want something (Torfes 19-20).

This idea is considered as the most controversial and famous part of the whole definition “Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender (Walker xii). Through this

definition, one can understand that Walker herself believes that there are things in common between feminism and womanism. However, this doesn't mean that they can be used interchangeably. The second part of her last definition "as purple to lavender" answers the first one when she said "womanism is a black feminism" (Torfes 20).

In a nutshell, Afro-American women in the twentieth century were part of the chaos which characterized that period in the United States. Swinging between problems of racism, classism, and sexism, black females were losing their identities on the go, and absorbing silently acts of oppression of different kinds. Those same women were caught between double edge of discrimination, the thing that caused them different psychological problems and disabilities which extended to a late stage in their lives, and that distorted their image towards their inner self and accepted their categorization of the 'otherness'. The latter was originally the goal of the whites, they wanted the blacks to look to themselves the same way the whites see them, so that they accept the fact of being invisible, unworthy, and unwanted. It is important to note that without the representations of the suffering of black females in the black literature, no one would ever know about the ugly facts of this period.

Chapter Two: Psychoanalytical Aspects in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

This chapter aims at highlighting the different psychoanalytic aspects that characterize the novel through providing a detailed description and analysis of the main character taking into consideration her daily life's circumstances. The reason is on one hand, to detect any psychological trauma that the main character faces in her everyday reality and on the other hand to analyze the same woman's process of growth. Hence, the first section discusses Celie's traumatic experience; the main character suffers various traumas in her whole life namely domestic violence trauma, and gender trauma. It is actually through the narrative structure process that Celie reveals her traumatic events. Therefore, this section explores the novel from the psychoanalytical perspective of the trauma theory. The second section analyzes the protagonist's process to find herself and her body as well. Therefore, the second section in this chapter adopts the psychoanalytic model of growth using certain psychological concepts of Freud's narcissism and Lacan's the mirror stage as a conception for the behaviors of the main character. The study aims at providing a subtle explanation for different decisions the protagonist makes throughout the novel. The analysis reveals the protagonist's stages of metamorphosis emphasizing on Freud's primary and secondary stages of narcissism as well as the protagonist step of mirroring her body as important factors towards self-construction depending on Lacan's the Mirror Stage.

The contemporary Afro-American female writer, Alice Walker won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for her novel "*The Color Purple*", who became the first black woman writer to receive the award in the History of America. The thing that crowned her work as the 1983 American Book Award as the best fictional work. *The Color Purple* stands as one of the most popular literary works which mainly reflected racism and sexism that work together to disgrace women's role and maintain male power. Many studies have built on this novel; critics have explored that Walker's masterpiece played a major role in fostering Afro-American literature

since they dealt with issues of racism, sexism and self-identity in order to foreshadow the struggle of Afro-American people, especially that of women by providing a realistic context of their lives in a racist, sexist and a violent society.

The Color Purple (1982) depicts the story of Celie Johnson, the protagonist of the novel whom she was abused by her stepfather. Alice Walker has chosen a young fourteen-year old girl to tell her story, following the epistolary narrative style. The whole novel is written in epistolary structure by the main character Celie. She writes letters to God and then to Nettie, her sister. The first two thirds of the novel contain letters that Celie writes to God to complain about the sexual assault against her, first by her step-father who repeatedly rapes her and as a result of this rape Celie gives birth of two children and later by her husband who treats her as a servant (El-Hamamsy 150). Celie's status as a victim to oppression is a representative to traditional black women who accept patriarchy as a canon. The remaining third of the novel comprises of letters between the two sisters, by/to Celie to Nettie, these letters demonstrate how they moved to live in Africa with the family where Celie's children were sold off (El-Hamamsy 150).

The novel emphasizes the idea of how a woman is seen by herself, by others, and what it takes to reject the patriarchal canon and gain her freedom. The novel depicts the issues of four female characters. Each of which has its own story that turns around the oppression cycle. Through her novel, Walker wants to change the old traditional views of Afro-American women as victims to different kinds of oppression.

I. The Novel's Analysis: Psychoanalytic Concepts of Freud and Lacan

I.1. Celie's Traumatic Experience

I.1.1. Domestic violence Trauma

In his (2005) article "*Literature Community and Violence: Reading African Literature in the West, Post 9/11*", Richard k. Prieb writes about violence in its broader terms and the way women fight against it: "They may overwhelm us with a sense of banality of violence, they may impress in us our capacity for the demonic, or they may serve to leave us with some sense of the sublime" (Prieb 47). And we can see the color purple doing all these things. The novel examines violence and its potential to act as a destabilizing agent of identity, subjectivity and selfhood and it also shows how the lines of demarcation between perpetrators, victims and observers are blurred in the face of violence.

On the light of this quote, *The Color Purple* is a novel that examines trauma derives from violence, it depicts the struggle of suppressed Afro-American woman in both America and Africa. It is the story of Celie who narrates her sufferance under numerous act of violence in her life. As a result of these violent acts, Celie is susceptible to experiencing trauma at her early age.

Rape is the worst type of violence, Celie received a repeated number of rapes by her step-father when her mother was sick and couldn't respond to his sexual desires "too sick to last long"(Walker 02). Her 'Pa' is seen as 'walking phallus' who treated Celie as an object to his sexual needs "You better shut up and git used to it" (Walker 03). Celie continues abuse throughout her childhood and adult life, this sexual assault against her, inflicts her psyche and causes traumatic disorders. Freud believes that traumatic hysteria results from a repressed and early experience of sexual abuse during the childhood period (Balaev 361). Trauma is very closely related to violence, in regards to gender, women are the most affected by traumatic experiences than men "The most common post-traumatic disorders are those not of men in war but of women in civilian life" (Herman 28). Celie suffers from violence and aggression

even in her wedding day, this time by her husband's son: "I spend my wedding day running from the oldest boy [...] he don't want to hear nothing bout new one. He picked up a rock and laid my head open. The blood run all down my tween breasts" (Walker 16). This incident summarizes Celie's future life and how it will be; for sure it will not be less difficult than her life with 'Pa'. in Mr ___ house. Given the physical and sexual assaults which Celie collectively endure, not far-fetched that these violent abuse against her, is the result of her traumatic disorder. In accordance with Freud's claim, Judith Herman argues that: "The late nineteenth-century studies of hysteria foundered on the question of sexual trauma. At the time of these investigations there was no awareness that violence is a routine part of women's sexual and domestic lives" (28). Therefore, trauma is the result of the physical and sexual violation against the victim. At some points, Celie narrates her sexual involvement with Albert which she feels as an act similar to rape, in her words: "He never ast me nothing bout myself. He clam on top of me and..., even when my head bandage. Nobody ever love me, I say" (109). Herman further demonstrates that rape predicts us to look to the nature of trauma as the cause of this act, since the effects of rape are physical and psychological violations. He states: "The malignant effects of rape are not surprising given the particular nature of the trauma. The essential element of rape is physical, psychological, and moral violation of the person" (57). As the victim of violence, Celie no longer trusts men, she claims: "I look at women, tho, cause of not scared of them" (Walker 5). Traumatic experiences that she endure, destroys her assumption about the safety of the world (Herman 51).

Violence in the novel not only appears in the form of rape. Celie reveals through her letters some acts of beating in her everyday reality "He beat me today cause he say I winked at a boy in church. I may have got something in my eye but I didn't wink" (Walker 8). "He beat me for dressing trampy" (Walker 10). Judith Herman assumes that the act of violence that is practiced by someone known by the victim is actually traumatizing, she suggests one

form of violence; she states: “in most instances of rape, for example, the offender is known to the victim...the rapist often enjoys higher status than his victim within their shared community” (62). Her step-father manages to give her to a man who is not different from him in his violence, he mistreated her as much as Alphonso does. “He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don’t never hardly beat them. He say, celie, git the belt [...]. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, celie, you a tree. That’s how come I know trees fear man” (Walker 22). This increases her trouble much more and puts Celie in a rightfully traumatized state.

Beating occurs as an everyday habit, Albert believes the fact that beating wives as one of the men’s rights: “Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr__ say, cause she my wife. Plus, she stubborn” (23). Celie holds this idea and convinces herself that a wife should be beaten, this occurs when she advises Harpo to beat Sofia in order to make her obedient. In the case of Celie, it’s clear that because of her position, as she is naïve and submissive to Albert’s insults, she considers women as slaves and captives to men. Thus, she loses her self-trust and self-consciousness of her existence, and therefore of her own body. Celie has no control over her body. As Gabriele Griffin believes that: “The body constitutes the site of oppression and become the source of permanent anxiety. The body dominates the novel... the central character has no control over her body and her physical environment. Victimized from an early age she is the object of perpetual abuse” (21). In other words, Celie as a victim to physical and sexual abuse, she feels as being “traumatized and tattooed emotionally” believing that the marks of this psychological injury would last forever (Roshnavand 22).

Thus, it is extremely unlikely that Celie’s traumatized status doesn’t result from her violent experiences that she faces in her everyday life. The nature of the assault highly damages the psychological system of the victim. Therefore trauma is the direct result of violence.

I.1.2. Trauma Narratives

Trauma is a theme that can be referred back to the latest works of Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman. This wave of criticism arise to study the concept of trauma in literature. In her *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), Cathy Caruth takes a further study of the psychological trauma, mainly the effects of traumatic experiences on the individual and its role in literature on the basis of Freud's trauma theories. According to Caruth, trauma fragments the psyche of the individual which in turn prevents him to express his thoughts. This can occur through the fragmented narrative structure (Balaev 363). We can see Walker through her novel uses fragmentation as a literary technique to demonstrate that her main Character goes through these symptoms. Celie's fragmented language illustrates her traumatic disorder state. It is in fact through her letters, one can see the fragmentation and the chaos in which Celie is part of it as a victim of physical and sexual abuse. Charles Proudfoot argues that Celie's letter structure is a mirror of her traumatization. He writes: "It is a style that mirrors Celie's traumatized cognitive processes and depressed emotional state" (17). The narrative structure shows Celie's psychological disorder. Walker's choice of letters instead of chapters is fragmented in itself. Celie starts narrating the story of her life taking the form of letters; these letters are short which prompts the reader to jump from one idea to another. The chronological disorder is specifically a representative of Celie's displacement results from the violence she experiences. Thus, the letters reveal the trauma.

Celie struggles to understand her situation by forming it into language, she is afraid where she can tell her internal troubles to God only. The novel begins with a warning or rather a threat by the man Celie believes to be her father "You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (Walker 4). Thus, her step-father silences her and forbids her to tell the truth about herself. Thereby depriving her right to speak to anyone, but God.

Herman argues that silence is the cause of women's violence and sexual abuse, she states:

“women were silenced by fear and shame, and the silence of women gave license to every form of sexual and domestic exploitation” (28). Celie decides to direct her blame inward, this appears when she starts to reveal her abuse to God. In her book *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self* (1979), Alice Miller examines the child’s abuse and the causes and effects of trauma. Miller assumes that trauma comes from the inability of the child to express his abuse. Since Celie threatens not to speak, she is in a state of trauma “Trauma victims are those who are unable or prevented from voicing their anger or pain” (06). As a victim of silence, Celie is unable to voice her trauma. Nettie writes a letter to Celie, she says “I remember one time you said your life made you feel so ashamed you couldn’t even talk about it to God, you had to write it, bad as you thought your writing was” (Walker 130). Celie admits all her thoughts, fears, emotions, and others to God in a simple broken language. The fragments that occur in Celie’s language reflects her disordered, depressed and traumatized status. Overall, Celie’s letters elicit the feelings of fear, loneliness, and despair.

As a source of horrific physical and sexual assault, Celie addresses God to give her a sign to understand what is going on around her: “I am fourteen year old, I have been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me...” (Walker 4). These words assure that Celie doesn’t recognize the trauma that she is suffering from. Cathy Caruth argues that trauma is “not locatable in the simple violent or original event” (17), but rather it is identified in “the way it is precisely not known in the first instance” (04). Therefore, Celie’s inability to define her status is trauma in itself.

When Celie recounts the difficult times of rape with her step-father, in this case she is in a state of remembering her traumatic events. From a psychoanalytical standpoint, Freud and Breuer cited in Balaev believe in the fact that “The original event was not traumatic in itself but only in its remembrance” (361). In the novel, Celie’s letters are seen as her trauma narratives, these narratives are stored in the memory, and the narrative recall for the traumatic

memories fragments the psyche of the victim. Thus, the effects of trauma appear through her language and the incorrect grammar and spelling Celie uses, which then mimics the sense of fragmentation and isolation that many trauma victims experience.

I.1.3. Gender-based Trauma

This type of trauma caused by the oppression of the patriarchal men over black women from early childhood. Walker's identification of the signs of trauma throughout the novel acts as a bridge to understand the source behind the symptoms of gender-related trauma. The novel's physical and sexual violence against women calls attention to the issues of gender. Out of our concern, female characters in the novel including Celie, Sofia and Squeak are part of gender-linked suffering. Our concern is on Walker's main character. Celie is a representative of a traditional black women who have no control over themselves, they accept anything from the black men without any complaint. Celie has to bear "The exploitation of black women by black men" (Stuart qtd. in Shukla 727).

Understanding trauma through the lens of gender is evident through Celie's relationship with her step-father, who forbids her from receiving her education. "The first time I got big Pa took me out of school. He never care that I love it... You too dumb to keep going to school, Pa say" (Walker 9). Celie has been taken out of school to take care of the children and the house. A lack of education allows him to maintain control and to use her for his own needs. Celie's pregnancy doesn't prevent her from doing all the housework and getting the children ready for the school: "I'm big, I can't move fast enough, by time I get back from the well, the water be warm. By time I git the tray ready the food be cold. By time I git all the children ready for school it be dinner time" (Walker 5). This incident demonstrates that Celie's life is constructed by the patriarchal order, emphasizing how her inferior status causes the trauma she experiences.

Ibrahim Kira et al. describe gender discrimination as a 'Type III' trauma, they assert that: "GD [Gender Discrimination] of females (and other types of discriminations) is an identity type III (continuous), and systemic trauma perpetuated by family and social systems and is one of the by-products of societal power dynamics" (2043).

In other words, gender discrimination trauma is the one which constructed by patriarchal power of society. Celie's step-father is a catalyst for gender-based trauma, his view of female's rights represents in Celie's oppression. He treated Celie as an object to his sexual desires. While her step-father's rapes continue, Celie gives birth of two children. We can see the cruelty of black men over women not only through the act of rape, but also through selling the children. Celie says: "But I don't think he kilt it. I think he sold it to a man an his wife over Monticello" (Walker 6). Even Celie's mother turned against her, though she loves her and she knows the truth, she eventually starts blaming her of bringing shame to family and cursing her before she dies: "My mama died. She die screaming and cussing. She scream at me. She cuss at me" (Walker 5). As a result, Celie starts to direct her blame in-ward though she is not her fault. This increase her internal troubles and puts Celie in a traumatic state.

Celie severely traumatized so that she flinched and panicked all day because of the acts of violence. Celie's identity causes her trauma which would last for the rest of her life "GD [Gender Discrimination] is one that is chronic and ongoing traumatization that may not stop and stick with the affected person all her/his life" (Kira et al. 2043). In other words, gender discrimination is an ongoing trauma which the victims' injury would last forever. Her step-father beats her for not dressing good and rapes her for dressing trampy "He beat me for dressing trampy but he do it to me anyway" (Walker 10). Her Pa continues to inflict Celie's psyche and therefore increase her trauma, he makes an arrangement to have her married to a man of his age who needs a good worker to look after his kids. To make him accept his suggestion, Alphonso describes Celie as, "she ain't no stranger to hard work. And she clean.

And God done fixed her. You can do everything just like you want to and she ain't gonna make you feed it or clothe it" (10). Celie is just an object who remains belonging to the men for all of her life. "He look me up and down. Pa rattle his newspaper. Move up, he won't bite, he say. Turnaround Pa say" (12).

Her step-father stresses the fact that she is ugly, even shug, the one that Celie loves confesses to Mr__ when the first time sees her: "You sure is ugly, she say, like she ain't believed it" (48). Celie records their bullying and starts to believe that she is ugly, since she is constantly reminded of her ugliness, this makes her feels inferior and pushes her to hate herself of being a woman and a black. Hence, she ignores herself and her body too which are susceptible to the repeated sexual and physical abuse . In this regard Daniel Ross states:

One of the primary projects of modern feminism has been to restore of women's bodies. Because the female body is the most exploited target of male aggression. Women have leared to fear or even hate their bodies. Consequently, women often think of their bodies as torn or fragmented, a pattern evident in Alice Walker's Celie. To confront the body is to confront not only an individual's abuse but also the abuse of women's bodies throughout history; as the external symbol of women's enslavement, this abuse represents for woman a reminder for her degradation and her consignment to an inferior status. (70)

In other words, since women's bodies is a source of exploitation, they start to hate them. As in the case of Celie, he abuse over her bodyremoves the personhood the same way categorization system do.

Gender Trauma is evident in the novel, when Celie transforms herself from human being into non-human, when her husband beats her, she says: "He say Celie git the belt. I make myself wood. I say, to myself, Celie you a tree" (22). She depersonalizes herself into a non-living thing which in fact represents her traumatic state. Her resistance of oppression is

worth quoting to pretend that she is wood, a tree bending but not breaking. Celie's alienation comes from her trauma. In spite of these living conditions, Celie never raises her voice. At some point she reveals that, she has been dehumanized to the point when she cannot fight back and all what she knows is to stay alive whatever conditions are. Even when her husband's son tells her to rebel against Albert, she refuses: "You got to fight them, Celie, she say. I can't do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself. I don't say nothing. I think bout Nettie, dead. She fight, she run away. What good it do? I don't fight, I stay where I'm told. But I'm alive" (22). Besides, she believes of her inability to fight for herself, she says: "Well, sometimes Mr__git on me pretty hard. I have to talk to old Maker. But he my husband. I shrug my shoulders. This life soon be over, I say. Heaven last all ways" (Walker 44). Therefore, Celie's silence from the abuse that she is experiencing is the cause of the trauma.

I.2. The Psychoanalytic Model of Growth in *The Color Purple*

I.2.1. Primary and Secondary Narcissism of Celie's Development

Daniel Ross based on his reading of *The Color Purple*; *3Celie in the Looking Glass: The Desire for Selfhood in the Color Purple*" (1988) believes that Freud's concepts of primary and secondary narcissism offer insights of the psychological dynamics that lie beneath Walker's literary work which portrays the importance of 'loving the self and the other' in facilitating Celie's developmental process. Furthermore, Freud's stages of narcissism; 'self-love' and 'object-love' not only represent Celie's relationships with herself and the other women, but also it shows how Walker creatively uses the concept of 'love' to empower women which in turn helps them to discover themselves, therefore, to raise their voices and speak.

Based his study on modern psychology; Ross confirms the Freudian belief of ego formation and Jack Lacan's the mirror scene in his analysis of the character of Celie. He believes that mirror scenes play major role in the process of development and shaping the selfhood. He

claims that: “The discovery that must necessarily precede Celie’s discovery of speech: the discovery for desire__of selfhood, for other, for community and for a meaningful place in the creation” (Ross 70). As the subject of rapes and violence, Celie comes to hate herself, and she has no desire to know or to love her body. However, with her desire to love other women in the novel, this gradually transforms Celie to love herself. Celie throughout the novel takes her mother, her beloved sister Nettie and later Shug Avery as an object desire for her love.

Curk in this context claims:

According to Freud, our love life develops in such a way that one main current desires and longs for other persons as objects of desire, while the other, more ancient current, remains narcissistic in the sense that it does not recognize boundaries between ego and objects and it creates identity of ego and object. It is in this fashion that the ego may enrich itself and take into self aspects or traits of others. In early childhood, this process plays a prominent part in ego formation and consolidation; but it continues in far more complex ways in later developmental stages as well. (Curk 07)

That is to say, an individual’s internal desires look for other persons as objects to direct its desire towards them. This can be occurred in the childhood stage, when the infant doesn’t differentiate between his identity and the one of his mother; the one who is feeding him and taking care for him. Thus, the child starts to shape his own self depending on the mother (Other). Later on, in a more advanced stage, he begins to recognize the self (ego) and the Other (object). Thereafter, he starts to follow a object love/self love or self love/object love process. Celie in the novel followed these steps which helped her to find herself and to appreciate her own body. This is evident in the novel, when her step-father threatens to kill her mammy if she tells anybody about what is happening to her. Celie in that situation manages to remain silent in order to protect her mother from the brutality of her Pa. This scene shows Celie’s self-sacrifice, care and unconditional love towards her object which is her mother. The

same incident occurred in the novel, but this time with her little sister Nettie, whom she loves and fiercely protects her from the sights of the sexist Alphonso. Celie tries to attract his attention in order to protect her sister from his rape: “Sometime he still be looking at Nettie, but I alway git in his light” (Walker 8). “I duck into my room and came out wearing horsehair, feathers, and a pair of our new mammy high heel shoes. He beat me for dressing trampy but he do it to me anyway” (Walker 10). Subsequently, with the coming of Shug, Celie starts to fall in love with her. Celie encouraged by her girlfriend (Shug) to love herself and gives her the opportunity to be selfish. The love of the other turns into the love of the self. Celie at some stages of her mental life, she recognizes the ‘other’ as an initial step to recognize ‘herself’. Curk in this regard states that: “Once the differentiation between ego and object is reasonably well established on one level of our mental life, once there is some sort of self-identity as distinguished from the identity of others, we are able to love ourselves as we are able to love another (and vise verse), each different from the other. Object love and self love develop together”. (Curk 07)

Shug does not only plays the role of Celie’s love object, but she also takes the role of Celie’s mother when Celie falls ill, Shug becomes Celie’s nurse. Celie describes her first time sleeping with Shug as: “[l]ittle like sleeping with mama, only I can’t hardly remember ever sleeping with her. Little like sleeping with Nettie, only sleeping with Nettie never feel this good” (Walker 119). Hopson argues that Shug’s presence in Celie’s life shows how devoid of emotional connexion was Celie’s relationship with her mother. Sleeping with Shug reminds Celie with her mother, on one hand and her sister, on the other hand. Yet, through the above quote, sleeping with Shug was different and better (“Tell Nobody But God” 11). Gloria Thomas Pillow in her book *Motherlove in Shades of Black* (2010) assumes that “the mother role is highly compromised in *The Color Purple*. The most compelling aspect of the mother/child relationship in this novel is in fact, its absence” (114). The same idea is

discussed by Ross that Celie's lack of mother-daughter relationship creates a maternal gap in Celie's development process, which in turn fills by the character of Shug in this context he states: "Shug not only plays the role of Celie's "narcissistic friend", but first and foremost she represents a mother-surrogate or, in Lacanian terms, a (m)Other" (Ross 78).

Referring to Freud's theory of ego formation, Celie starts to see her body as fragmented when she starts to turn herself into a non-human being as a tree. Ross notes that Shug's mother role allows Celie to think differently about her body and to "Conceive of a relationship beyond the self, with an other" (77). He suggests that Celie went through primary narcissism: "In which two love objects exist, the self and the mother" (Freud 88-89). According to Ross Celie moves to the Secondary stage of narcissism when self-love is "displaced onto an-other" (Ragland-Sullivan qtd. In Ross 77). In this scene, Celie finds her body by discovering her intimacy under Shug's direction. Henderson asserts that once Shug "Introduces [Celie] to the beauty of her own body...Celie's passivity and self-indifference are transformed into receptivity and responsiveness first to Shug, then to herself" (qtd. In Hopson 11). In other words, Celie's responsive to the juvenile drama guided by Shug changed her perception of others (Shug) and then of herself. Thus, Celie's openness to engage in the intimate scene helps Celie to appreciate herself and her body thereafter. Her perception of the newfound part of her body allows Celie to correct her understanding of the whole body as a complete rather than fragment (Ross 77).

I.2.2. The Reconstruction of Selfhood: Mirroring the Body Scene

Depending on Lacan's theory of Mirror stage, Daniel Ross attempts to study and analyze the psychological side of the characters in the literary production. Focusing on his study of *The Color Purple*. He assumes that Lakan's mirror scenes offer illusions (images) of whole selfhood. When the mirror stage is absent in the infant's life; this causes the unaccessible to his own self. Ross refers to Walker's novel as a literary work which holds a

questioning for selfhood in Celie's voice in the novel when she addresses God "Dear god" (Walker 01). In this regard he asserts:

Lacan believes that the mirror stage offers the child only an illusion of whole selfhood, when in fact the subject is always split. But Lacan's view of the unattainability of whole selfhood finds a more optimistic revision in Walker's novel. The color purple, in fact, endorses another view prevalent in modern thought that such illusions are not destructive but are positive accommodations that allow one to find meaning in life, far preferable to the desire for self-annihilation Celie voices early in the book. (Ross 73)

Self-recognition is considered as one of the most important concepts for identity formation, especially in Afro-American tradition, when it comes to Afro-American women who are the victims of oppression and brutality and "have been made aware that those who name also control, and those who are named are subjugated" (King 683). Thus, self-discovery is a tool of women for their independence and empowerment. Celie is like any other girl who grows up in a patriarchal black community and experiences epiphany-like moments. These moments lead her to shape her self in a coherent way. In these moments the presence of the mirror enables Celie to move from a dispersed and fragmented self to a more unified self-identity. Daniel Ross believes that this transformation fits Lacan's the Mirror Stage. Celie at the beginning of the novel comes to hate her body which is the source of her psychological trauma that she faces in everyday reality. At the age fourteen and as a result of the repeated rapes, Celie addresses God to understand what is happening to her and how to cope with this situation by writing the word "am". This shows that Celie questions her self-image from the very beginning (Pifer and Slusser 47). She is clearly experiencing Lacan's mirror scene in which Celie sees herself as a fragmented bodily unit. As a result of this, she cries out "my body [...] my heart is broke" (Walker 256). Then she continues: "I have been a good girl" (4). This demonstrates how Celie is confused about her identity, because she used to be good

and now “She no longer feels certain of her goodness” (Pifer and Slusser 47). At some points, particularly, when her husband is beating her, Celie resembles herself as a tree: “I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree” (23). Celie depersonalizes herself as a tree because of her miserable circumstances (Pifer and Slusser 47). She never resists “just born that way” (22). However, with the help of one female character, Celie learns to love herself and her body thereafter. Near the end of the novel, Celie manages to raise her voice and speak her mind. Shug’s arrival helps Celie to look at herself literally and metaphorically. Just as the real Shug replaces the image which Celie carries about her. The mirroring scene under Shug’s guidance helps Celie to understand her situation and to recognize her body which was the source of her trouble (Pifer and Slusser 47-48).

Ross believes that Celie takes the first step towards her body; to look at her body is to look at herself. Thus, discovering the body, is in turn the discovery of the self. He suggests that: “The repossession of her body encourages Celie to seek selfhood through spoken language” (70). He believes that when Celie is able to love and appreciate her body as her own, she can share that love first to herself and then to others. Apparently, her desire for selfhood, he further adds, is started in the mirror scene when Celie discovers her genitals which in turn raises her desire to find her selfhood (Pifer and Slusser 48). Ross argues: “The process of discovering or developing desire begins, for Celie, with the reappropriation of her own body ...the crucial scene in initiating this process is the mirror scene. In this scene Celie first comes to terms with her own body, thus changing her life forever” (70). Pifer and Slusser suggest that, the scene can be considered as a crucial scene for Celie under Shug’s guide because it calls Celie up from the comma and Celie’s process of self-discovery takes place as she sees her own vagina for the first time (Pifer and Slusser 48). Celie describes the scene: “I lie back on the bed and haul up my dress. Yank down my bloomers. Stick the looking glass

tween my legs. Ugh. All that hair. Then my pussy lips be black. Then inside look like a wet rose”.

“It a lot prettier than you thought, ain’t it?”[shug] ask from the door. It mine, I say. (Walker 82).

In this context, Ross assumes that “Celie’s immediate response abnegates her previous annihilation and ignorance of her body: ‘It mine, I say’”(qtd. In Pifer and Slusser 48). Pifer and Slusser argue that before this scene, Celie doesn’t care more about herself, this occurs when she describes her lovemaking emotions, and even referred to her sexual relationship with her husband as doing “his business”. However after this scene, Celie is able to recognize her private parts as something belonging to her (48). Celie states: “ I look at her and touch it with my finger. A little shiver go through me... just enough to tell me this the right button”(Walker 82). Pifer and Slusser believe that Celie’s reaction to a newfound part of her body, fits the child in Lacan’s the mirror stage (48). It closely describes Ragland-Sullivan explanation of the pre-mirror stage in that Celie’s body was seen as fragmented and dispersed parts, he refers to it as “A period in which an infant experiences his body as fragmented parts and images” (qtd. In Ross 75). Celie has moved from a pre-mirror stage of subjectivity and fragmentation to what Lacan calls a *jouissance* (joy)³. In other words, now Celie is able to recognize and to appreciate herself as she repossesses her stolen body , taking the pleasure in that repossession (Pifer and Slusser 48).

On the basis of Lacan’s theory, before the Mirror stage the child perceives himself as fragmented and dispersed body. However, when entering the mirror stage, he starts to constitute himself with the reflections of what he sees himself in the mirror (people). Like when we see our reflections in the literal mirrors, the child starts to build himself as a total self when he sees himself reflected in the metaphorical mirror (others). In the novel, Celie starts to see the reflection of herself in the metaphorical mirrors represents by the people

whom she loves. Celie reflects her identity in the metaphorical mirrors of other women in the novel as comparing herself with the lack of alienated other “Us sleep like sisters, me and Shug. Much as I still want to be with her, much as I love to look” (154). Ross believes that: “This lack of an other is extremely critical, for Lacan links the discovery of the Other to our becoming social beings; without it we become over attached to early fixations of identity, unable to adapt them as necessary to life’s demands” (74). This lack of the Other can occur in speech; Celie is confined to silence. She has been forced to reside in a wordless setting. Celie’s inability to speak, she has no voice; the only access to language is through writing letters. Lacan believes that speech needs “the Other to whom you are addressed” (Sheridan qtd. in Ross 74). Feminine Characters in the novel advise Celie to rebel against her stepfather and to reclaim her freedom among them so far. Celie remains on a muted option because she doesn’t find an audience to listen to her speech. However, Shug’s arrival develops Celie’s awareness of the concept of ‘Otherness’. Therefore, she starts to accept herself, and to create her identity based on what Lacan calls “*méconnaissance*”. Which is the total acceptance of herself because she internalizes external images as reflections to her own self. Lacan believes that the child is described as alienated subjects whom they depend on the external images (other) to construct themselves. Eagleton says: “Duly enthralled by the image of myself I receive, I subject myself to it; and it is through this “subjection” that I become a subject” (qtd. In Ross 74).

In her lovemaking moments with her husband Albert, Celie imagines herself as sleeping with Shug, she puts her arms around him and starts to imagine doing the same thing with Shug (Pifer and Slusser 47). In the novel Celie writes: “I know what he doing to me he done to Shug Avery and maybe she like it. I put my arm around him” (21). Shug awakens Celie’s identity when she dedicated her song to Celie, she says: “first time somebody made something and name it after me” (75). This act shows Celie’s awareness of herself, she must

be somebody to name something under her name. At the end, Celie liberates herself physically, sexually and economically. The evident in the novel is when she leaves Albert alone and moves towards her own business of sewing pants. This unintentionally gives Celie the opportunity to test her personal development without Shug's guide. Shug then leaves with her music band leaving Celie on her own. This scene in the novel shows that Celie is able to manage her own life depending on herself only. Celie stands before a full length mirror and decides that there is "Nothing special here for nobody to love" (Walker 266). Yet to love only her newfound self (Pifer and Slusser 48). Ross writes: "This scene provides the test that proves Celie's psychic growth has continued unchecked, that she will not regress in a crisis" (82). Pifer and Slusser argue that, this scene shows that Celie has moved from the pre-mirror stage (of fragmented body) to a mirror stage (of total self), to reach the post-mirror stage of symbolic language (48).

In his explanation of the post-mirror stage and its need for a symbolic language, Lacan points to the fact that "all subjects remain split. *Meconnaissance* allows a subject to believe in his or her wholeness, but this is simply an illusion one might carry for life" (qtd. In Pifer and Slusser 49). In other words, Lacan asserts that the mirrors offer only an illusion of wholeness. While the self remains separate. Contrary to Lacan's belief, Ross argues that when we refer to *The Color Purple*, these illusions of wholeness are positive accommodations which help in the reconstruction of selfhood. They serve as an approval for Celie to proclaim her self-existence (Pifer and Slusser 49). He further adds: "That such illusions are not destructive but are positive accommodations that allow one to find meaning in life" (73).

Celie finally, moves through Lacan's mirror stage in her process of emancipation. She moves from her previous sense of herself as passive and fragmented body to a whole selfhood. In approaching the end of the novel, when Darlene tries to convince her to speak standard English instead, Celie refuses (Pifer and Slusser 49). she writes that "look like to me

only a fool would want you to talk in a way that feel peculiar to your mind” (Walker 223).

The scene indicates that Celie is no longer belonging to others, rather than allowing them to control some parts of herself, such as her language, Celie now owns herself and she enjoys her newfound identity (49).

To make long story short, Celie suffered from different types of trauma. She led a life of being oppressed and mocked by men, blindly immersing herself in the world of self-denial. Living in a society in which oppression and discrimination are the living standards, she was almost on the verge of degradation of herself and her body. With the coming of Shug, Celie learns how to love others and then she loves. Shug guides Celie towards body mirroring which in turn arouse Celie’s correct understanding of herself and successfully achieved self-salvation.

Chapter Three: Celie's Journey for Self-Discovery from the Womanist Lens

This chapter is dedicated to analyze the protagonist's process of emancipation, not only in terms of aging, but also in terms of her transformation from a passive oppressed girl to a powerful and independent woman. In fact, the novel is regarded as a quest for identity which depicts a woman's process for self-discovery and freedom. Thus, spotlighting the womanist mechanisms of empowerment, emphasizing on its aspects of sisterhood or female bonding, letter writing and quilting. This chapter of the thesis consists of two sections: female bonding and its role in Celie's self-assertion. Ranging from her beloved sister Nettie, her daughter in law Sofia and her husband mistress Shug. This bond between women is considered as a corner stone in identity construction. The second section subsequently discusses Celie's process of writing letters as a necessary step to break out the silence and speak up her mind. The third section introduces the process of quilting as an important factor towards the protagonist's freedom. Either spoken discourse that takes place during female bond and conversation or written discourse that associates with Celie's letters.

I. Female Bonding as a Womanist Strategy

As a representation of African-American tradition, *The Color Purple* is a novel that depicts on one hand black women's sorrows, and on the other hand, it presents the defiance of women in the face of oppression and male-dominance via strong solidarity. Through her novel Walker herself encourages the collective effort focusing on the part of black women whom in turn they will use this as a female strategy to empower their friends and sisters.

The primary consideration of womanism is the connexion and network between women and Celie's journey for gaining her voice is greatly influenced by the women around her as womanism proposes. As a womanist, Walker believes in the power of women to make change in their lives if they allied together and create a community of sisters. By which they become aware of their circumstances. Christian claims that Walker "Sees the possibility of

empowerment for black women if they create a community of sisters that can alter the present-day unnatural definitions of woman and man” (181). Sisterhood is a process of support among women as a way to share their stories of sufferance which they experienced in the patriarchal society in order to overcome these issues. Sisterhood bonding among black women is regardless of blood connection in Ethology, it “is used if the females regularly form coalitions in which they mutually support each other, especially if such coalitions are used to attack other groups or individuals” (Thims 497). Thus, sisterhood bond is a female technique of empowerment, its firm base is on women’s alliance and unity. In the novel, the major reason behind Celie’s empowerment and transformation from being naïve young girl to a self-assertive woman is the help, support and unity of the women around her among Celie, Nettie, Shug and Sofia that contributes greatly to Celie’s process of emancipation (Singh and Gupta 218). As Christian Barbara writes “Celie comes close to liberating herself through the community of her black sisters, Nettie, Sophie, and Shug, and is able to positively affect the men of her world” (181). Harold Bloom also adds: “The progress of *The ColorPurple* can easily be seen as the process of Celie’s writing herself into being and consciousness, of her forming power and control as writer” (qtd. In Singh and Gupta 218). That is to say, *The Color Purple* can be read as a quest for selfhood; it is the study of Celie’s process to proclaim her freedom.

Female bonding or female solidarity plays a major role Celie’s journey for selfhood. Mainly, it calls Celie up from her inactivity and encourages her to make change in her life by freeing herself from the shackles of sexism physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Marry Ann Weathers, In her (1969) essay “*An Argument for Black Women’s Liberation as a Revelutionary Force*”, sees that male-domination over black women is something that black women of all classes may share not only the poor ones and what links them together is the spiritual tie between them as ‘sisters’ whom they share the same tragic experiences “they

most certainly have felt the scourge of the male superiority oriented society as women... to help in alleviating some of the conditions of our more oppressed sisters by teaching, raising awareness and consciousness” (159). She adds that women of all kinds share the same oppression of the patriarchal society. Black women, however still “the most oppressed and degraded” (159). In the novel *The Color Purple*, male-supremacy over black females is portrayed in the case of Celie; the male violence of her step-father who is not much different from Albert’s vindictiveness towards her. In addition to Harpo’s mistreatment and hateful attitude towards Sofia. As such, black women must be willing to “turn to ourselves and one another for strength and solace ... we cannot sit on our behinds waiting for someone else to do it for us. We must save ourselves” (Weathers 159-60). As a result of this harassment, a woman manages to keep away from male-brutality and his everyday abuse through escaping into her domestic life, becomes solitary from male and in ties with other women for support, care, security and unity. Thus, sisterhood is undeniably the basis of the novel.

Michele Wallace in her essay “*Anger Isolation: A Black Feminist’s Search for Sisterhood*” (1975) through her participation in black movement, she emphasizes the importance of anger and distrust in attaining the black women’s sisterhood. To Wallace, anger and distrust are notions often related to black women’s desire to overcome male-supremacy. Similar to Wallace, Bonnie Thornton Dill’s essay “*Race, Class and Gender*” as cited in Lynda Stone’s book *The Education Feminism Reader* says: “The concept of sisterhood has been an important unifying force in the contemporary women’s movement. This concept has been a binding force in the struggle against male chauvinism and patriarchy” (42). That is to say, Sisterhood is a strategy which is used by women to protect themselves from male-patriarchy. In *The Color Purple*, Walker creates four visions of black female sisterhood as supportive, nurturing and challenging ‘sisters’ among Celie, Nettie, Shug, Sofia and Mary

Agnes against a sexist male order. This kind of intimate companions' bonding, in turn, helps Celie in her process of defining herself as an independent and strong woman.

The sisterly attachment and unity among women protects them from the physical abuse, psychological disturbances, and domestic harshness. African-American women are delighted to their togetherness; they group together and narrate stories, knit quilts, plant their gardens and sing songs. Audre Lorde in her essay "*Eye in Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger*" (1983) assumes that sisterhood or the feminine connexion between black women is important since it satisfies the need for self love and self recognition through grouping together as women and share their own stories and experiences. Black women "Sharing close ties with one another politically and emotionally" (144). She continues that the result of sisterhood pursuit would lead us to our "empowerment __our strengthening in the service of ourselves and each other, in the service of our work and future" (174). One such instance is in Nettie's letters when she talks about the companion tie among Olinka wives who share the same husband. Celie also finds Shug as her mentor and supporter. Another incident that shows sisterhood alliance is when Shug encourages Harpo's girlfriend to confront the crowd and sing. This scene allows us to understand the firm base on which sisterhood depends. It depends on encouragement, support and faith.

Alice Walker, in her (1983) series of essays "*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*", she defines womanism as "From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, 'you acting womanish' i.e., like a woman" (08). It means their daughters grow up and become responsible, independent and capable for their own lives. *In The Color Purple*, female characters are presented as weak and self-denying. According to walker, they are "suspended women" where they are victims of both society and men. As part of womanism, the first thing walker does is involving women in a close sisterhood to overcome male-supremacy. Cheryl R. Hopson in her book *The U.S. Women's Liberation Movement and*

Black Feminist "Sisterhood" assumes that "Walker's womanist schema, mothers and daughters join together as figurative sisters and in defense against oppressive forces" (264). She further adds "to be joined in a womanist sisterhood is to participate on a relationship, real and imagined, that is supportive, affirming, and that fosters black women's autonomy, in community" (267-68).

Walker as a womanist believes in the power of change and grow up "Walker believes strongly in the ability of people to change and grow, attributing this belief to her work... during the Civil Rights Movement, when she saw a great deal of change" (Abrams 30). He demonstrates that all her characters in the novel undergo some change in one way or another. In her novel *The Color Purple*, the power of change is that of women; when Sofia leaves home, Harpo changes and starts to cook, doing all the housechores and takes care for his children. Also, when Celie moves to Memphis with Shug, Albert changes and starts to do the housechores that he never does before (Abrams 30). Celie changes when she returns from Memphis, she rebels against her husband after she learns how to fight back from other female characters. She moved from a naïve and passive girl to a strong self-asserted woman (Abrams 30). She says: "Look different. God on some dark blue pants, and a white silk shirt that look righteous. Little red flat-heeled slippers, and a flower in my hair" (195).

Thanks to her 'sisters', each of whom contributes greatly to her awakening. Celie realizes the power of sisterhood in achieving her true identity. She believes that the only loyalty that she can offer is for Nettie, Sofia and Shug. Walker wants to show that women have the ability to change their lives, develop and choose the right path through creating their own community than being submissive to male sexist order. Sarah Addison Allen in her book *The Peach Keeper* focuses on the bonding that women share because of their severe sufferings and the necessity of women to stand by each other because no one could do so: "We're connected as women. It's like a spider web. If one part of that web vibrates, if there's

trouble, we all know it, but most of the time we're just too scared, or selfish, or insecure to help. But if we don't help each other, who will?" (18).

Walker's womanist views based on "Women coming together, sharing their experiences, reaching out for one another and, in doing so, guiding each other toward the light of liberation and self-understanding" (El Hamamsy 168-69). In other words, The greatest power of the female can be seen when women allied together to guide each other towards freedom. Female bonding occurs in the novel in Olinka section, when Reverend Samuel accepts women get along with each other in his house. This is obvious when women share various tasks like doing housework, nursing each other and take care of each other's children. Walker's words in the novel "Perhaps I can help with her work. It is in work that the women get to know and care about each other... Catherine became friends with her husband's other wives. This friendship among women is something Samuel often talks about. Because the women share a husband but the husband does not share their friendship" (150-51). As in the novel Nettie takes care of Samuel and Corrine's children, then she comes to know the fact that these children are her beloved sister's kids out of rapes by the sexist Alphonso. Nettie starts to remember the time when her sister Celie took care of her just like her mother did: "thinks about the time you laid yourself down for me" (73). In the African American Community, daughters, mothers, grandmothers take care for other women's children when their mothers are ill or unable to do such tasks, Collins in Hopson states "In African-American communities, the boundaries distinguishing biological mothers of children from other [girl and] women who care for children are often fluid and changing...grandmothers, sisters, aunts or cousins acted as othermothers by taking childcare responsibilities for each other's children" ("Tell Nobody But God" 03). She also adds that these othermothers are "key not only in supporting children but also in supporting bloodmothers, who, for whatever reason, were ill-prepared or had little desire to care for their children" ("Tell Nobody But God" 03). We can

also find the friendship bonding in the form of mother-daughter relationship. In the novel it is obvious in Olinka Section when Tashi's father dies; she becomes closer to her mother "With the death of Tashi's father she became attached to her mother. But the death brought her (Tashi) and her mother closer together" (150). Shug's mother role helps Celie when she needs help; she forces Albert to stop brutalizing Celie and supports Celie struggle to get free. They got along with each other and this led Mr Albert's to question about their relationship "I never understand how you and Shug got along so well together and it bothered the hell out of me" (246).

Baga suggests that the sisterhood ties between black women is through to their love, friendship, and the same oppression in which they share, that they collectively gain the power to make themselves away from the bondage of their past and collaborate together as free and equal for themselves and for those they love (25). At the beginning of the events in the novel sisterhood takes different directions, before it unifies the women. Firstly, when Shug first met Celie, she didn't like her and treated her badly. But later they became close friends. Shug became the reason behind Celie's self-development and she supported her with materialistic requirements to liberate her economically to lead her own free business. Another incident is when Harpo dances with his separated wife Sofia at the center of the bar, but his girlfriend Squeak didn't like that, she slaps Sofia at her face and calls her 'bitch', so they start fighting each other (36). But when Sofia enters the jail, Squeak did all what she can do to leave her out of prison (40). Corrine the wife of Samuel hates Nettie when she realizes the resemblance between her adopted children and Nettie and accuses them of treason (65). These incidents show on which basis sisterhood depends. Female bonding depends on faith, trust, loyalty, on believing and sharing one another's sufferings, sorrows, happiness, among others.

Womanism stresses the idea that female allied together to reject the patriarchal principles which threatens their gender. Celie in the novel is seen by Mr_ as nothing "He

laugh. Who you think you is?... look at you. you black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. Goddam, he say, you nothing at all” (46). Females around her ask her to fight back against her husband’s dominance. Nettie says: “ You’ve got to fight and get away from Albert. He ain’t no good” (119). When her sister Nettie learns that not only Mr_ beats Celie, even his kids, she asks her to beat them instead “you got to let them know who got the upper hand. They got it i say. But she keep on. You got to fight. You got to fight. But I don’t know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive” (26). Celie doesn’t know how to fight, all what she knows is to stay alive whatever conditions are. Totally dependent person, Celie is always signified by the patriarchal framework and she doesn’t dare to change it. Celie depends on Nettie to fight for her, but this stops as soon as her sister leaves the house and runs away. Sofia also urges Celie to depend on herself and to fight all men in the patriarchal society “All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my brothers. I had to fight my cousins and my uncles. A girl child ain’t safe in the family of men” (46). When her husband Harpo beats her, Celie ask her to stay and not leave him, sofia refuses and she leaves the house. This incident awakens Celie to fight back for herself and rebell against Mr_ and leave him alone. David Guys in this respect states: “Accepting themselves for what they are, the women [in the novel] are able to extricate themselves from oppression; they leave their men, find useful work to support themselves” (qtd. In Baga 23).

Black men conceive the concept of sisterhood as a threat to their power and status in the society, because whenever women bound to each other, some sort of power starts to burst, this way, they think that this concept is a kind of rebellion against their standards which they think that are unbearable, but in fact, this strong bond between women is more emotional than physical. Audre Lorde clarifies this confusion, she says: “Black women in struggle from our own perspective, speaking up for ourselves, sharing close ties with one another politically and emotionally, are not the enemies of black men” (144). In most of the cases emotional bonds

have the strongest effect and this can be seen clearly through the relationship between Celie, Shug, Nettie, and Sofia, these women supported and inspired each other to break up from the chains of oppression and patriarchy.

‘Sisterhood is powerful’, the word seems like an attack or women’s rebellion. However, sisterhood among black women is an ongoing process. In its real or non-real definition, it can make change in life because it calls for the interchange of ideas and thoughts among women. Which helps them in turn to change their lives to a better one. Black women’s sisterhood is like a power in the world. It changes my life and the life of many others (Hopson 269).

All in all, sisterhood bonding is something that allied women together to share their feelings of happiness, sorrows, their trust, opinions, among others. As far as it helps them to share housework, nursing each other and take care of the children. It helps a woman to overcome the issues, to move ahead in order to get its independence. As far as the novel is concerned, female bonding is obvious throughout the novel; celie with the help of other women get liberated emotionally, spiritually, and economically.

I.1. Sisterhood between Celie and Nettie

Celie is in close relationship with the other women with whom she breaks her silence and gains strength and power to achieve her own real identity. Females’ relationship in the novel takes different shapes: some come in the form of motherly, sisterly, and some others are connected with sex. First of all, Celie’s sisterly bond appears when Celie tries to compensate her beloved sister Nettie for the absence of her mother. In this way, Celie takes sister-role and mother-role for her sister as Hopson argues about Celie’s both roles “Celie is both Nettie’s sister and a mother figure for Nettie, and Celie nurtures, protects, cares for, and challenges Nettie in a way that their mother refused or was unable” (03).

Since her mother is absent Celie acts as Collins in Hopson establishes the term the 'othermother' which refers to black females and daughters who have the desire to support and help other black women who are unable to nurture their own children because of their illness or of having little desire for doing such tasks ("Tell Nobody But God" 03). Hopson further adds "Celie effectively functions then as an othermother to Nettie, stepping in to care for and protect her sister in their mother's absence" (03). Besides, she attempts to protect her from the rapes of the sexists; her step-father and Albert, she sacrifices with her own body for the sake of her sister. In some cases in the novel Celie tries to attract her Pa's attention when he has a sexual desire towards Nettie. Celie says "Sometime he still be looking at Nettie, but I always git in his light" (08).

Although Celie forces to quit the school, she is still interested in learning; she encourages her sister to keep learning whatever conditions are "keep at your books...look what happen to Ma" (05). She also finds out her own way to escape from Alphonso's brutality through reading books "Us both be hitting Nettie's schoolbooks pretty hard, cause us know we got to be smart to git away" (10). To Celie, Nettie is her trigger to education and hope. Both sisters live in a family where love and care are completely absent. So, they engaged in literacy as a way to get out from their oppressive status. Since they share the same living conditions, of their mother's physical and mental illness and the sexual harrasment of their stepfather, their sister bond gradually develops (Hopson 03). The sisterly feelings can be seen also in the case of Nettie when she urges celie to fight back against her husband, when she observes him beating her and to respond to any abuse from his rotten children in order to show her superiority over them "Don't let them run over you, Nettie say. You got to let them know who got the upper hand. They got it, I say. But she keep on, You got to fight. You got to fight" (15).

Unlike Celie, Nettie is educated and with the help of her teacher Ms. Beasley she builds up a strong personality. Nettie in turn takes the role of the teacher of her sister Celie; she teaches her how to confront her troubles and how to become a strong woman through literacy, also, she teaches her how to write letters if one day Mr_ forces them to be apart. Writing plays a major role in keeping both sisters in touch, when Nettie comes to leave, Celie tells her to write letters in order to keep closer “I say, write. She say, what? I say, write. She say, nothing but death can keep me from it” (19). The close connection between the two sisters continues to exist. Since Nettie doesn’t respond to Albert’s sexual abuse, he swears to not hear from her sister again “Well, I started to fight him, and with God’s help, I hurt him bad enough to make him let me alone. But he was some mad. He said because of what I’d done I’d never hear from you again, and you would never hear from me” (131). When Albert reads this letter, he takes revenge to hide all the letters come from Nettie. And this what really happens; he breaks the communication between the two sisters and let Celie in darkness without having any idea about her sister. She thinks that her sister dead, but in fact she is alive. Nettie never stops writing to celie and since Celie doesn’t receive Nettie’s letters, she writes to her saying “I imagine that you really do get my letters and that you are writing me back: Dear Nettie, this is what life is like for me” (161). It is via letters that one can understand the sisterly feelings and love towards each other as far as, it explores the womanist bonding between them, though they are miles apart from each other.

Writing helps Celie discover herself and reach her boiling point of self-discovery. In spite the fact that Albert hides Nettie’s letters, celie at the end of her journey comes to know some facts about her past in the hidden letters; she knows that Nettie finds her children Olivia and Adam and that her father is not her real father. As Walid El Hamamsy words about letter writing “to voice feelings and thoughts that s/he might not otherwise have been able to

do due to social conventions and the nature of public discourse” (152). Despite the physical distances and the oppression that these girls face in their lives, they keep their hopes alive

I know you think I am dead. But I am not. I been writing to you too, over The years, but Albert said you'd never hear from me again and since I never heard from you all this time, I guess he was right. There is so much to tell you that I don't know, hardly, where to begin? But if this get through, one thing I want you to know, I love you, and I am not dead. (81)

Nettie's letters can be considered as a connecting metaphor between the two sisters, and the discovery of Celie to these letters marks a turning point that changes Celie's life up-side down and becomes self-confident and powerful, it must be seen as an ongoing process for self-redefinition.

I.2. Sisterhood between Celie and Sofia

The novel not only presents and recognizes the literal sisterhood between the two biological sisters, Celie and Nettie, but also it draws attention to the kind of sisterhood that occurs between Celie and other non-biological sisters such as Sofia and Shug.

Sofia Butler is the wife of Harpo, the son of Mr_. She is another woman who Celie had found to be her model in life. She teaches Celie how to defend for herself and oriented her to the right way in order to free herself from her husband's abuse. She is a guide and a very intractable and self-confident woman. Sofia grows up in similar domestic situation just like Celie, but Sofia is aggressive girl and filled with anger, she is a fighter; she believes that fighting is the only way to survive especially if a girl lives in a family of men and to keep her personality strong as well as to stay in a safe zone. “All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my uncles. I had to fight my brothers. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men, but I ain't never thought I'd have to fight in my own house” (40). She returns blows for blow whenever Harpo tries to beat her, she fights back if her husband fights her.

She breaks herself out from submission and dehumanization. She rejects her love to Harpo when she discovers that marriage in patriarchal society is just a euphemism of male supremacy and power. Unlike Sofia, Celie is passive and silent even when she faces violence. Celie is submitted to the patriarchal power, she is in a position as a slave woman. However, Sofia rejects the unfair social conditions. She resists sexual and racial discrimination. She fights physically and verbally with the mayor's wife when she says 'hell no' and never hesitate, she enters in a fight with the mayor and knocks him down when he slaps her. In fact, Sofia's physical resistance merely leads to her disfigurement and imprisonment. Celie surprises by Sofia's rebellious spirit, because this is the first time she sees a woman stands for her belief and breaks out the entrenched humiliation and dehumanization. This in turn awakens Celie and encourages her to rebel against Mr_. In this perspective Mae Henderson contends that: "Sophia, then, becomes, for Celie, a model resistance to sexual and racial subjugation" (25).

Celie sees Sofia the first time when she comes to Mr. Albert house asking him to marry his son Harpo. Celie surprises by her strong body "She not quite as tall as Harpo but much bigger, and strong and ruddy looking, like her mama brought her up on pork" (30). "She is a big strong girl. Arms got muscles. Legs too. She swing that baby about like nothing it She... give you the feeling she all there. Solid. Like if she sit down on something, it be mash"(36).

When Albert rejects the proposal that Sofia suggests to him; he refuses to let Harpo marry her. Sofia stands up and before she leaves she tells Harpo "Naw, Harpo stay here. When you free, me and the baby be waiting (Walker 38). Celie amazed by her strong personality and bravery and she wishes to be like her. Sofia marries Harpo irrespective of his family objection. After marriage Sofia's attitude is not mechanical to Harpo; she kept her free characteristics "if she talking when Harpo and Mr._ come in the room, she keep right on. If

they ask where something at. She says she doesn't know. Keep talking" (34). Harpo is fed up from her behaviors and decides to ask her father and Celie for advice. Albert instigates his son to beat Sofia. Even Celie believes that a woman should obey her husband and be submissive under his control. Besides, she is jealous of her strong personality. Thus, she thinks that beating is the best solution. When Sofia knew that Celie urges Harpo to hit her, she considers it as a kind of betrayal, then she asks Celie about the reason behind this act of mistreatment, Celie says: "I say I'm a fool, I say it cause I'm jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can't" (38). This demonstrates how Celie is amazed by Sofia's strength. Thereafter, Celie shares her sufferings with Sofia. Sofia sympathizes with her and advises Celie to "to bash Mr. ___ head open, Think about heaven later" (39). After they speak frankly with each other about their miserable experiences, Celie and Sofia become friends. This marks the beginning of the sisterhood bonding between each other. From the character of Sofia Celie "begins to understand Sofia's strength and to adopt parts of Sofia's ideology as her own" (Martin qtd. in Jurković 22). Celie learns how to defend herself and stand up for her beliefs, especially when Sofia confesses that her only way to stay alive is fighting. This may awaken and sharpen Celie's consciousness against the oppressive patriarchal society and male-oriented power and control.

The form of sisterhood between Celie and Sofia is reflected by the job which they share both of knit Quilts. In fact, quilting embodies women bonding, i.e. how women are intertwined spiritually by means of mutual respect, faithfulness and most importantly, appreciating the feminine power that each one of them is carrying inside. Accordingly, one can say that it is the internal feminine bond that is holding them together, and not the job which they consider as 'sisters' choice', in fact this job is merely something in common between them and which allows them to pour their anger on and turn it into something beautiful instead, in the same way Sofia suggests to Celie "Let's make quilt pieces out of

these messed up curtains” (44). Those curtains are the ones that Harpo asks Celie to make for their new house with Sofia; so they are a gift from Celie and now they are a possession of Sofia. This, in turn shows the collaboration and the help of women. Moreover, Shug joins them in their job “Me and Sofia piecing another quilt together.[...]She (Shug Avery) pick up a random piece of cloth out the basket.[...]Frown how you sew this domination thing.[...]” (54-55).

Shug later collaborates in this quilt making by giving them her “old yellow dress for scrap” (66). Celie wants to give the quilt to Shug when she will finish it, but she gives it to Sofia when she leaves Harpo. This work of quilting doesn’t only bond Celie with Sofia, but it pushes her to the right direction of self-empowerment. This act also shows how females taste the flavor of freedom and liberation. Celie writes in her letter: “Dear God, Me and Sofia. Work on the quilt. Got it frame up on the porch...It a nice pattern call sisters’ choice” (56). Quilting helps African-American women to bond together just like when Celie sits on the porch and weave quilts. This friendship bonding has its role in supporting women to be strong, self-confident and helps them to define themselves whenever they confront violence and abuse of different types. In this respect Clenora Hudson-Weems states: “... with such love, trust and security, it is difficult to imagine any woman without such a genuine support system as that found in genuine sisterhood” (60-65).

I.3. Sisterhood between Celie and Shug

The blues singer Shug Avery was the mistress of Mr Albert and then Celie’s girlfriend. She appears as a self-confident woman who has a strong personality by whom Celie inspired. she appears as the moral inspirational source in the novel that oriented both Albert and Celie to do what is right for both of them. She acts as Celie’s real catalyst to break out her silence as well as the patriarchal oppression. Celie sees Shug in a picture given by her stepmother. the beauty of Shug impresses Celie even she is a woman. She sees her as being “

like a queen”. Mentally, she describes her as the prettiest girl that she has ever seen “The most beautiful woman I ever saw...She bout ten thousand more prettier then me” (7).

Early in the novel, Shug turns ill, but no one in town can provide help to her or takes her in willingly. Albert feels sorry of her and since he loves her, he takes Shug to his house where Celie can take care of her. When Celie heard that Mr__ is taking Shug to his home, she feels happy and she says: “My heart begin to beat like furry, and the first thing I try to do is change my dress” (46). She has fever and she is very weak, as Celie says “look like she ain’t long for this world”(47). Celie nurses her back to health with love and admiration, she says: “I wash her body, it feel like I’m praying. My hands tremble and my breath short”(51). Even Shug hates her and treats her rudely like everyone. But later she becomes her lover and takes big part in her heart. After she has developed a bonding friendship with Shug, she tells her that Mr__ is beating her when Shug is not there. Shug decides to stay in order to prevent Mr__’s abuse towards Celie.

Shug names one of her songs Miss Celie’s songs. Celie says: “First time somebody made something and name it after me” (77). This act awakens Celie about herself; she feels that she is somebody to name something on her name. so, she feels that she is of value. Shug’s dedication of the song to Celie evokes Celie’s subconscious desire of selfhood. She provokes Celie’s sexual desires. Since previously, Celie is distanced from her own body and she is uncared about her internal feminine beauty because of patriarchal intervention. With Shug, Celie comes to know different parts of her body and feels the importance of it.

Celie tells Shug about her miserable life with Mr Albert and how he treats her so badly, then she starts crying, although Shug kisses her on her face, then on her mouth, Celie keeps crying and says “My mama die... my sister Nettie run away. Mr come git me to care his rotten children. He never ast me nothing bout myself. He clam on top of me and fuck and fuck, even when my head bondaged. Nobody ever love me”(117). Shug replies to her “I love

you, Miss Celie. And then she haul off and kiss me on the mouth. *Um*, she say, like she surprise (118). Celie quickly kisses her back and then they engage in a physical intimacy.

The relation that grows between the two characters demonstrates how female bonding leads to female sexuality, this in turn promotes motherly and sisterly attachment. Celie in this regard says: “sleeping with shug feels like sleeping with mama and Nettie” (119). Walker attempts to transform mother-daughter relationship with lesbianism. She once says: “we are all lesbians” (289). To stress the importance of lesbian relationship in the process of self-discovery, Kevinn Everod Quashi argues that: “the dynamic relationship between one woman and her other, her girlfriend” (qtd. In Roshnavand 33). Hence, through lesbian relationship, Walker attempts to highlight the importance of women’s friendship in Afro-American community. As Celie comes to discover the loveliness of her own body through Shug’s guidance. Thus, this enables her to step out from self-enclosure to establish an autonomous self; Celie describes this situation as “My life stop when I left home, I think. But then I think again. It stop with Mr_____ maybe, but start up again with Shug” (85).

As the female bonding between Celie and Shug becomes solid enough, Celie tends to tell her life story to Shug as she starts to trust her after God. God is still her addressee, but not the only one who tells him her stories since then. Hence, Celie starts a new belief; God as divine nature and Shug as a female character. However, when Shug helps Celie to find Nettie’s letters, Celie discovers the reality in those letters about her Pa who is not her biological father. Celie decides to stop her belief in God because she refuses the notion of white and male God and she believes that God is “a “man”, who acts “just like all the other mens [she] know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown” (199). Shug helps Celie to reconstruct the notion of God and confesses her way of perceiving the divinity of God: “God ain’t a he or a she, but a it” (202). Shug creates new understanding of God because she doesn’t believe in the old belief of the church depiction of God. She teaches Celie how to worship, is through

enjoying the outside world with its beauty “ lay back and just admire stuff. Be happy”. Thus, her perception of God embodies that love, appreciation and beauty are the ultimate goals of life. Celie accepts this new notion of God and this is evident in her last letter she says: “Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear everything. Dear God” (292). As Linda S. Kauffman claims that Celie “reconstructs divinity, under Shug’s guidance, as the principle of creation and love in the universe” (209). Under Shug’s guidance, Celie starts a new life with the rejection of patriarchal confinement. When Celie learns that her Pa is not her real father, Shug suggests to take Celie with her in Tennessee. But, before that Celie wants to see her Pa to hear from him the truth about her real father. When Shug insists on taking Celie with her, Albert refuses to let her go, Celie replies: “you a lowdown dog is what’s wrong, I say. It’s time to live you and enter into the creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need” (207). Later, Mr ___ tries to defend himself and diminish Celie in front of others, he says: “you balck, you pore, you ugly, you a woman, Goddam, he say, you nothing at all” (213). Celie responds: “im pore, I’m black, I may be ugly and can’t cook, a voice say to everything listening. But, I’m here” (214).

When she fights back her husband, this reveals that Celie is on her way for self-assertion. This is due to the help of Shug. Shug then, takes Celie with her to Memphis; Shug develops her ability to sew pants. Celie starts her own business. This shows Celie’s advance in her life. Thus, Shug plays a major role in building up Celie’s identity. She turns Celie into a new human being. She supports her endeavor to develop her new selfhood. She breaks Celie’s dependence on others, and establishes a new independent Celie. Although Nettie, Sofia, Squeak advise Celie to fight back against her husband. In fact, it is Shug who makes this change and develops the appropriate atmosphere for Celie to establish herself and declare her freedom.

II. Celie's Process of Writing Letters

The epistolary form in the novel of *The Color Purple* is a kind of genre which have first been used by women writers to challenge the patriarchal society that prevents women from expressing themselves. Thus, it is used as a way for women to express their sufferings from oppression and violence in a male-dominated society. Although, the epistolary form is used also by men, still the genre almost chosen by women writers other than men (El Hamamsy 152).

Similarly, Lindsey Tucker argues that the epistolary format as rather a private genre was mostly and primarily associated by women and less used by men (82). Because of its informal format, letter writing is used by women "because of their inferior education and because of the fact that such writings were not expected to be published" (Tucker 82).

Similar to other critics Rebecca Hogan believes on the female characteristic of the epistolary mode since it holds women's secrets, personal stories and confessions which can be understood by women only, she refers to this kind of genre as a 'feminie form'. Hogan states the following : "[The diary is] private, secret, locked?the paradoxicalidea of a writing which will remain unread, a sort of"silent" text. If we see "feminine" as a cultural signifier,standing for the historically determined social construction of feminine behavior, psychological characteristics, and the like, then the diary is a feminine form" (qtd. In El-Hamamsy 153).

Walker uses this kind of genre on purpose in order to mirror Afro-American women's sufferings from double oppression; racism and sexism not only in America, but also within the same community by the men of the same race. As Martens sees it "Some contemporary women writers see fragmentary, open forms like the diary as the readiest possibility for finding a new women's voice" (qtd. In El-Hamamsy 152).

Walid El Hamamsy confirms Hogan's perception of the importance of letter writing in the process of identification in which she believes "like *l'écriture féminine*...diary-writing ...crosses the boundaries between self and other, between author and reader, between text and experience" (qtd. In El-Hamamsy 153). Depending on Hogan's belief El Hamamsy comes out to conclude that diary form is a way to proclaim selfhood, and move from a silent passive state to a state of power and freewill "Letter writing becomes a question of identity that has to do with a whole gender's choice to speak, instead of being silent, and to subvert, instead of being subservient" (153-54).

Celie threatens in the very beginning of the novel not to speak. She keeps silent and voiceless. Her only access to language is through writing letters to God. Celie starts to write against the odds. The act of rape and everyday abuse from her step-father traumatizes her and trigger her to hold up the pen and write. Though her words begin with Dear God. Thus, her first addressee is God, later Celie starts to write to her sister Nettie when she leaves her and starts her missionary in Africa. Lare-Assogba believes that the epistolary form:

Enables isolated women to connect with one another within a patriarchal structure.

Since the protagonist's energy is directed inward, letters give the reader the opportunity to access the characters private thoughts, emotional real and their psychological development. Walker effectively uses letter writing to convey her female protagonists' desire to break with the oppressive situations. In this context, too, isolation provides the appropriate space for Celie to voice her ordeal. (qtd. In Talif and Sedehi 431)

That is to say, letters are ways to connect women together who live in a patriarchal society, just like Celie and Nettie whom they raised in a family in which love is totally absent. Also, it helps the reader to understand the psychological trauma of the characters.

Celie decides to write to God in order to challenge her step-father who wants to keep her silent. The process of writing is considered as a protest against victimizers who attempt to

dehumanize her. So, letter writing can be seen as the tool that breaks out the silence⁴ and speaks her mind in the form of letters. Although, she has an addressee whom Celie addresses her speech, Celie doesn't receive any response to her letters, it is only Celie who writes and responds to herself. This is the reason behind Celie's changing her interlocutor from God to her sister Nettie (El Hamamsy 155).

Celie does find her voice through the act of writing. The unrequited of her letters to God shows a kind of confession as she still views herself sinful following the incest of rape "Confession is often connected with an act of deviance from the normal that leads the feelings of guilt" (El Hamamsy 158). Celie's guilt-feelings response to the incident of rape by the so-called father⁵. Blaming herself for the crime, though she is not her fault. Celie feels guilty and ashamed to tell about her story of the abuse at the hands of man even to God. Celie was in a state of despair, she has no one to share her stories and thoughts with. This drives her to reveal to God though she never gets replies (El-Hamamsy 162). Lindberg-Seyersted talking about Celie's state of loneliness and her sister: "[Nettie] correspondence functions as the same kind of therapy against loneliness that drives Celie to maintain her correspondence to God although he, as far as she can tell, never answers by act or vision" (qtd. In El-Hamamsy 162). Thus, Celie confesses to God to purge herself of the deviance of rape. In her first letter "I have always been a good girl" (01), Celie starts regretting that she is no more the same girl "It is an act of ridding oneself of feelings of guilt, obtaining forgiveness"(El Hamamsy 159).

By writing the letters, Celie is able to cope with her sufferings that she can confront them. This in turn can help her to overcome the obstacles and turn her sufferings into glories and triumphs⁶. Hendersen G. Mae's article "*The Color Purple: Revisions and Redefinitions. Alice Walker*" (1989) cited in Claudia D. Johnson's book *Women's Issues in Alice Walker's The Color Purple* (2011) asserts that: "Writing thus becomes for Celie, a means of structuring her identity__her sense of self" (69). This skill raises her self-consciousness. Thus, writing to

God reveals her process of self-discovery. Winchell in Johnson claims that: “In writing to God she is writing to the part of her personality growing progressively stronger until she is able to acknowledge the God within herself and demand the respect due her” (42). That is to say, writing to God is considered as writing to herself and this leads her to become powerful and strong woman.

III. Quilting as an Alternative Methodology of Discourse

Alice Walker in her novel *The Color Purple* presented ‘Quilting’ which is a traditional handcraft in Africa as a “reflection of another process that takes place among the female characters, namely, that of female bonding” (El-Hamamsy 168). Quilting is, then, related to discourse as women group together to knit quilts, they share their female stories, conversations and fears and they try to be comforter and refuge of other sisters. In her article “*Alice Walker’s The Color Purple: Emergent woman, Emergent Text*” (1988), Lindsey Tucker argues that: “quilting is related to discourse [...] Walker associated quilting with discourse in ‘Everyday Use’” (88). In other words, quilting is associated with spoken discourse which takes place during women’s everyday speech. The scene in the novel which shows that quilting is mostly related to spoken discourse between women takes place during Albert’s brother visit. Early in the novel, Albert’s father forbids him to marry Shug, mainly this is the subject that goes around Tobias visit. He tries to convince Albert not to live with her. Celie, Shug and Albert go against his proposal. At that time Celie and Sofia were sewing (Tucker 89). When he leaves Celie feels that she did the right thing when she defends Shug and Albert “Us three set together against Tobias...For the first time in my life, I feel just right” (52). Thus, as female characters allied together to speak against his argument, quilting can be seen as “a defense” or a “kind of affirmation of Shug” when she joins Celie and Sofia in needlework (Tucker 89).

In accordance with Tucker's view, Martha Cutter in her article "*Philomela Speaks: Alice Walker's Revisioning of Rape Archetypes in The Color Purple*" (2000) asserts that: "Sewing and conversation are allied and inseparable, part of the alternative methodology of speech Walker is explicating." (171). In other words, females' conversation during the quilting process marks the interrelation between conversation and quilting as part of the alternative methodology of spoken discourse that Walker presents in her novel through her female characters. Walker uses sewing and conversation as a means of communication between women to speak and tell their own stories which is more effectively than lexical signs (Cutter 171). Therefore, "Sewing often functions as a language" (Cutter 171). The 'quilt' that Celie gives to Sofia as a gift when she was leaving home, has a symbolic value of their sisterly love and their stories and conversations that they shared together. But when Celie encourages Harpo to beat Sofia in order to maintain his power and control over her, Sofia learns about Celie's betrayal and she becomes angry at Celie. She cut down the curtains that Celie made and returns her thread (Cutter 172). This scene of Sofia cutting down the curtains shows that these curtains hold something between the two women, and this thing will no longer exist as they are angry from each other. It is in fact the speech and the bond between them. It is not surprising that quilting is related to the spoken discourse among women during their togetherness and unity, as Celie and Sofia reconcile their differences, Celie starts piecing those messed up curtains (Cutter 172). This act demonstrates the return of speech and bond between Celie and Sofia.

Quilting is a way that women use to communicate with each other, it is a sign of the unifying bond between black women; it symbolizes their sisterly attachment and love "Sewing is an act of union, of connecting pieces to make a useful whole. Furthermore, sewing with others is a comradely act, one that allows both speech and comfortable, supportive silence" (Tavormina qtd. In Cutter 172). That is to say, the quilt section exhibits the bond and

unity shared among Celie, Sofia and Shug. Piecing together their shared conversations, stories and experiences to make one artistic piece of story that represents their alliance and sisterhood. It is a speech of diverse personalities “Sewing is conversation, a language that articulates relationships and connects and reconnects networks of individuals to create a community” (Cutter 172). Sewing is a discourse, is a language that unifies women together. In the novel, when Nettie was in Africa, Celie sewed pants for her sister. Sewing in this scene is envisioned as a language to express their sisterly love and attachment (Cutter 173). In a letter mentioned by Cutter Celie says: “Nettie, I am making some pants for you to beat the heat in Africa [...] Every stitch I sew will be a kiss” (192). Another scene in the novel that shows sewing is a kind of conversation and language among women, when Celie first time met Corrine, their first conversation occurs within the store where Corrine buys sewing materials to make a dress for her daughter. As she becomes intrigued with quilting of Olinka, Nettie starts her quilting work, she buys the same material of quilt that Corrine had purchased when she met Celie years before (Cutter 172). Thus, quilting is associated with the conversation that takes place between Celie and Corrine.

Cutter asserts that quilting is a language that represents the patriarchal discourse of Celie’s husband (172). Thus, women in the novel find their own way to voice their feelings of pain and suffering through quilt-making. When they bond together, their speech makes them feel happy and secure. Collins in this respect believes: “When I am with other black women I always laugh. I think our humor comes from a shared recognition of who we all are in the world” (“Black Feminist Thought” 97). They feel a sense of security from the aggression and violence of their female world. In letter twenty-seven, quilt is mentioned again when Shug joins Celie and Sofia “ Me and Sofia piecing another quilt together [...] She [Shug Avery] pick up a random piece of cloth out the basket [...] frown how you sew this domination thing [...]” (54-55). Thus, Cutter further argues that through sewing and conversation Walker gives

voice to voiceless women. Sewing and conversation is an alternative methodology that bring the end of women's silence from violent discourse (173). In the novel, when Celie finds Nettie's letters which were hidden by Albert, Celie reacted to this violent act with aggression and hate towards Albert. However, Shug tells Celie to sew pants instead of doing something wrong (Cutter 173). Celie's reaction to Albert's violence by sewing and conversation while reading Nettie's letters. Celie says: "Everyday we going to read Nettie's letters and sew. A needle and not a razor in my hand, I think" (137).

The quilt needs to collect different parts in order to make one piece. This symbolizes Celie's process to define herself, she collects the parts of her fragmented self to establish as a strong independent woman. "let's make quilt pieces out of these messed up curtains, she say. And I run git my pattern book" (41). As female awareness establishes due to spoken discourse during quilt-making, Celie becomes economically free. Her artistic needlework occurs when she sew pants and starts her own business. The first pair of pants that Celie sew were under Shug's guidance (Tucker 90). The speech during quilting has a great impact in transforming Celie's life to a better one. She leaves Albert alone and moves to live with Shug. Celie pieces out curtains from old materials and creates an enterprise of her own art. Therefore, Celie's sewing pants is associated with her independence (Tucker 90).

Seemingly, quilting is associated with spoken discourse. However, the written form of the novel can also be seen as a product of sewing⁷. Cutter argues that Walker's novel is an 'embroidered tapestry' created by Celie's pen, her pen is a needle that pieces out the thread of the narratives of Nettie's letters (Cutter 172). Cutter asserts that: "Celie's letters to God sometimes weave in quotes or threads from Nettie's and Shug's letters" (172). Cutter wants to show that Celie removed the narratives that she received from Nettie's letters and she pieced them with her own words in order to design her artistic tapestry that belongs to her only. One of these letters Cutter mentioned:

Dear God,

Now I know Nettie alive I begin to strut a little bit. Think, when she come home us leave here [...] But I think bout Nettie. It's hot, here, Celie, she write. Hotter than July. Hotter than August and July. Hot like cooking dinner on a big stove in a little kitchen in August and July. Hot. (138, 235-38)

Thus, as we can see the narrative structure not only told by Celie's voice, rather there are other narrative voices occurred those of Nettie and Shug which Celie pieced them by her needle/pen (Cutter 173).

Sewing not only associated with conversation and speech, it is also an important analogy for the novel's form. Cutter argues that Celie's pen is a needle and then her needle is a pen, she refers to the scene in the novel, when Celie sew diaper to her daughter, she writes her name Olivia on those diapers (174). Cutter comments on this scene, she states that "The needle is, quite literally, a pen, stitching a name that fits the child, that connects mother and daughter, that is both linguistic (written in letters) and sewn (embroidered)" (174). In other words, the needle has a phallic shape just like a pen, and Celie's use of this instrument shows the great connection between sewing and writing as well as between the needle and the pen. These two instruments are used interchangeably and cannot be separated "The thread and the word cannot be separated" (Cutter 174).

Walker herself associates the writing of the novel with the process of quilting "My quilt began to grow. And of course, everything was happening. Celie and Shug and Albert were getting to know each other" (*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* 358). A number of critics see Walker as a quilt-maker who pieces together the materials available at that time; oppression, violence, rape among others, to come out with an artistic piece of work. Tucker in this context states that "Walker, like the quilt-maker, has pieced together from the only

materials available—materials of poverty, ignorance, brutalization—a work that, like the product of the quilt-maker, may seem artless, but is instead a carefully crafted and brilliantly patterned piece of work” (93). Characters in the novel present this piece of art, Celie in her letters pieces out words together by narrating the story of rape which Celie refers at the very beginning of the novel as *history* (her father’s story of rape). Celie considers that this story is the reason behind her mother’s death “his story kilt her”. By the end when Celie reaches to a self-understanding and reconciliation with the world and therefore, *history* becomes *herstory* (Tucker 93). *Herstory* is Celie’s journey towards self-realization, Celie quilts her own story from the scraps and bits that she faces in her life, by which she reconstructs her new self “a story of female love, female work, female song, and, most importantly, female bonding” (Tucker 93). Thus, *The Color Purple* is novel which enhances the two synonymous factors ‘quilting’ and ‘letter writing’. Walid El Hamamsy in his description of both factors, he says: “Quilting and letter writing become synonymous acts, both based on a process of piecing together cloth and words. Just like quilting and sewing give meaning to Celie's life, the letters give her an identity and understanding with which to grasp this meaning” (168).

To sum up, all female characters in *The Color Purple* experience the same sufferings and pain, but they find their own path in relation to other women. The more they interact with each other, the more they gain strength and power that helps them to reach an understanding of life and themselves which they would probably have never been able to gain otherwise. Thus, women characters in the novel proclaim their freedom as they stitche together in a unity through the process of quilt-making.

Female bonding is a Walker’s *womanist* strategy since it depicts the severe sufferings that Celie and other female characters in the novel undergo because of their race and gender as notions related to *Womanism*. Walker stresses Celie’s transformation from a naïve young

girl to a fully independent woman to inspire black women to go through a journey of self-discovery and affirmation, suggesting in this way her views of womanism.

Walker's association of quilting within female bonding and conversation functions as an alternative methodology of speech which leads to Celie's acquisition of spoken and written discourse. Walker presents sewing to refer to a language, either spoken during women's bond and conversation or written through Celie's letters. *The Color Purple* as a whole creates new methodology of speech that replaces the pen and paper with a needle and the thread. Sewn language gives women a way to speak, to voice their pain and to reject the patriarchal discourse. Sewing becomes the cornerstone for the reconstruction of gender roles.

Conclusion

The novel represents African-American women's sufferings and humiliation. It doesn't only present the sufferings of a single woman, rather it tackles the real oppression that many black women handle due to their race and gender. By the end, women in the novel stand up against patriarchy through bonding with each other called sisterhood. More than that, they found another way to speak and to pour their feelings of pain through quilt-making and the process of writing. Thus, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is a novel that clearly highlights the role of womanist mechanisms in the process of empowerment. Celie Johnson, the protagonist of the novel, suffers a great deal to proclaim her rights and liberties in a society where patriarchy and double oppression seemed to be a lifestyle. Walker throughout the novel, shows the amount of violence is used on Afro-American women through her central character Celie. By the end of the novel, Walker demonstrates, in the name of all black women, that a woman have all the powerful strategies to break out her self-enclosure as well as patriarchal-enclosure and come to terms with her own voice. Celie is able to reconstruct her identity and to move from her victimized status to a independent woman.

This study aims at investigating the issues of racism and sexism which are one of the most sensitive issues during the time period of the twentieth century. Focusing on the psychoanalytic and womanism theories, the study aims to examine the personality of the protagonist, and her ability to resist patriarchy, the traditional gender roles, and double oppression which were recurrent in the black community. It also analyzes the stages of Celie's metamorphosis from a naïve young girl to a strong independent woman despite double discrimination. As a reaction to black women's double marginalization, Alice Walker creates Womanism to suit the black women sufferance since their struggle is different and unique, and to announce that feminism fails to address black women's issues of both racism and intra-racial racism who carries tow concerns, being black and being female. Since Walker's novel

The Color Purple reveals the issues of racism and sexism, the study serves as a support to her womanist views by providing an objective analysis of the protagonist and how she fights both issues to liberate herself physically, spiritually, and economically.

The first analytical chapter is concerned with the psychoanalytic features that characterize the novel. It attempts to highlight their main aspects that make the novel a psychanalytic one. This chapter of the dissertation sheds light on Celie's traumatic experience; the main character suffers various traumas in her whole life, namely domestic violence trauma, and gender trauma and through the narrative structure process, Celie reveals her traumatic events. Therefore, it explores the novel from the perspective of trauma theory by Freud. The analysis looks chiefly at trauma that is derived from both violence and gender descrimination. Violence and gender acts as catalyst for Celie's traumatic status to show how Celie was oppressed by the people around her. The analysis reveals that rape is the worst type of violence; Celie experiences physical rape by her step-father when her mother was sick and couldn't respond to his sexual desires. Celie continues to receive the sexual abuse at her early age. Depending on Freud beliefs of trauma, the analysis reveals that trauma results from the sexual assaults of the child during the childhood phase. The chapter also highlights beating as another form of violence, Celie reveals some acts of beating by her step-father and later by her husband. The analysis reveals that the physical violation against the victim is traumatized in itself. The chapter discusses scholars views of trauma. It is based on Cathy Caruth study of Freud's theories of trauma. According to her trauma inflicts the individual's psyche which in turn prevents him to express his thoughts in a normal way. She refers to it as a fragmentation. The analysis of this section shows that the issue of fragmentation occurs in Celie's narrative structure. Therefore, the narrative structure reveals Celie's traumatic status. The physical and sexual assaults against a black woman calls attention to the issue of gender. Thus, the chapter also tackles trauma that results from gender. The study shows that Celie's father forbids her

from receiving education, as well as the acts of rape and when she gives birth of two children out of rape, he took them away from her. Then, he forces her to marry to a widower to take care of his children who in turn treats her badly just like her step-father did. Since her body is an object of sexual abuse and physical, Celie comes to hate her body which is the source of her trauma. Thus, to hate herself. Therefore, the main aim of this study, is to analyze the psychoanalytical growth of the protagonist. This study uses the appropriate psychological concepts, in order to come out with a reliable outcomes in the analysis of the protagonist Celie who had faced some obstacles which hampered her process of metamorphosis to grow in a normal way like the other girls in her age during her stage of adolescence. The first concept relies on in the examination is Freud's stages of Narcissism. The analysis shows that Celie is between loving the self and the other, she moves through primary narcissism 'self-love' and secondary narcissism 'object-love' in her process of development. That is to say, her object-love are the women in the novel, then this desire to love others gradually directed to herself. Thus, self-love helps her to discover her true self and therefore, her identity. Besides, the study uses another theory, it discusses mirroring the body scene. The analysis shows that Celie went through the mirror scene, she starts to reflect herself in the people that she loves, those people according to Lacan are the metaphorical mirrors through which one can see himself. Thus, the study shows the way Celie starts to see herself in the character of Shug. Shug encourages Celie to see her genitals in the mirror, Celie's self-discovery begins as she sees her own genitals for the first time. This is the crucial scene in the mirror stage which in turn helps Celie to build a unified self-construction.

Subsequently, the second analytical chapter analyzes the protagonist's process of empowerment focusing on womanist strategies. Genuinely, by the end Walker shapes the personality of Celie in a way that surprises the reader by her strength, courage, and faith. She is an ambitious character who rejects patriarchy as a canon, by fighting back all types of

oppression and violence in a patriarchal social order. Accordingly, the analysis of Celie's progress by means of first womanist strategy concludes that female solidarity is one of the most important factors in Celie's emancipation process. Through the support and unity of sisterhood among, Celie, Nettie, Sofia and Shug that contributes greatly to her self-discovery. It starts with her beloved sister Nettie who acts as her teacher who teaches her how to write after Celie was forced to stop her studying by her step-father. Sofia on the other hand, acts as a mentor for Celie. With her strong personality and fighting character, she unconsciously influences Celie's personality. Shug's efforts to make Celie repossess her stolen body is one of the major steps that enables Celie to liberate herself. In fact, the mirror scene in the novel is considered as a turning point for Celie's self-assertion. The study focuses on another strategy that effectively contributes in the process of Celie's self-recognition, which is the process of writing. Writing is considered as a challenge against her traumatic experiences, it is a way to cure her sufferings and sorrows. Letters can also be regarded as a protest against her victimizers. Letter writing helps her to understand her situation and to question herself. Thus, this study reveals that letter writing as a second womanist strategy enables Celie to break out her silence and speak with her own terms. Lastly, the chapter highlights the act of quilting that is associated with both female bonding and letter writing since it is associated with discourse. This latter takes place when women group together to narrate their stories and talk about their experiences; they knit quilts. Therefore, quilt-making is a part of their discourse. It also delves into quilting and its association with letter writing, Celie's process of writing letters is the same way like quilt-making; quilting a word and cloth (El-Hamamsy 168). Therefore, the study concludes that quilting in the novel is a language that gives voice to voiceless women and becomes a crucial step towards black women's liberation.

Notes

¹ For more about Double Jeopardy of racism and sexism, and Triple Jeopardy of racism, sexism and classism, see Frances M. Beale in Double Jeopardy “To Be Black and Female: in The Black Woman: An Anthology” (1979). See also Deborah K. King’s article “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology” (1988) pp.46.

² Sojourner Truth or Isabelle Baumfree was a famous African-American abolitionist and a civil rights activist. She is known by her defense and support to black women’s rights and liberties. Her famous speech “Ain’t I a Woman” in Ohio 1851 against gender inequality at Women’s Rights Convention is considered as one of her best works through which she tried to speak in the name of all black women about their sufferance and descrimnation (Wikipedia).

³ Jouissance is a concept created by Jaques Lacan in his seminar “The Ethics of Psychoanalysis”. The term has been defined as an enjoyment that has no limit. In his later seminars the concept appears as an opposition to Freud’s Beyond the Pleasure. According to him, beyond that pleasure there’s pain and sufferings and that principle of pain is jouissance. Thus, jouissance is enjoyment/pain (Hewitson).

⁴ For a detailed discussion of Celie’s narrative voice, see Abbondanato Linda “A View From Elsewhere” who reads Walker’s novel as a woman’s struggle towards linguistic self-definition. She states that: “the narrative is about breaking silences” (1106), she adds “Celie struggles toward linguistic self-definition” pp. 1106.

⁵ For a detailed analysis on Celie’s letters as an alternative or ‘second body’, see Wall Wendy “Letterd Bodies and Corporeal Texts in The Color Purple, “letters become the surrogate body for Celie, an inanimate form that both fend off pain” (85). Also her belief that Celie’s letters linked with female body. She asserts that: “letters within the text, however, are similarly connected with the female body” (87).

⁶ For more reading about language as a tool of empowerment, see Serena Volpi, “She Called in Her Soul to Come and See .Representation of Ageing in Zora Neale Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God and Alice Walker’s The Color Purple” especially pp. 09.

⁷ For more critics who argue that the novel’s structure is quilt-like, see Abbondanato “A View From Elsewhere” pp.1109.

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المخلص

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحليل آليات القوة النسائية و الاعتراف بالنفس التي استعملتها البطلة سيلبي في عملية نضوجها الفكري من خلال رواية اللون البنفسجي للروائية أليس ووكر 1982. اعتمادا على نظريات التحليل النفسي والاستراتيجيات النسائية، تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحليل مراحل نضوج سيلبي الفكري بالاضافة الى القوة النسائية التي تم الوصول اليها من خلال ثلاثة مصادر. التعاون النسائي زودها بالوحدة والدعم من طرف النساء الأخريات، حيث ساعد في انشاء عالما نسائيا موحدا وهو بدوره شجعها على التغلب على كل العقبات التي تعترض طريقها. كتابة الرسائل، تأتي كعامل مساعد في شروع سيلبي في عملية البحث عن الحرية. المصدر الأخير هو الخياطة، التي تعتبر المنهجية البديلة للحديث والتي مكنت سيلبي من الخروج عن صمتها والتكلم عن حقها. وبالتالي، الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل عملية البطلة في التخلي عن دور المرأة المضطهدة و الضحية و تبنيتها بعد التجارب المأساوية دور المرأة المستقلة. ووكر تؤمن أن التمييز العنصري والجنسي هم سبب الاضطهاد والمأساة التي تعاني منها النساء الافريقيات من أصل أمريكي. وبالتالي سبب انشاء ووكر لمصطلح 'النسوية يعود الى التمييز العنصري والجنسي كما أن سببه راجع الى الحركة النسائية التي فشلت في تجسيد معاناة النساء الافريقيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التمييز العنصري، التمييز الجنسي، النسوية، النسائية، أليس ووكر، التحليل النفسي، فرويد.