



INDICATORS OF FEMINISM AND FEMINIST VIEWS IN ALICE WALKER'S NOVEL *THE COLOR PURPLE* AND SARAH MOORE GRIMKE'S WORK *LETTERS ON THE EQUALITY OF THE SEXES AND THE CONDITION OF WOMAN*

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Abstract

In this study Walker's novel *The Color Purple* and Grimke's work *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* were analyzed in terms of feminism indicators and feminist views in these works were tried to reveal. The purpose of the study is to depict the feminist aspects of these two works. Generating the study, literature review was used. It is seen that to Walker and Grimke, being black women is much more difficult than being white women. In both works, authors use letter technique to convey their feminist views. Grimke metions about the equality of men and women that should exist in society. Even though she is not black woman, she defends the rights of black women. To her, both men and women were created equally, so they should have the same rights in society. There must not be superiority between sexes. Likewise, in novel of Walker feminist views can be seen clearly. To her, gender and racism is two things with which black woman should struggle. The consequence of the study is that both Walker and Grimke's works include feminist views. Both reveal that there is inequality in society considering the sexes' conditions.

Keywords: Feminism indicators, Literature, Feminist Views.

1. Introduction

Feminism is a movement of ideas that seeks to grant recognition of the same rights to men and women. In the eighteenth century, women were believed to be back from men in terms of creation. For this reason, women have been deprived of various rights. Feminism, a literary movement, has emerged in the direction of women, women's lives and women's rights. The advocates of this movement are having the view that men and women do not receive equal treatment in society. According to these people, men are always one step ahead of women and believe that they have various privileges. For this reason, an inequality has arisen in society. Women who realize this disparity have begun to express their views through the feminist movement.

The fundamental theme of feminism is based on women's freedom. There is criticism against social relations. Feminists are often focused on issues of gender and sexuality because, in their view, these issues must be considered when restructuring society. First, they began to defend equality and later made efforts to obtain women's rights. The main aim of feminist theory is to understand the nature of gender inequality. There are also people who advocate different thoughts within the feminist movement. Among these, there are some who claim women's equality, and others who claim that women are superior to men. Feminist subspecies have emerged which are divided into various species.

Feminism begins with the initial enlightenment period. This trend has turned into an act of organized act in the nineteenth century as the belief that women are being treated unjustly, increases. Feminists claim they live in a world where men are sovereign. Men have more and different rights than women. This causes the opposite gender to appear lower. According to feminists, all the injustices in society will disappear by the help of recognizing equal rights to women. In many countries in the world the right to vote for women have been given in the twentieth century. Feminism has been a major influence in granting various rights to women in America.

The effects of these feminist ideas that emerge in the nineteenth century are evident in the works of writers, most of whom are female. Two of these writers are Alice Walker and Sarah Moore Grimké. Both of these authors are advocates for women's rights and express it in their works, although they have begun adventure of authorship at different times.

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In her book, *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker realistically reveals the difficulties a black woman experiences in a patriarchal society. Like many black feminist writers, to Walker, being a black woman requires to face with many different challenges. Because for a black woman, the only problem is not to submit to male domination, to her all men around, including her family members, mean the same danger. A black girl starts to recognize a completely different face of the Earth from the moment she was born. Even his father and brother are the ones she has to struggle with. The best example of this becomes clear at the entrance of the novel *The Color Purple*. Celie who is a black girl is raped by her father and he use force so that she will not share it with anyone.

In novel *The Color Purple*, the epistolary technique used helps reader to understand the thoughts of the main character in more detail. Celie expresses what she lives in her letters in detail. God is her only refuge in patriarchal society. So, at first she begins to tell what she have lived by addressing God. During previous times the character who obeys the men around her, toward the end of the novel with the help of experineces and some of her different female friends, she no longer obey the society's oppression and has the identity of a self-expressing woman. With the courage she receives from female friends who rebel against male domination, she begins to struggle with the men around and with the conditions she is in. As a result of the fight against life, she realizes that she is also a person and must have various rights. Contrary to what her husband says, she has a personality as a human being. Her personality, which has been under pressure for years, finds expression power with the help of other female friends.

In her novel *The Color Purple*, there is a clear female sisterhood and closeness. Women who are exposed to the same oppression support each other. But some of these women try to show that they do not accept the dominance of men. Celie's girl friend Shug is a woman who reacts to the men. "At first, Celie's friend, Shug Avery, eventually becomes her love" (Dieke, 1999: 55). Becoming one of Celie's friend, she begins to be close to her, even her lover. As the novel progressed, Celie begins to become a completely different person and comes through the male oppression, meeting the things she has longed for.

Likewise, Sarah Moore Grimké's *Letters on Equality of Sexes and the Condition of Woman* has been written under the influence of the feminist movement. This work also advocates the equality between women and men. Unlike Walker, Grimké speaks more clearly about women. In doing so, she begins to talk about the Bible, Adam and Eve's experiences.

To Grimké, it is again men who raise the belief that men are superior, because in fact, women and men are created equal by God. So, men have no superiority. Everything that is right for men must be true for women. Despite the fact that the author is not a black, she continues to defend the rights of black women. To her, it is true that in a male-dominated society, women are oppressed, they are pushed to the second position, but what the black woman experiences is much more different.

2. History of Feminism

There are many different kinds of feminism, such as First-wave Feminism, Second-wave Feminism, Third-wave Feminism, Post-Feminism, Socialist and Marxist Feminisms, Radical Feminism, Liberal feminism, Black Feminism, Post-colonial Feminism and Third-world Feminism, Maltiracial Feminism, Postmodern Feminism. First-wave feminism demonstrates the period of feminist activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United States and United Kingdom. It advocates the equal contract and property rights for women and objects to the husbands who act as if they are the owner of their wife and children. After years, it focuses on gaining political power, especially the right of women's suffrage. The Suffragists have campaigned for the women's vote in Britain. After the Representation of the People Act (1918) the right of vote has been granted the women who should be over the age of thirty and own houses. After ten years, this right is used by women who are over twenty one. The leaders of this movement want the abolition of slavery before women's right to vote in the United States. American first-wave feminism involves lots of women and some of them belong to conservative Christian groups.

First- wave feminism ends with the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1919) that grants women the right to vote in all states, in the United States. After the First- wave Feminism the Second- wave Feminism begins. The Second-wave Feminism focuses on fighting social, cultural and political inequalities. In contrast to the Second wave, the first waves of feminists object to abortion. To them, a woman should be allowed to refuse sex with her husband. In addition to this, they want the women to have the right to her body for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

Second-wave Feminism refers to a period of feminist activity beginning in the early 1960s and lasting through the late 1980s. The second wave is the continuation of the earlier phase of feminism. This movement is concerned with different issues of equality, like ending discrimination. To second- wave



feminist women's cultural and political inequalities are linked and that encourages them to understand aspects of their personal lives.

Third-wave Feminism began in the early 1990s, being a response to the failures of the second wave. It challenges the essentialist definitions of femininity of second-wave, that emphasizing the experiences of upper middle-class white women. Gender and sexuality is the central issues of this movement. During that time many black feminists want to negotiate a space within feminist thought for consideration of race-related subjectivities.

The term, post-feminism was used in the 1980s. It includes challenges to the second wave's ideas. To some post-feminists, feminism is not relevant to today's society. In post-feminist writings emerging in the 1980s and 1990s, second-wave feminism was criticized. Some contemporary feminists consider that women are people. They emphasize that the views separating the sexes are not feminist, but sexist. Women struggle to obtain equal rights. Feminism includes not only equality for women, but also for everyone in the society. Post-feminists states that equality has been achieved and the feminist should deal with something different.

Several sub-movements of feminist ideology have developed over the years, such as Socialist and Marxist feminisms. To Socialist feminists, the oppression of women is connected to Marxist ideas. Women are oppressed because of the fact that they are not equal in both the workplace and houses. Socialist feminists think that women are exploited by patriarchal system. The essential value is not given to women and the work that they do. These feminists focus on the whole society's change. Women should work, like men and everyone in the capitalist society. To the pioneer of Marxist theory, Marx if class oppression is overcome, gender oppression will vanish, too.

To define feature of women's oppression, Radical feminism considers the male controlled capitalist hierarchy. Women can free them only when they destroy patriarchal system. To Radical feminists, the reason of the oppression and inequality is the male-based authority. If this system continues the society can not be reformed. In order to achieve the goals, the society should be reconstructed.

Liberal feminists indicate that there should be equality of men and women through political and legal reform. Liberal feminism is an individualistic form of feminism. It focuses on women's ability to show their equality through their own actions. To transform the society this movement uses the personal interactions between men and women. All women have the ability to achieve equality without altering the structure of society.

To Postcolonial feminists, gender oppression is the primary force of patriarchy. They object to the portrayals of women as passive and voiceless and the portrayal of women as modern, educated and empowered. Postcolonial feminism emerged from the gendered history of colonialism. The status of women in the developing world has been controlled by the organizations and traditional roles of women seen as insufficient by Western standards. There occurs a form of rebellion against colonial oppression. Today, Postcolonial feminists struggle to fight gender oppression. They have reacted against universalizing tendencies in Western feminist thought. To them, the society has not paid enough attention to gender issues.

Third-world feminists take part in feminist politics in third-world countries. They criticize Western feminism because of the fact that it does not take into account experiences of women from third-world countries. To them, Western feminism is related only to African feminism and postcolonial feminism.

Women of color feminism in other words, multiracial feminism deals with the analysis of the lives and experiences of women of color. This theory emerged in 1990 and it is about African American women and family.

Postmodern feminism connects postmodern theory to post-structuralist theory. To postmodern feminists, gender is constructed through language. They criticize the distinction made by previous feminists between biological sex and socially constructed gender. Women are complicated by class, sexuality and other aspects of identity.

3. General Characteristics of Feminism

Feminism is a literary thought emerging in the nineteenth century and continues today. It necessitates that all of the women in the world have equal rights to the men. To feminists, the actual reason of inequalities is being a man or a woman. The sexes determine how a person should behave in the society. Feminism causes variations in male dominated societies. It influences not only the culture but also the laws. Feminists aim to protect the women from violence and abuse. Moreover, they want equal jobs and equal pay to destroy the discrimination. The main target of those women is to be liberated, like men. "In the 1960s, feminists began to write in the first person and to speak of women



as 'we', on the grounds that we all shared common interests as women oppressed by men" (Ramazanoğlu, 1989: 1). As stated, feminist writers generalize all the women, since they think that every woman is under oppression and suffers.

It started from assertions of women's common sisterhood in oppression. Sisterhood expressed the idea that in general women have interests opposed to those of men that men generally dominate women, and generally benefit from this domination. During the 1970s, however, feminists produced new knowledge of women's lives. Instead of establishing women's shared oppression as women, they began to emphasize the differences between women. Once attention was given to the diversity of women's experience, to the power of some women over other women, and to the political and economic interests shared by some men and some women, problems were created for feminism. Differences of interest between women challenged feminist theory of women's shared oppression (3).

As seen, feminism begins with the belief that women are sister of each other and men dominate women. The meaning of feminism changes through time and it demonstrates the differences between the women. Some women seem to be more powerful than another. Emerging because of the common oppression, feminism begins to have different meanings. Important topics for feminist theory include: the body, class and work, disability, the family, globalization, human rights, popular culture, race and racism, reproduction, science, the self, sex work, and sexuality.

Feminism involves different movements and theories concerning with subjects like gender difference, that defend equality for women and campaign for women's rights. The history of feminism can be analyzed into three waves. These feminist movements cause the Feminist Theory emerge. Feminism has changed the common perspectives in some areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. The Feminist Activists have wanted to gather for women's legal rights. Most of the leaders of feminist movements are middle class white women from Western Europe and North America. Women of other races have suggested new alternative feminisms. This trend accelerates with the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Then women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed Post-Colonial and Third World feminisms. Postmodern feminists argue that gender roles are socially constructed and it is impossible to generalize women's experiences across cultures and histories.

4. Black Feminism

Black feminism indicates that racism, sexism and class oppression are connected. To Black feminists, the liberation of black women necessitates freedom for all people because of the fact that it requires the end of racism, sexism and class oppression. The previous feminisms have ignored oppression based on racism and classism. Alice Walker and other Womanists state that black women experience a different and more intense kind of oppression than that of white women.

Recent Black Feminism is a political and social movement emerging due to the discontent with the Civil Rights Movement and the Feminist Movement. To these feminists, all women suffer oppression. The previous feminist movement focused on the problems faced by white women. Black women were being ignored by the movements. Black women begin creating a new movement that shows the combination of problems they were battling. They demonstrate the suffering of Afro-American women. To them, the position of Black women is specific. They have to deal with racism and sexism. They struggle against not only racism but also patriarchal society.

Black American Feminist thought dates back to the nineteenth century when African American women like challenged the conventions of their era to object to slavery and to support black women's rights. These African American women's feminism is a tradition of anti-racist and anti-sexist political movement and thought. Many black American women continue to work toward destroying the race and gender inequality. They seek to have a voice in two centuries of liberation struggles that have silenced them. They struggle against oppression black American women have experienced at home, at work and in their communities.

Contemporary black American feminists have identified the central themes in black feminism as evidenced in over a century of struggle in the United States of America. These include the presentation of an alternative social construct for now and the future based on African American women's lived experiences, a commitment to fighting against race and gender inequality across differences of class, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, recognition of Black women's legacy of struggle, the promotion of black female empowerment through voice, visibility and self definition, and a belief in the interdependence of thought and action.



Black Feminist Movement grows in response to, the Black Liberation Movement and the Feminist Movement; because African women feel that they are being racially oppressed in the Women's Movement and sexually oppressed in the Black Liberation Movement. The purpose of African feminism is to address the way ethnicity, gender and class affect their lives and to take action to stop racist, sexist, and class discrimination. African women faced sexism in the Black Liberation Movement such as the Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism, the Black Panthers, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and others. Black women were an invisible group and their existence and needs were ignored. There were disregard for the humanity and equality of black women. Black women became prey to perpetuating patriarchy within the black community.

Black Women participated in the feminist movement during the 1960s met with racism. Even the well-known black women were often treated as tokens and as their writings portrayed the black experience they were never criticised and ignored. The white feminists did not want to admit their racism. Black feminist writings developed a theory addressing the simultaneity of racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism in their lives. To Black authors, identity is so important and they use the subject "I" in most of their works. The black feminist membership included black women from all class levels; well-educated, middle-class women worked together with poorly-educated women on welfare to address issues that pertained to all of them.

5. Sarah Moore Grimke

Sarah Moore Grimé born in 1792 was an American abolitionist and writer. She was the daughter of a wealthy slave owning plantation owner "... and Mary Smith Grimké, also of Southern aristocratic background, a woman who bore fourteen children and managed the large Grimké households" (Speicher, 2000: 13). Her early education shaped her future as an abolitionist and feminist. She was prevented from substantive education and from pursuing her dream of becoming an attorney. She was so confined that she felt a sense of connection with the slaves. When she was twelve years old, she spent time teaching Bible to the young Slaves on the plantation. Her parents did not want her to teach reading to those slaves and during that time teaching slaves to read had been against the law in South Carolina. Nevertheless, she taught the slaves to read and write. After her father discovering this teaching, she did not do it again.

Because of the fact that she was not a boy, she was not allowed to go off to law school at Yale, like her brother. To her, the denial of education was unfair. Then she realized that on the one hand the slaves were encouraged to attend worship services, on the other hand these believers were not viewed as true brothers and sisters. So, she determined that religion should take a more proactive role in improving the lives of those people. She became an outspoken advocate for education and suffrage for African-Americans and women.

After her father died, she moved to Philadelphia and became a Quaker. Returning South Carolina, she caused her sister Angelina Grimké to join her sister in 1829. During the nineteenth century, the two sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, fought for the abolition of slavery and women's rights. The two women published written work as well as making public speeches.* They disgusted the slavery. They hoped that their new faith would be more accepting of their abolitionist beliefs. "The Grimke sisters had witnessed slavery first hand on their home plantation. They had the knowledge of what life was like in the North and the South; this made it possible for them to reach many people in society about the issue of slavery."* To these sisters, fighting for women's rights was as important as the fight to abolish slavery.

Letters on the Equality of the Sexes was first published as a series in the *New England Spectator* and the *Liberator* in 1837 and 1838. The *Letters* are a wide-ranging examination of the position of women in society, beginning with Grimké's assertion of the biblical basis for equality... (Speicher, 2000: 112)

Sarah wrote "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women" in 1837 and the letters published in book form in 1838. These letters addressed to the President of the abolitionist society. In her book, she defended women's right to the public platform and linked the rights of slaves to the rights of women.

These sisters were the first women agents of the abolitionist movement and the first women to speak in public to large crowds in US. "... in the lives of these women one can trace a similar pattern of conviction and action that led each one step by step toward the momentous decision to raise her voice publicly in the

* "19th Century Women Sarah Moore and Angelina Weld Grimke", <http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/whm2001/grimk6/html>.



antislavery cause" (2). Angelina Grimké married the leading abolitionist Theodore Weld and retired to the background of the movement. Sarah Grimké too continued to work for the abolitionist movement. Then Sarah wanted to become a clergy member and discouraged by other male members of the church. The anti-slavery rhetoric began entering public discourse at this time.

Sarah Grimké is not only an abolitionist but also a feminist. She was more sensitive to the rights that women were denied. She opposed being subject to men and she refused to marry. She and her sister involved in anti-slavery movement. They publish literary works and letters on this topic. They began lecturing around the country on the issue. Sarah challenged women's domestic roles. She believed that in order for women to be able to challenge slavery they also needed to be equal.

Being women's rights activists, these sisters realized that women would have to create a safe space in the public arena if they wanted to be effective abolitionists and reformers. "The Grimkés started from a more orthodox position, drawing heavily on scripture to justify their abolitionism and their public roles in the antislavery movement" (84).

The two women proved to be strong, independent, and skillful in getting their points across. They faced challenges and came to realize the need for women's rights in order to get their voices heard. This was difficult because "their sex would be used against them as another way of attacking the anti-slavery movement. (web "19th Century Women Sarah Moore and Angelina Weld Grimke")

They were attacked because they were women seeking to operate in the public sphere. They came to understand that women were oppressed and without power and that without power women could not right the wrongs of society. They wanted to encourage southern women to join the abolitionist movement for the sake of white womanhood as well as black slaves. In addition to denouncing slavery, the sisters denounced race prejudice. "They were helpful, for example, in extending the human rights issue of equality for African Americans to include, both theoretically and practically, equal rights for women, black and white, as well" (Speicher, 2000: 9). Further, they argued that white women had a natural bond with female, black slaves. The Grimkes insisted on the importance of equality for both women and blacks. These two timid daughters of an aristocratic slaveholding family became the first women who dared to speak in public for the black slave and then for women's rights.

In *Letters*, Sarah Grimké raises a whole range of feminist issues, such as the value of housework, wage differentials between men and women, women's education, fashion, and the demand that women be allowed to preach. Furthermore, she discusses the special oppression of black women and of women held in slavery. Sarah Grimke continued to campaign for civil rights and woman's suffrage until her death.

Throughout their lives, Grimké sisters traveled throughout the North, lecturing about their first-hand experiences with slavery on their family's plantation. The Grimke father has hundreds of slaves. Among the first women to act publicly in social reform movements, they received abuse and ridicule for their abolitionist activity. They became early activists in the women's rights movement. They were legends in their own lifetimes.

Sarah Grimké could now assert her faithfulness to God and turn her back on the Quaker authority to which she had deferred for so many years. She prayed to Jesus to direct her footsteps, but her destination does not really seem to have been in doubt at this point. Without hesitation she declared her readiness to accompany her sister Angelina in her proposed parlor talks to women on behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society a course of action against which she had previously counseled Angelina (18).

Grimké sisters' crusade was not only to free the enslaved but to end racial discrimination throughout the United States. The Grimke sisters were among the first abolitionists to recognize the importance of women's rights and to speak and write about the cause of female equality. What made them exceptional was their first-hand experience with the institution of slavery and with its daily horrors and injustices. They left the South and devoted her life to racial and gender equality. In the early nineteenth century, the causes that the Grimke sisters espoused placed them among the most radical Americans of their day. They witnessed suffering: family slaves who were mistreated and abused; and screams of pain from the nearby workhouse, where slaves were dragged on a treadmill, suspended by their arms. They could not remain silent about these injustices.

Because of the controversy their tour created, the sisters became aware of the overwhelming parallels between women's and slaves' role in society. Both were denied the right to vote and the right to a secondary education, and both were treated as second-class citizens. Sarah soon



became convinced that until women were themselves completely free, they could not effectively work for the rights of others. Thus, Sarah was prompted to write *Equality of the Sexes*, the first document to link slavery to the unequal treatment of women (web: Sarah Grimké, Angelina Grimké).

Angelina and Sarah became the first women to serve as agents for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In January and February of 1837, the sisters toured New York State, filling churches with the sympathetic, the curious, and the hostile. The sisters were prominent figures at the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in New York City in 1837.

Angelina and Sarah not only spoke but wrote about slavery and about the rights and responsibilities of women. "The Grimkés did not only communicate by letter. They visited in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, often reporting having met other reformers, such as Lucretia Mott, at social occasions" (Speicher, 2000: 129). The sisters spoke for the antislavery movement, at the time there was widespread disapproval of this; many male public speakers of this issue were criticized by the press. The public speaking of the Grimké sisters was also criticized because they were women. Neither Sarah nor Angelina initially sought to become feminists, but felt the role was forced onto them. Both their abolitionist sentiments and their feminism sprang from deeply held religious convictions. Both Sarah, who eventually emphasized feminism over abolitionism, and Angelina, who remained primarily interested in the abolitionist movement, was powerful writers. "Each sister possessed a strong mind and kind soul and, in spite of growing up in a male-dominated, slave-holding southern family, the two shared the belief that all people are created equal" (web: Sarah Grimké, Angelina Grimké). They neatly summarized the abolitionist arguments which would eventually lead to the Civil War. Sarah's work addressed, 150 years early, many issues that are familiar to the modern feminist movement.

In their later years, each of these women found their convictions evolving and their activism modified by various demands and concerns. This occurred on the personal level, in response to health, family obligations, and their own aging and maturing. It was spurred on by outside events, such as the expanding women's rights movement, the controversies within the antislavery movement, the Civil War, and emancipation. (Speicher, 2000: 162)

The Grimkes insisted on the importance of equality for both women and blacks. Sarah became a major theoretician of the women's rights movement, challenging all the conventional beliefs about a woman's place. "The Grimke sisters used their time to promote equality for women and African Americans" (web "19th Century Women Sarah Moore and Angelina Weld Grimke"). "The issue of woman's rights was another shared concern of their later years. As in the issue of race relations, they not only campaigned for their issues, they articulated theoretical justifications for their views and actions. All of them agreed that women had an important role to play in the "regeneration" of the world" (Speicher, 2000: 164).

6. Letters on The Equalities of The Sexes And The Condition of Woman

"Sarah Grimké's extensive *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*, was a major contribution toward American feminist theory" (112). In *Letters on the Equalities of the Sexes* Sarah Grimké repeat the thought that men and women are equal in religion. She points out that she is "in search of truth" (Grimke, 1838: 3). And only wants to demonstrate the equality between the sexes. She exemplifies Adam and Eve, stating that they are treated equally by God. "...I shall depend solely on the bible to designate the sphere of woman, because I believe almost every thing that has been written on this subject..." (4) Her only resource is bible and her thoughts depend on this Holy Scripture. To her, God gives women to men as a companion "in all respects his equal" (5) and women like men, have intellect and feelings. She states "...I believe God designed woman to be a help meet for man in every good and perfect work. She was a part of him, as if Jehovah designed to make the oneness and identity of man and woman perfect and complete..." (5) Women and men complete each other and are created for helping each other.

Sarah Grimké states that the most concrete indicator of reality of the equality is that Adam and Eve was dismissed from the heaven together. "They both fell from innocence, and consequently from happiness, but not from equality" (Grimke, 1838: 6). Adam and Eve are not deprived of the right of equality though they have lost beauties of heaven, their purity and cleanliness, for they have departed from heaven together. The thought that women are cursed is also an estimation.

"Further, she believed that the Bible contained, along with numerous mistranslations and misinterpretations, many purely historical examples irrelevant to the current age. It could not, therefore, be considered an infallible guide" (Speicher, 2000: 84). Even the translators of the sacred book translated it biasedly. They have made a translation with the thought that women must have been under the control of their spouses.



The author supports the idea with evidences and states that: "God created us equal; - he created us free agents; - he is our Lawgiver, our King, and our Judge, and to him alone is woman bound to be in subjection, and to him alone is she accountable for the use of those talents with which her Heavenly Father has entrusted her. Over is her Master even Christ" (8). The only judge of women is not their husbands, but their creators, and the creator created men and women equally. Adam and Eve were deprived of happiness and innocence as the punishment for their sins, but they have no superiority over the God because their superior is God alone.

All I ask of our brethen is that they will take their fee from off our necks, and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God designed us to occupy. If he has not given us the rights which have, as I conceive, been wrested from us, we shall soon give evidence of our inferiority, and shrink back into that obscurity, which the high souled magnanimity of man has assigned us as our appropriate sphere (Grimké, 1838: 10).

The only request of the author is to leaving women at ease in the places given to them by God. She believes that only with this way equality can be achieved. Everything would have been much different if this right that existed since Eve had not been given to women. Grimké expresses the reasons for starting to do examinations about equality like that: "As I am unable to learn from sacred writ when woman was deprived by God of her equality with man, I shall touch upon a few points in the Scriptures, which demonstrate that no supremacy was granted to man" (10). She does research on men are not given any privileges.

All history attests that man has subjected woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish gartification, to minister to his sensual pleasures, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort; but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could do to debase and enslave her mind; and now he looks triumphantly on the ruin he has wrought, and says, the being he has thus deeply injured is his inferior. (11)

Throughout history, Grimké states that men entrust women to do what they want. Male always uses the woman in the direction of the wishes and thinks about his own comfort. But he has never brought woman to the level she deserves. The man did not allow the woman to use his intelligence, but rather he has resisted her need for knowing and learning. As a result, she left her at a lower level than he was. To the writer, even in patriarchal times, men and women were engaged in the same business, but was deprived of much taste. The woman obeyed the man and was dominated by the man.

The cupidity of man soon led him to regard woman as property, and hence we find them sold to those, who wished to marry them, as far as appears, without any regard to those sacred rights which belong to woman, as well as to man in the choice of a companion. (13)

The greed of men has increasingly led them to look women like an object and sell them to others. They behaved as if women had no rights. It was demonstrated that as though women do not have the right to choose their life friends. Grimké claims that women's rights are the same as the rights of slaves and she supports that women must be free spiritually and mentally. To her, Jesus did not make any sex discrimination when talking about people's duties, too. Therefore "Men and women were CREATED EQUAL; they are both moral and accountable beings, and wahtever is *right* for man to do, is *right* for woman" (Grimké, 1838: 16). Since both men and women are equal, they both have the same rights. The author reacts to the idea that the woman should be in the domination of man. "How monstrous, how anti-Christian, is the doctrine that woman is to be dependent on men!" (17) Women do not appertain men but, "The power of woman is in her dependence, flowing from a consciousness of that weakness which God has given her for her protection" (18).

Until our intercourse is purified by the forgetfulness of sex, -- until we rise above the present low and sordid views which entwine themselves around our social and domestic interchange of sentiments and feelings, we never can derive that benefit from each other's society which it is the design of our Creator that we should. (24)

To Grimké, gender distinction should not be made. If done, there is no benefit in society. The creator already created an environment where exist equality. The author says that "... women are capable of acquiring as great physical power as men, and secondly to show, that they have been more or less the victims of oppression and contempt"(29). In America what slave women experience is much more different. "In Christian America, the slave has no refuge from unbridled cruelty and lust." (52) It is very difficult for these women to get rid of the situation they are in.

Nor does the colored woman suffer alone: the moral purity of the white woman is deeply contaminated. In the daily habit of seeing the virtue of her enslaved sister sacrificed without



hesitancy or remorse, she looks upon the crimes of seduction and illicit intercourse without horror, and although not personally involved in the guilt, she loses that value for innocence in her own, as well as the other sex, which is one of the strongest safeguards to virtue (53-54).

To the author, women suffering are not only black women. The whites are also influenced by the moral direction in front of the sorrows of their slave sisters. They also gradually lose their innocence in the face of all kinds of immoral crimes against their sisters. Slave women are subject to all kinds of persecution and suffering. These women are deprived of their clothers and suffers form all kinds of rudeness and even "sometimes tied up and severely whipped, sometimes prostrated on the earth, while their naked bodies are torn by the scorpion lash" (54).

When Grimké speaks of equality, she says, "intellect is not sexed. To her, thoughts about men and women are relative and they become different in different periods and countries. Because these ideas are created in the direction of people's will.

"As moral and responsible beings, men and women have the same sphere of action, and the same duties devolve upon both; but no one can doubt that the duties of each vary according to circumstances; that a father and a mother, a husband and a wife, have sacred obligations resting on them, which can not possibly belong to those who do not sustain these relations. But the duties and responsibilities do not attach to them as men and as women, but as parents, husbands, and wives" (60).

Women and men have the same responsibilities and moral structure. Whatever the circumstances, there are some responsibilities given to people without gender discrimination. In particular, there are certain tasks that family ties bring, which are in conflict with the gender discrimination of men.

"... when speaking of the importance of women being well educated, that " educated men would never make educated women, but educated women would make educated men." I believe the sentiment is corret, because if the wealth of latent intellect among women was fully evolved and improved, they would rejoice to communicate to their sons all their own knowledge, and inspire them with desires to drink from the fountain of literature" (Grimke, 1838: 62-63).

The author argues that education must be equal, as well. Though there exist the view that men are not able to create an educated woman in society, women must be well educated. If so, women ensure that men in their families become educated and knowledgeable, too. Woman has always been a subject of mockery when she has tried to become educated like men in all ages and countries. She has been kept away from science and literature. "...by ornamenting her person with flowers and with jewels, while her mind was desolate; she was still the mark at which wit and satire and cruelty leveled their arrows" (66-67). Women have always been regarded as ornaments and are not allowed to develop their intelligence. "...we find the early Christians would not fight, or swear, or wear costly clothing" (68). In fact, there is no tradition of dressing so fancy in early Christians and" one of the chief obstacles in the way of woman's elevation to the same platform of human rights, and moral dignity, and intellectual improvement, with her brother... is her love of dress" (71). If a Christian preacher is not suitable to wear eye-catching, it is not right for other Christians to dress like this. Because, "God makes no distinction between the moral and religious duties of ministers and people" (73).

In work of Sarah Grimké *Letter on the Equalities of the Sexes and the Conditon of the Woman* the condition of women against laws is also stated. "They have persuaded us, that we have no rights to investigate the laws, and that, if we did, we could not comprehend them; they alone are capable of understanding the mysteries of Blackstone" (75). Men think that women should not be interested in laws because to them, women can not reason about such things. Unlike, "Women should certainly know the laws by which they are governed, and from which they frequently suffer..." (77-78)

"That the laws which have generally been adopted in the United States, for the government of women, have been framed almost entirely for the exclusive benefit of men, and with a design to oppress women, by depriving them of all control over their property, is too manifest to be denied. Some; liberal and enlightened men, I know, regret the existence of these laws..." (81)

Many laws that apply to women in America recognize priviledges to men. They puts women under pressure. They deprive women of the right to own property. But many people do not believe in the existence of these laws. For this reason, women should focus primarily on this unequal laws.

" I do not wish by any means to intimate that the condition of free women can be compared to that of slaves in suffering, or in degradation; still, I believe the laws which deprive married



women of their rights and privileges, have a tendency to lessen them in their won estimation as moral and responsible beings, and that their being made by civil law inferior to their husbands, has a debasing and mischievous effect upon them, teaching them practically the fatal lesson to look unto man for protection and indulgence" (82-83).

To Grimké, the condition of a woman living in a free environment in all respects is not the same as that of a slave woman. The slave woman is not only suffering, but also being underestimated. The law does not grant privileged rights to women. Law brings women to a lower level than their spouses. This causes women in every case to see themselves lower than men and constantly to obey men and to need protection of men. "... women, among the lowest classes of society, so far as my observation has extended, suffer intensely from the brutality of their husbands" (Grimke, 1838: 88).

According to the principle which I have laid down, that man and woman were created equal, and endowed by their beneficent Creator with the same intellectual powers and the same moral responsibilities, and that consequently whatever is *morally* right to a man to do, is *morally* right for a woman to do, it follows as a necessary corollary, that if it is the duty of man to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, it is the duty also of woman (98).

To the writer, men and women are created equal by God. They have the same mental power and responsibility. So, what is right for a man is true for a woman. There is no distinction in religion. "... the soul of the woman in his sight is as the soul of man, and both are alike capable of the influence of the Holy Spirit" (103).

I do not ask any one to believe my statements, or adopt my conclusions, because they are mine; but I do earnestly entreat my sisters to lay aside their prejudices, and examine these subjects *for themselves*, regardless of the "traditions of men," because they are intimately connected with their duty and their usefulness in the present important crisis (119).

Grimké expresses that what she has written is only her own thoughts. She asks women to stay away from prejudices and think the issues she has mentioned once again on their own behalf. She believes that women should get rid of men's oppression. Because "... WHATSOEVER IT IS MORALLY RIGHT TO A MAN TO DO, IT IS MORALLY RIGHT FOR A WOMAN TO DO..." (122- 123)

Therefore, there should be equal view in moral situations, only by this, women may come at the same position as men and have the same rights and same responsibilities. Another issue that the author opposes is this issue: "... Christian women can be engaged in doing God's work, and yet cannot ask his blessing on their efforts, except through the lips of a man" (125). Even if to religion, it is not appropriate for women to pray for the situation they are in. As in any case, they are provided with dependence on their spouses.

7. Alice Malsenior Walker

She is an African American author, feminist, womanist and activist borning in Georgia in 1944. She has written at length on issues of race and gender. She witnessed in her early life that a white plantation owner once asserted to her that blacks had no need for education. Walker is a respected figure in the liberal political community for her support of unconventional and unpopular views as a matter of principle. Recognized as one of the leading voices among black American women writers, Alice Walker has produced an acclaimed and varied body of work, including poetry, novels, short stories, essays, and criticism. Her writings portray the struggle of black people throughout history, and are praised for their insightful and riveting portraits of black life, in particular the experiences of black women in a sexist and racist society. Walker has described herself as a "womanist" her term for a black feminist.

After high school, Walker went to Spelman College in Atlanta on a full scholarship in 1961 and later transferred to Sarah Lawrence College near New York City, graduating in 1965. Walker became interested in the U.S. civil rights movement. Continuing the activism that she participated in during her college years, Walker returned to the South where she became involved with voter registration drives, campaigns for welfare rights, and children's programs in Mississippi.

Walker published her best-known work, the novel *The Color Purple* in 1982. The story of a young black woman fighting her way through not only racist white culture but patriarchal black culture was a resounding commercial success. The book became a bestseller. Walker has written several other novels. *The Color Purple* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Walker the first black woman to win in 1983. Walker was also the first black woman to win the National Book Award. Her works focus on the struggles of blacks, particularly women, and their struggle against a racist, sexist, and violent society. Her writings also focus on the role of women of color in culture and history.



Walker's creative vision is rooted in the economic hardship, racial terror, and folk wisdom of African American life and culture, particularly in the rural South. Her writing explores multidimensional kinships among women and embraces the redemptive power of social and political revolution. Her works along with that of such writers as Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor, is commonly associated with the post-1970s surge in African American women's literature. Walker's women characters display strength, endurance, and resourcefulness in confronting and overcoming oppression in their lives, yet Walker is frank in depicting the often devastating circumstances of the "twin afflictions" of racism and sexism.

She supports antinuclear and environmental causes, and her protests against the oppressive rituals of female circumcision in Africa and the Middle East make her a vocal advocate for international women's rights. Walker's appreciation for her matrilineal literary history is evidenced by the numerous reviews and articles she has published to acquaint new generations of readers with writers like Zora Neale Hurston. Like her short stories, Walker's six novels place more emphasis on the inner workings of African American life than on the relationships between blacks and whites. Among her novels and short story collections are *Possessing the Secret of Joy: A Novel* (New Press, 2008); *The Way Forward is with a Broken Heart* (Random House, 2000); *By the Light of My Father's Smile* (1998); *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992); *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989); *To Hell With Dying* (1988); *The Color Purple* (1982), which won the Pulitzer Prize and American Book Award; and *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1981).

8. *The Color Purple*

The Color Purple (1982), an epistolary novel concerning the growth to maturity of a poor black woman in an oppressive, brutish society, launched Walker to mainstream critical success and best-seller popularity. It received the 1983 Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award, and was made into an Academy Award-nominated film by Steven Spielberg (Bloom, 1989: 195).

The famous modern feminist novel *The Color Purple* written by Alice Walker consists of many letters written by the main character and tells the slave life of 19th century caused by men. "*The Color Purple* is a novel which deals with what it means to be poor, black, and female in the rural South during the first half of the twentieth century" (76). The work is about Celie, a poor, southern, black woman, who matures over time and finds herself. " "*The Color Purple* gives a wonderful redemonstration of the evils of male-oriented society..." (Dieke, 1999: 18) Living in a repressive society, Celie has to throw her pain beginning in her childhood inside. She lives loneliness because of her mother's death and her sister Nettie's running away to another country. For this reason he begins to share his loneliness with God. She writes letters to him.

Celie is a black women and has feminist thoughts. Her words demonstrates her view clearly: "I don't even look at mens. That's the truth. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not sacred of them" (Walker, 1985: 7). She isn't interested in men. With whom she is interested are women. Her sister Nettie comes first. Although Nettie is in another country, she is the one who informs hers about the people living in the world with the letters she wrote. "And she is a good teacher too" (17).

In *The Color Purple* Alice Walker creates the character of Celie, a Black adolescent girl who is sexually abused by her step-father. Writing letters to God and forming supportive relationships with other Black women help Celie find her own voice, and her voice enables her to transcend the fear and silence of her childhood (Collins, 2000: 123).

When Celie is still a young girl, she is raped by her stepfather . This situation, which embarrassed her, is understood through the letters she wrote to God. She can not tell anyone about this. Her stepfather threatens her by saying that she should not tell anyone. But as the years go on, she began to get rid of her fears of childhood with the help of their other black female friends. Celie is no longer a response to any of the men around her, but she becomes a different woman now. She becomes a person who defends herself and admits who she is. Celie, who has always been unresponsive to the predicament in the face of the embarrassment, states this: "But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive" (Walker, 1985: 17). To her, what matters after she has lived is to be able to survive. Only with this way because she believes that she can spend good days with Nettie, is the only true love in her life.

The first letters in novel start with the expression "Dear God". "She begins her letters to God as a form of therapy to relieve her from her isolation and to validate that there must be some divine plan for her miserable existence" (Dieke, 1999: 56). The creator is the only thing that she has and is close to and she expresses it like this: " I just say, Never mine, never mine, long as I can spell G-o-d I got somebody along" (Walker, 1985: 18). As long as she lives, God is the asset that she can trust and share her secrets. Celie has been exposed to things she has not had to live since she was a little girl. The person she knew as his father, Alfonso raped her and Celie could not share this shame with anyone. Then she was forced to marry to Mr. Albert---- who has a child. Albert is married to ----. So, in a patriarchal society, she begins to live the



suppression of women at an early age. "When a woman marry, she spose to keep a decent house and a clean family" (19). Responsibility has been imposed on her without knowing how marriage is. As a woman, she should look after her children and their spouse and fulfill her responsibilities at home. There are characters around the main character who defend the supremacy of men. Even Harpo, the eldest son of her husband, says: "Women work. I'm a man" (20). He says he can not do business because he is a man and can not help Celie in her business. To him, all work is for women.

The first person to warn Celie against men and defend herself against them is Harpo's wife, Sofia. "You got to fight them, Celie, she say. I can't do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself" (21). She emphasizes that she should protect herself against men and fight with them for her whatever happens. But Celie gives Nettie as a model and says that she will not fight. "I don't say nothing. I think abot 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" (21). To Celie, opposing men leads a woman to death, just as it is with Nettie. Nettie has escaped from home by defending herself and defending men supremacy. But, to Celie, this escape is the result of her end. So what really matters to Celie is survival.

Celie expresses that her husband orders her to do something continuously: "He tell me, Wash this. Iron that. Look for this. Look for that. Find this. Find that" (24). Because every work should be done by women and if Celie is his wife, she is the only person to make this works. To her husband Mr.-----, "Wives is like children. You have to let'em know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating" (34). Women must be made aware of who is at the top and women should be beaten.

Celie tells Harpo that since she was born she always knew that the men were sovereign, and that Mr .----- had beaten her in particular, he had to be beat his wife in order to be able to speak to his wife. But Harpo encounters Sofia's reaction when he tries to do this and he tells her that it is advised by Celie. When Sofia, a more courageous and confident lady than Celie, asks Celie why she advised him to beat, Celie states: " I say it cause I'm fool, I say. I say it cause I'm jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can't" (38). Celie is one who fulfills all orders of her husband and does not act in any way. Because to her, a woman has to obey her husband. But Sofia behaved much differently, and when her husband tried to beat her, she beat her husband and her husband decided not to do it again. Sofia is one who is opposed to crushing and humiliating by men, and if a man can beat his wife, she should be able to do the same.

She say, 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 a family of men. But I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house. She let out her breath. I loves Harpo, she says. God knows I do. But I'll kill him dead before I let him beat me (Walker, 1985: 38).

As a black lady, Sofia expresses that she always has to defend and protect herself against men throughout her life. She tells that she is always in a fight against her father, her brothers and male relatives. She states that in their environment a girl is not safe in a place where men exist, even in her own family. She has beaten her husband Harpo because he must protect herself against him. Her husband, Harpo, expresses his thoughts about Sofia like that: "I want her to do what I say, like you do for Pa" (56). He wants Sofia to be like Celie and to be a lady who fulfills all the orders of her husband. "She do what she want, don't pay me no mind at all. I try to beat her, she black my eyes" (56). On the contrary, Sofia can not stand still in the face of violence and does what she wants not what her husband wants. Celie explains this situation to Harpo like this: "Some womens can't be beat, I say. Sofia one of them. Besides, Sofia love you. She probably be happy to do most of what you say if you ast her right. She not mean, she not spiteful. She don't hold a grudge" (57). Some women can not be beaten, they are strong, and if Harpo tells his wishes to Sofia with a good word, she says Sofia can do what he wants. In Sofia's eyes Harpo "don't want a wife, he want a dog" (58).

When Sofia can not resist her husband's behavior says she wants to leave her home, Harpo do not object this. After a long time, both of them will continue their lives with other people. Now, Sofia has a new lover, and Harpo marries another girl. But Harpo tries to behave his new wife just like he does Sofia and does not even address her with her real name. When Celie realizes that Harpo is calling his wife a nickname, Celie says to him: "What your real name? I ast her. She say, Mary Agnes. Make Harpo call you by your real name, I say" (75). Celie reacts toward this nickname and emphasizes that he should address his wife with his real name. Because the fact that he does not address her with the real name indicates that he does not care her. Although his wife does not approve of this appeal, Harpo continues to address Mary as Squeak. He even tries to get her to do things he can not do to his ex-wife. He uses expressions emphasizing male privilege. "Shut up Squeak, he say. It bad luck for women to laugh at men" (171). He asks his wife to be silent and tries to emphasize that it is not right for a woman to laugh at a man.



Another character having importance for the feminist aspect in *The Color Purple* is Shug Avery. "Ain't anything wrong with Shrug Avery. She just sick. Sicker than anybody I ever seen. The sicker than mama was when she die. But she more evil than my mama and that keeps her alive" (43). Shug is actually an old and sickly woman, but what separates her from the other women is that she does not bow to men and treat them mercilessly. In fact, the thing that keeps her alive is that she does not care about the men and treats them badly. Learning the Mr.----- has beaten Celie, she says: "What he beat you for?" She ast. "For being me and not you" (66). To Celie, if she could be a brave woman like Shug, her husband would not dare beat her, but she was not such a lady. Celie points out that Shug is a different lady stating: "I notice how Shug talk and act sometimes like a man" (72). Shug behaves like a man, she is a independent woman and does not submit to any oppression. When Shug is trying to get Celie to get different thoughts, Mrs.----- want the exact opposite. "A woman need a little fun, once in a while, she say. A woman need to be at home, he say" (72). To Shug, women are entitled to some things like men. A woman can also have fun and behave like a man freely. But to Celie's husband, a woman's place is home and she does not have the same rights as men.

As time goes by, Celie's thoughts about life and women change. "All day long I act just like Sofia. I stutter. I mutter to myself. I stumble bout the house crazy for Mr.----- blood" (103). She is now trying to act like mighty Sofia. After that, God is not the only one to share her secrets. She starts her letters with "Dear Nettie" and writes letters to Netie, believing that her sister is alive. "And 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" (132).

Now, her only supporter who survive is her sister and she tries to survive by hoping that they will come together. Nettie writes letter to her and now the two sisters are sure that both of them are alive. Nettie lives with Celie's child at home of a couple both of whom are missionaries. In his letters feminist attitudes and thoughts reveal openly, as well. Missionary Mrs. Corrine, who lives with her, begins to train Nettie, whom she regards as a female sister. Nettie explains this situation like that: "... one thing I do thank her for, for teaching me to learn for myself, by reading and studying and writing a clear hand. And for keeping alive in me somehow the desire to *know*" (Walker, 1985: 112). She is grateful to Mrs. Corrine since this women has helped her have the desire to know and has taught a lot.

Nettie does not only tell about what she experience in her letters, but also informs Celie about other people and events around the world. "Oh, Celie, there are colored people in the world who want us to know! Want us to grow and see the light! They are not all mean like Pa and Albert, or beaten down like ma was, Corrine and Samuel have a wonderful marriage" (112).

All men in the world are not as they were born. There are those who argue that women have also some rights, and not all women suffer painfully like their mothers. Nettie draws conclusions from what he has learned in his wandering places: "We are not white. We are not Europeans. We are black like the Africans themselves. And that we and the Africans will be working for a common goal: the uplift of black people everywhere" (115). She believes that it can only possible by learning to read and to write and by being educated. Nettie goes to Olinka together with the couple Missionaries. The thoughts about women are the same as those in the place where Nettie was born.

"The Olinka do not believe girls should be educated. When I asked a mother why she thought this, she said: A girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something" (132). Girls do not have to be educated because the important thing is their husbands not them. Those who should be educated are only men. The people who will come through all work are women and their daughters will do the same things in the future. Actually women in Olinka "look so unhappy and work so hard" (133). Their only wish is that their daughters will grow up and marry. Despite all the difficulties in their lives, it is important for these women to be the wife of a high-status man. To these women, even if they are young, it is more important that their daughters help their mothers in their work on the contrary being educated.

Nettie is the teacher of small girl called Tashi being from Olinka. She says to her father who objects to education: "The world is changing, I said. It is no longer a world just for boys and men" (136). No longer the only humanbeings who should be educated are men. On the contrary, the girls also need to be educated. But Tashi's father objects to it and talkes about traditions of Olinka. "Our women are respected here, said the father. We would never let them tramp the world as American women do. There is always someone to look after the Olinka woman. A father. An uncle. A brother or nephew" (137). In Olinka a woman is always under the domination of a man. These women can not do whatever they want independently, contraray to the women in America. And the father tells Nettie that: "... but our people pity women such as you who are cast out, we know not form where, into a world unknown to you, where you must struggle all alone, for yourself" (137). The women in Olinka live only for their husbands but only for herself goes places she does



not know, lonely. Therefore she will be alone and will come through difficulties lonely. To those who are from Olinka the truth is this. Even though there are women who have much more different lives in different parts of the world, they “do not approve of this different way for our children” (137).

Nettie likens the behavior of the men in Olinka to the behavior of his father. “There is a way that the men speak to women that reminds me too much of Pa. They listen just long enough to issue instructions. They don’t even look at women when women are speaking” (137). Men do not care about the woman or even they do not look at their faces while talking. When they talk, they look at the ground, not the faces. Likewise, women do not look at the faces of men. “They look instead at his feet and his knees. And what can I say to this? Again, it is our own behavior around Pa” (137).

Nettie tells that women are in solidarity with each other in Olinka. “It is in work that the women get to know and care about each other” (141). Even the same husband's spouses help each other while doing works. Because these things bring women closer together. But by doing the same things women can understand each other better. “This friendship among women is something Samuel often talks about. Because the women share a husband but the husband does not share their friendships, it makes Samuel uneasy” (Walker, 1985: 141). Corrine's husband, Samuel, even notices Olinka's female sisterhood. Women can share each other's husbands and become friends. But a husband can not make friendship and share his wife with others. This inequality even worries Samuel.

Women in these places have to act in accordance with the situation they are in, and this forces them to make friends with other spouses of their husbands. “... among the Olinka, the husband has life and death power over the wife. If he accuses one of his wives of witchcraft or infidelity, she can be killed” (142). Women and men do not have the same rights in Olinka. If a woman does a wrong behaviour, her husband even has the right to kill her. “The women spend all their time in the fields, tending their crops and praying” (147). Women have to spend all their days working, praying and obeying their husbands. Celie learns from a letter from Nettie that their father is not their real father. Celie was attacked by the person whom she know as her father and shared this secret only with God, after a long while getting this news she starts her letter with “Dear God”.

“My children not my sister and brother. Pa not pa” (151). She felt a little comfortable in this embarrassing situation after that. Because in this case her children will not be considered as her sister or brother. After sharing this new secret with God, she continues writing her letter with “Dear Nettie”. When Shug who is her best friend asks Celie why she does not start her letter with Dear God, she answers like that: “What God do for me? I ast. She say, Celie! Like she shock. He gave you life, good health, and a good woman that love you to death” (164). Celie says God does not help her because she faced hardships throughout her life. However, Shug tells her from the positive side that she is in her life, and that she is the one who loves her forever and gives her the help and God brought her to Celie’s life. Judging by the love between Shug and Celie, it seems that this love has taken a far more different form than a normal love of a friend. In fact, both now begin to see each other as lovers, and when they are apart they feel very bad.

Indeed, for different female characters in the novel, such as Celie, Nettie, Shug, Sofia, and “Squeak”, there are different definitions of life, love, and sexuality. Perhaps the most symbolic of this ideological plurality is, again, Celie's definition of God, which, throughout the novel, becomes less and less expected. Although the idea that God may not be a white male is hardly Walker’s invention, it may be more interesting to notice that Celie does not replace one image of God by another, but leaves the possibility of creating one's own god, one that is not related to society, friends, or even to her lover, Shug, who awards Celie with the possibility of finding God but does not dictate any one image of it. (Dieke, 1999: 19)

In novel *The Color Purple* there are female characters with different characteristics. These women are different from each other in their way of looking at life. When viewing Celie’s thoughts about God, it can be understood that she believes God is a man. The god he imagined is like a man, but he shares his secrets with him. Shug causes Celie to change her views about God. Shug tells her that God is not a man and that there is no image on earth. In fact, to the writer, Celie's thoughts about God comes from men who are consistently superior. Nettie, her sister is not only woman who tells Celie about life. Her girlfriend, Shug, is also the one who shares her thoughts with her and keeps her informed. They start talking about God and Shug says: “God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it” (Walker, 1985: 166). To her, God is not a man or woman like Celie thinks. It is a different entity and it is in people. Shug claims that men desire and act on themselves above all people. To her, Celie’s thought about God’s masculinity is caused by men. “Man corrupt everything, say Shug. He on your box of grits, in your head, and all over the radio. He try to make you think he everywhere. Soon as you think he



everywhere, you think he God. But he ain't" (Walker, 1985: 168). To Celie, previously Nettie was the only one who loves her in a real sense in the world. But later, a woman whose love she believes that real, comes to her life. This is Miss Shug Avery. Now her point of view of life changes and Nettie writes: "Well, you know wherever there's a man, there's trouble" (175). Men are the source of women's problems. When Celie says she wants to leave the house with her friend Shug, she meets her husband's reaction. "...Who you think you is? He say. You can't curse nobody. Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. Goddam, he say, you nothing at all" (176). Like it occurs everytime, Mr.----- implies that a black woman can not move freely. He tries to express that she can not do anything by herself and must always be at home under a male control. "Celie has been denied "a self" and is treated merely as an object"(Dieke, 1999: 22). But Celie is no longer the woman, her husband recognizes and submits to everything. In novel, Celie's "critique of the patriarchal system, her denial of the commodity value of women, and her creation of female self-sufficiency in the terms of sexual and moral independence from male domination" (18) can be seen.

She says with courage that she got from powerful women especially from Shug around her: "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here" (Walker, 1985: 176). It is the first head up against a man. She accepts all the unpleasant qualities and tries to express that she is a person and that she may have some rights as she is still alive. Celie goes to Memphis with her friend Shug. Since Shug knows that the black women are working like a servant there throughout their lives, she tells her friend Celie that she is no longer in that situation: "...You not my maid. I didn't bring you to Memphis to be that. I brought you here to love you and help you get on your feet" (179). Shug's only request is that Celie move freely. In doing so, Shug is the one who will help her. After starting this new way of life, Celie continues to write to her sister. Now she is happy, there is a woman and her sister who really love her. As if the whole world is hers. But when Shug goes to other places, Celie starts to feel different." But look at you. When Shug left, happiness desert" (220).

But I don't hate him, Nettie. And I don't believe you dead. How can you be dead if I still feel you? Maybe, like God, you changed into something different that I'll have to speak to in a different way, but you not dead to me Nettie. And never will be. Sometime when I git tired of talking to myself I talk to you. I even try to reach our children (220).

Celie starts looking at life and men differently. She does not hate Mr.----- and does not want to kill him anymore. Because he, too, has begun to change."... when you talk to him now he really listen..." (221). As seen, Celie is not the only character who changes in novel. "Other characters simply leave their former empty, wretched existence and embrace an entirely new lease of life" (Dieke, 1999: 4). She is now sure that Nettie is alive. Nettie also has a different form like God. Nettie writes a letter to her sister whenever she feels loneliness as if she is talking to her.

Well, your sister too crazy to kill herself. Most times I feels like shit but I felt like shit before in my life and what happen? I had me a fine sister name Nettie. I had me another fine woman friend name Shug. I had me some fine children growing up in Africa, singing and writing verses. The first two months was hell though, I tell the world. But now Shug's six months is come and gone and she ain't come back. And I try to teach my heart not to want nothing it can't have (Walker, 1985: 226).

Celie mentions Nettie about changes in her life. She tells that previously she wanted to kill herself, but she could not. Because there are Nettie and Shug and her educated children who keep her alive. Shug is the only friend whose love she believes in. She expresses this situation as follows: "A lot of people love Shug, but nobody but Shug love me" (239).

But, Shug leaves her alone for months. Celie tries to get used to this loneliness. The feature differentiating Shug from other women, like Mr.----- said is that: "... Shug act more manly than most men... You know Shug will fight... Just like Sofia. She bound to live her life and be herself no matter what" (Walker, 1985: 228). The other strong character Sofia is like Shug who does not bow to men and does not accept their dominance. Whatever happens, she is a character who will not give up on herself and for her life. Mr .----- tells this talking about Shug and Sofia: "Sofia and Shug not like men, he say, but they not like women either" (228).

Changes in her life leads Celie to question his situation and what is happening around her. "I start to wonder why us need love. Why us suffer. Why us black. Why us men and women. Where do children really come from. It didn't take long to realize I didn't hardly know nothing" (239). She asks herself questions but has difficulty in answering. In fact, even this questioning power shows that she is no longer the ex-Celie. Because she lives in a society where men are dominant, she is black, and she is a lady, she does not have so much knowledge about the issue. So she can not solve her own curiosity.



"Dear GOD. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear Everything. Dear God. Thank you for bringing my sister Nettie and our children home" (242). At the end of the novel, Celie has a different personality. "... motif is the regenerate self, the belief by Walker that it is possible for human beings to transform themselves. It is a belief rooted in the triune mythic drama of birth, death, and rebirth (Dieke, 1999: 3). She is like a reborn and a self-found lady. Letters that start with dear God, then dear Nettie, now start with dear people, dear everything. Because she started to enjoy her life, got rid of her old attitudes and grateful to her sister and her children. Now she begins to see herself as a part of the universe. At the end of the novel, she gains great victory against oppressive society, and she does so through femininity relations. She starts doing just what she wants. "In fact, Celie's success in becoming her own master, totally self-dependent, ... Walker is able to proclaim not only the moral superiority of her heroine, but also the chance that she may prevail" (17). She gets rid of men's behavior giving orders. To Alice Walker, "human life is a journey, a continuing process of growth and discovery" (4). The most clear model of this thought is Celie. Other issue dealt in novel is "the discovery of what means to be fully human and feminine in the sense of having the capacity for personal freedom and initiative" (8).

9. Conclusion

These two novels, *The Color Purple* and *Letters on Equality of Sexes and the Condition of Woman* contain feminist items. Both works show that women are under pressure and there is a marked disparity in society. Although Walker focuses specifically on the difficulties that black women have to suffer from and the challenges they have to come from, Grimké voices the need to give various rights to all women, regardless of what constitutes black women. When Walker and Grimké's novels are examined feministically, it is understood that living in a male-dominated society confronts women with various difficulties. Men are seen as superior to women. Sex discrimination and racial discrimination affect the place of women in society.

To Grimké, being a black and slave woman means struggling with different challenges. For this reason, slavery must be abolished before women are granted various rights. In the first years of her life, Sarah Grimké, a close witness to the sadness of his father's slaves, is the favor of removing slavery. The lives of slaves are too different to compare with the lives of other women. To the writer, as God created men equally without discrimination of gender, patriarchal societies should recognize the rights recognized by this supreme creator. If Adam and Eve were expelled from heaven together, there should be no need for inequality in society.

To Grimké, the Bible, the holy book, has been bi-linguistically biased by men with biased views of those believing they are superior. The author wants men to pull their hands out of women, expressing clearly the position they are dropping women. In fact, it is the behavior of men that causes women to look down on themselves. Women being knowledgeable and educated individuals are prevented by the opposite sex. Because men consider women to be objects, and they think only of the women's appearance, thinking that their minds should be empty. Grimké believes that women are obedient to men because of their love of wearing expensive gowns and wearing spectacular outfits. Indeed, what is important is that women must be aware of their situation and be willing to deal with the behaviors they have learned by taking the necessary training. Grimké's work is in an effort to show what women experience all over the world. The work accomplishes this purpose successfully. The writer wants women not to be blind to some things, to think about things, even if they do not believe in what they claim. She expresses that towards the ignorance attitudes of the right of equality given by God, women should not remain unresponsive.

Likewise, in Walker's novel *The Color Purple* feminist views are evident. The novel, which started with the worst things that could happen to a black woman, is ending in successfully. It is sexism and racism that the female heroes of the novel have to struggle with. It is emphasized throughout the novel that Celie's nigger, especially a the woman and should be submissive to men. Because she is a black woman, her humanity is ignored and is always under pressure. As a married woman she is forced to do what her husband wants, not what she wants. To her husband, she is an asset that he can do whatever he wants. In fact, her husband does not even see Celie as a woman.

The novel's female hero meets a women of different characters after being married to a man having children with force. With the help of these female friends, changes have begun to come to fruition in her worldview. Sofia is the first reason for these changes in her thinking. She tries to beat Harpo beating her to death. Explaining this behavior to Celie, she is trying to express that in a society where men are, a woman must constantly struggle. Because, as a black woman, Sofia has had to protect herself against men around her life. But she have never bowed to their wishes. Celie, influenced by Sofia's statements, believes she can not fight life. She just considers that trying to fight will take her to death.



When Celie meets his second female friend, Shug Avery, the real changes in her mind and behavior begin to take place. Shug is a woman who does not submit to the domination of men, like Sofia. What is important for her is to do what she wants and to live as she wants. Celie begins to share his secrets that she can not share with anyone, after God, with Shug. The main character, who realizes that Shug's thoughts about men are similar to her own thoughts, tries to show these views in her acts that she conceals previously. Even though her husband is trying to avoid it with humiliating words, Celie, who starts to act like Shug and Sofia, decides to live with Shug by abandoning her husband. "Eventually, Shug teaches Celie to be self-reliant and to be equal and free to all, or to be part of creation" (Dieke, 1999: 61). Celie is no longer a submissive woman, but a new black woman standing on her feet, working and earning money, freely living as she wishes, and this is enough to change her perspective on men around her.

The novel *The Color Purple* reveals the ability of a black woman to come through difficulties with the support of her female friends, even though she has been exposed to the worst behavior and oppression. Of course, being a black woman is not easy, but getting rid of the conditions is also difficult. The best example of this is the character, Celie. Celie began to deal with rules patriarchal society. This is a personal victory. Life begins with difficulties, continues with finding herself. "To Walker, Celie embodies all black women. Like them, Celie unwittingly carries her pain in her personal charm and carelessness "(56). In a male-dominated society, Celie, in fact, has won a victory that many black women can not. Though the previously she remains silent, she finds support in the fraternity of her sisters, escaping from fears and reservations. The novel, which begins with sorrows, ends with a happy ending. At the end of the novel, Celie seems to have stepped into a hopeful future.

As seen, as Grimké tries to express, women are still in their own hands to get rid of the situation they are in. For this, women need to take into account realities, especially the facts revealed by God. If men and women are created equal, they must be equal throughout their lives.

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