

A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF STELLA DADZIE'S A KICK IN THE BELLY

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Abstract

This research explores the various forms of violence and oppression endured by enslaved Black women in the Caribbean and the Americas as depicted in Stella Dadzie's *A Kick in the Belly*. Using a postcolonial feminist approach, this study identifies five forms of violence - physical, psychological, sexual, systemic, and cultural, that were deliberately employed to uphold colonial domination over Black women. These forms of violence were not only tools of control but also mechanisms to sustain both racial and gender hierarchies within the colonial system. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, this research relies on documentation as its primary instrument for analyzing the historical and literary narratives presented in Dadzie's work. The study highlights the collective trauma experienced by enslaved Black women and illustrates how violence was systematically used to reinforce their subjugation. Furthermore, this research underscores the resilience and resistance of these women against oppressive structures, shedding light on their agency despite immense adversity. The findings of this research contribute to a broader understanding of the historical roots of racial and gender-based violence. Moreover, it establishes a connection between historical oppression and contemporary social movements advocating for racial justice and women's rights, reinforcing the continued relevance of addressing systemic inequalities in today's society.

Keywords: *postcolonial feminism, violence, colonialism, black women, A Kick in the Belly*

INTRODUCTION

Slavery and oppression continue to occur and flourish despite being outright banned, and according to Anti-slavery International, there are still around 50 million people around the world who are still slaves. Slavery is not only a violation of human rights but also a crime against humanity. According to Latuharhary, 2022, slavery is a past social system that is cruel and inhumane, exploitative in nature, and causes victims to suffer greatly. There are several disciplines that can observe and dismantle social inequality and also aim to fight for women's rights (Ilmia, 2023), such as postcolonial feminism, which is one of the basic concepts of feminism theory that focuses on gender liberation from the perspective of non-Western women, especially those living in former colonial countries (Hamil, 2024).

The novel "A Kick in the Belly" by Stella Dadzie is a literary work that focuses on the struggle of black women who were enslaved in the Caribbean and in America, but it also tells how black women who became slaves survived and also resisted slavery. Stella Dadzie illustrates how women not only survived but also fought for their identity and culture in the face of cruelty. Feminism is an ideology and also a movement that aims to fight for gender equality as well as women's rights. There are several theories of feminism, including postcolonial feminism. Hamil (2024) reveals that "postcolonial feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses on gender liberation from the angle of facing double challenges, namely gender-based oppression and also race and culture-based oppression. This theory explores how women in the context of non-Western women's perspectives, especially those who live in former colonial countries," Postcolonial feminism is a combination of gender analysis and colonialism, where this theory describes how women in postcolonial societies experience double oppression, namely gender-based oppression and also race-based oppression. Therefore, this research focuses on postcolonial theory because this theory is deemed suitable for analyzing the book *A Kick in the Belly* by Stella Dadzie. The research also aims to find out how violence is depicted in the novel and what forms of violence are in the novel based on the perspective of postcolonialism.

Ilmias's research (2023) investigated the study of postcolonial feminism literary criticism by describing the form of resistance in the novel "Cinta 2 Kodi" by Asma Nadia. The second research conducted by Fahmilda and Putri investigated postcolonial feminism in the short story "Racun untuk Tuan" by Iksaka Banu. The third research conducted by Susanto investigates postcolonial feminist studies in the novel Gowok written by Liem Khing Hoo. The fourth research conducted by Putri investigates A Feminism Postcolonial Study Towards Siti Soendari in the Novel House of Glass. The fifth research conducted by Ilmia investigates A Feminism Postcolonial Study Towards Siti Soendari in the Novel House of Glass. These studies illustrate the description of the resistance of slaves to oppression. Therefore, this study aims to find out how violence is depicted in the novel and what the forms of violence are in the novel based on the perspective of postcolonialism. Previous studies have explored the dynamics of women's resistance in the postcolonial context, but few of them have examined the forms of violence perpetrated during oppression. Therefore, the research will focus on how violence is depicted in the novel "A Kick in the Belly" and what forms of violence and oppression are present in the book.

The current study of feminism in the landscape of feminism leads to a post-colonial feminist approach that takes the background of patriarchy as one of the cultures that contribute to domination and subordination in third world countries in the landscape of colonial feminization, the presence of women in various positions must be representative and substantive (Loomba (2016). Post-colonial feminist figures such as Spivak (2010) argue that women's involvement is not only seen in the form of vocal referencing in public, but what is more important is the purpose behind their appearance and involvement in these activities. For postcolonial feminists, women's participation precedes the extent to which feminist consciousness and agenda already exist in the space. This is because women are very vulnerable in their position as representation when coupled with other orientations. In this case, violent colonization occurs in the spaces of women's representation. Spivak reminds us that colonizers often portray themselves as saviors of existence when they are always motivated by their own interests.

Postcolonialism is generally defined as a theory that was born after most colonized countries gained their independence. Postcolonialism is a form of awareness and critique of colonialism. Postcolonialism also incorporates a variety of disciplines ranging from philosophy, cultural studies, politics, literary language, social science, sociology, and cultural studies. feminism. Postcolonial does not mean after independence, but postcolonial begins when the first contact of the colonizer with the indigenous people. The study in the field of colonialism covers the entire national textual treasury, especially literary works that have experienced imperial rule from the beginning of colonization to the present. The themes studied are wide and varied, covering almost all aspects of culture, including politics, ideology, religion, education, history, anthropology, ethnicity art, language and literature, as well as practical forms on the ground, such as slavery, occupation, population transfer, language imposition, and various other forms of cultural invasion (Bartens, 2001).

Case example:

Door Duisternis Tot Licht (grammatology) The struggle of RA Kartini, which is compiled in the biography "Panggil Aku Kartini Saja" written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The idea to establish an indigenous school arose because Kartini experienced discrimination from the school environment, because she was not a white race, not every knowledge opportunity was open to her. Discrimination based on the rank and socio-economic status of the parents of students. This is what Kartini wanted to eliminate. education belongs to everyone.

The characteristics of Postcolonialism are divided into 3 namely domination, exploitation, and cultural coercion. Colonial domination involves a great deal of oppression and coercion, and thus is sometimes analyzed as a process that does not involve the will of the colonized. (Arnold, 1994 in Loomba, 2003). The word exploitation itself is taken from the English exploitation, which means a political attempt to use a certain object arbitrarily. Then the characteristics of Postcolonialism are exploitation, exploitation is divided into two, namely sexual and economic exploitation according to Aroma Elmina Martha, (2003) sexual exploitation is the utilization of women that occurs through actions, both in the form of speech (verbal) such as obscene jokes, and in the form of actions such as rubbing, poking, hugging, kissing, and even having sex with women. In a book entitled The Philosophy

and Economics of Market Socialism: A Critical Study, N. Scott Arnold explains the concept of economic exploitation as a relationship in the distribution of economic wealth, in which a worker does not receive the proper amount of income or rights. Cultural imposition refers to the colonial power's attempt to impose culture and their customs to the colonized society. This could be due to a belief in the cultural superiority of the colonizers, a desire to spread a particular religion, or as a strategy to consolidate political control over the colonized territory.

Cultural imposition often involves the erasure or neglect of local culture, which can result in the loss of the cultural identity of the colonized people. This emphasis on cultural domination suggests that colonialism is not only about physical and economic control, but also control over cultural values and practices.

The definition of slavery is very broad. The Slavery Convention issued in 1926 article 1.2 defines slavery as all acts involving the capture, acquisition, or disposal of a person with the intent to make him a slave, all acts involving the acquisition of a slave with the intent to sell or exchange him, all acts of release through sale or exchange of slaves acquired with the intent to sell. There are 4 types of slavery in America, namely:

Chattel slavery (personal property)

In this type of slavery, a person is considered a personal property and is freely traded. Slaves had no rights and were expected to perform work (as well as provide sexual 'favors') at the master's command. This form of slavery was brought to the Americas as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Debt Collateral

This type of slavery involves people as collateral for debt. Slaves are provided by the person who owes the debt-usually a family member or his own child.

Forced labor

As the name implies, this type of slavery involves the threat or use of violence against workers. The slaves were contracted for a certain period of time so that they could not escape from forced labor.

Serfs (slaves who worked as farm laborers)

Serf is a term for slaves who worked as farm laborers during feudalism in Europe. These slave farmers were controlled by the landlords. They earned a living from working the landlord's fields.

According to Alfian Romansyah (2016), patriarchy comes from the word "patriarchate" which means a structure that places the role of men as the central single ruler and everything. The patriarchal system that dominates the culture of society causes gender inequality and injustice that affects various aspects of human activities. Men have a role as the main control in society while women have little or no influence or rights in the general areas of society, economically, socially, politically, and psychologically, even including the institution of marriage. Restrictions on the role of women by patriotic culture make women become shackled and get discriminated against until now the patriarchal culture is still developing in Indonesian society.

This research aims to find out how violence is depicted in the novel "A Kick In The Belly" and what forms of violence and oppression exist in the book. Using postcolonial theory is able to show that colonial power structures shape injustice in all aspects, including physical, psychological, systemic and cultural violence. This research is relevant for social movements that support racial justice and women's rights in the modern era.

Nudin, Putro and Yusar (2021) in a journal entitled Postcolonial Analysis of the Novel "*Tak Ada Esok*" by Mochtar Lubis, the purpose of their research is about radical and passive resistance and mimicry that occurs in the novel "*Tak Ada Esok*", and there are also orientalist elements and resistance. The method used in this research uses two approaches, namely theoretically and methodologically. Theoretically using a discourse analysis approach and methodologically, using a qualitative descriptive approach. So, the essence of the results of this study is to describe the behavior of orientalism and the

forms of resistance contained in the novel *Tak Ada Esok* by Mochtar Lubis seen from the perspective of postcolonial theory.

Gultom (2022). The purpose of this study is to analyze racial discrimination and resistance by the main black female characters in the novel *Hidden Figures* using a postcolonial theory approach. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. This method is used because the research data is in the form of words or sentences taken from the novel *Hidden Figures*, not in the form of numbers. The results of this study are to describe the forms of discrimination and resistance found in the main characters in the novel *Hidden Figures* and analyze the social context of discrimination against black women in the United States at that time. Postcolonial is chosen and considered appropriate because of its approach that focuses on the process of subjugation or colonization of a nation or state against another nation or state and the influence of colonization on the colonized society.

METHODS

This research uses descriptive-qualitative as its structural analysis method. Creswell (2014) describes how qualitative research approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing differ from the traditional, quantitative approaches. Purposeful sampling, collection of open-ended data, analysis of text or pictures, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings all inform qualitative methods. The data source used in the research is the novel "A Kick in the Belly" by Stella Dadzie, with a focus on Chapter 1, "A Terrible Crying: Women and the Africa Trade," and Chapter 2, "A World of Bad Spirits: Surviving the Middle Passage," to see the postcolonial feminist perspective on African women's experiences under the slavery system. Due to time constraints, researchers only analyzed two chapters of *A Kick in the Belly*. The technique of data collection in this research uses literature study techniques with the text of the novel itself. According to Danial and Warsiah (2009), literature study is research conducted by researchers by collecting a number of books and magazines related to research problems and objectives. Theoretical literature study steps such as determining the topic and scope, identifying relevant sources, collecting and organizing the literature, evaluating the quality and relevance of the literature, summarizing and synthesizing the literature, identifying research gaps, writing a literature review, and checking and updating the literature review. In qualitative research, there are several ways, namely observation, interviews, documents, and audiovisual, social media, and digital materials. In this study, researchers used documents and social media by searching for novels relevant to the research through book databases, libraries, or online platforms. The researcher then chose the novel "A Kick in the Belly" by Stella Dadzie as the subject to be studied. The data analysis used by researchers is using discourse analysis and postcolonial analysis. There are several ways to collect discourse analysis, namely, text analysis, transcription, unit of analysis identification, descriptive analysis, interpretative analysis, critical analysis, finding collection, interpretation of findings, and conclusion. Researchers only use text analysis by selecting texts that are relevant to what will be studied, unit analysis by determining which part of the text will be the focus of analysis, interpretative analysis to explain the meaning contained in the text, interpretation of findings to connect findings with relevant theories, and conclusion, which concludes conclusions based on the results of the analysis. In postcolonial analysis, there are understanding postcolonial concepts, text selection, identifying historical and social context, analyzing representation, discourse analysis, analyzing resistance, analyzing hybridity, and a conclusion. Researchers only use several methods as tools for this research, such as understanding postcolonial concepts that study postcolonial concepts as a basis for research, text selection that selects as the object we will examine, and conclusion as the result of the whole study.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As we know according to the slavery convention issued in 1926, slavery is all acts involving the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with the intent to make him a slave, all acts involving the acquisition of a slave with the intent to sell or exchange him, all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with the intent to sell. In this novel by Stella Dadzie highlights a large part of slavery where the novel *A kick in the belly* tells the story of human trafficking in ancient times. In those days

people who could not pay tribute, were in debt or committed offenses would be sold by their respective regional chiefs. Even their chiefs were allied with chiefs from other countries. The tribal chiefs felt that by selling their people he got a big profit, some of them even sold their wives due to the increasing demand of the international market. African people are often exploited by other countries, they are often deliberately kidnapped and forcibly taken to be sold and brought to America, and they often experience oppression and violence. In this novel, Dadzie describes several forms of violence felt by African women.

Forms of violence in the novel *A kick in the belly* by Stella Dadzie

Based on the theory used, researchers found several forms of violence and oppression against black female slaves in Caribbean and America including physical, psychological, sexual, systemic and cultural violence.

1. Physical Violence

Female slaves were faced with forced labor in the plantation and in the domestic environment, they also experienced physical violence such as being beaten, whipped, or punished with severe punishment and even killed. This physical violence aims to subdue the slaves and ensure that there is no attempt to rebel.

Table 1. The types physical violence in the novel “A kick in the Belly” by Stella Dadzie

No.	Excerpt from the book	Explanation
1.	“How women who declined to ‘entertain’ their captors during the long months awaiting embarkation would be chained to the cannonball at the ankle or forced to hold it aloft in the blistering heat for hours at a time – a tantalising hint of the defiant mindset of those recently captured women”.	This quote depicts a form of physical violence where female slaves who refused to entertain their masters would be chained to a cannonball or forced to lift the cannonball for hours on end.
2.	“ Flogging was common practice on the coffle line, with no exception made for young children or pregnant women. Babies, the elderly or the infirm, viewed as an unnecessary encumbrance, were often abandoned en route or casually murdered”.	This quote describes another form of violence, namely the whipping carried out by black female slave masters, they do not look at children, women, the elderly, pregnant women, even this quote also reveals they do not hesitate to kill slaves who are considered a burden and unreliable.
3	“Women and children, foot-sore and overburdened, were urged on unremittingly by their barbarous masters; and even when they reached their camp it was no haven of rest for the poor creatures. They were compelled to fetch water, cook, build huts and collect firewood for those who owned them”.	This quote illustrates the violence of forced labor where slaves have no time to rest, they are constantly forced to work and serve their masters even when they are sick.

4	“Many a captive perished in the disease-ridden holds of ships as they languished off the coast, waiting for the quota to be filled. Others endured the prolonged torture of captivity for months, forced to lie spoon-like in their own excrement, vomit or menstrual blood until the ships were fully loaded.”	This quote also illustrates the cruel physical violence where during the sea journey from Africa to America or the Middle Passage the slaves were not given any space on the ship they were treated like goods that were piled up close together and so tight that they have difficulty breathing.
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2. Psychological Violence

Female slaves were forced to live in fear and pressure for the rest of their lives, as the constant violence, threats and humiliation traumatized them emotionally. Not only that, this trauma was also exacerbated by separation from their families, where slave girls were often sold separately from their mothers. Often slave girls witnessed their husbands, children, relatives being sold and tortured and even killed in front of their own eyes.

Table 2. The types psychological violence in the novel “A kick in the Belly” by Stella Dadzie

No.	Excerpt from the book	Explanation
1	“Never was a face of serenity more suddenly changed into one of the deepest distress. The terror which she manifested on having the load put upon her head and the rope fastened around her neck, and the sorrow with which she bade adieu to her companions were truly affecting.”	This quote depicts where there was nothing to keep the slaves calm, they were constantly haunted by fear.
2	"Captives who were not taken directly on board could be confined in the coastal forts or 'barracoons' for months at a time. Elmina bears witness to the many thousands who languished in filthy, overcrowded holding cells or slave pens until loaded onto ships that, if they survived the journey, would transport them to the Americas."	This quote depicts psychological violence where slaves are forced to sleep next to each other, even with their own menstrual blood and feces, and are treated as nothing more than pets.
3	"Their suicide was clearly a conscious and wilful act, despite being prompted by mounting despair. Olaudah Equiano, whose account must speak for the millions who were silenced, describes how 'the shrieks of women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole scene of horror inconceivable'."	This quote illustrates how miserable the slaves were and chose to end their lives instead of living in fear, they considered the only way to be free from all the cruelty of their masters was suicide.

3. Sexual Violence

Slaves were often victims of sexual exploitation by their owners or even male workers, female slaves were also treated as reproductive offspring, where they were forced to bear children in order to increase the number of slaves.

Table 3. Sexual Violence in the novel “A kick in the Belly” by Stella Dadzie

No.	Excerpt from the book	Explanation
1.	"Female captives were also systematically raped. Ship surgeon James Arnold claimed that it was common practice for the captain of the Ruby ‘on receipt of a woman slave – especially a young one – to send for her to come to his cabin so he might lie with her’."	This quote describes the systematic sexual violence experienced by African slave girls where they not only served their masters but were also forced to fulfill the sexual needs of the captains and crew of the ships that brought slave girls
2.	"The girl, having resisted his attack on her ‘virgin modesty’, is seen being strung up by her left foot with a rope attached to a pulley."	This quote illustrates that slave girls who are still virgins must accept abuse by their owners or other male workers and will be punished if the slave girls refuse, where those who refuse will be tied to a pulley or even executed.

4. Systemic Violence

The legal system of slavery meant that female slaves had no legal rights or protections, and laws justified and reinforced the violence experienced by female slaves, with African women enslaved in a system that perpetuated oppression and exploitation. This systemic violence is evident in the complicity of various parties, including local authorities who are often involved in the capture and sale of their own people. These women are made part of the “economic machine” that supports the transcontinental human trafficking system.

Table 4. Systemic Violence in the novel “A kick in the Belly” by Stella Dadzie

No.	Excerpt from the book	Explanation
1.	"As the British, French, Danish, Dutch, Prussians, Spanish and Swedish jostled with the Portuguese for strategic dominance of the coastal forts and supply routes, competition was fierce, often deadly."	This quote illustrates the competition of various countries for slaves and the success of human trafficking. where they consider women as machines to make a lot of money.
2.	"In the coastal fortresses and trading posts, despite phenomenally high mortality rates, some Europeans survived disease, foreign bombardment, political intrigue or the effects of excessive alcohol consumption long enough to form intimate relationships with local women."	This quote illustrates the slave trade system where they are no longer considered as human beings but as goods that have a selling value.

5. Cultural Violence

Female slaves were forced to abandon their cultural identity. They were even dehumanized by their owners. They would accept new names and roles given to them by their owners. African women were often portrayed as inferior and uncivilized, which justified treating them as slaves.

Table 5. Cultural Violence in the novel “A kick in the Belly” by Stella Dadzie

No.	Excerpt from the book	Explanation
1.	"Africans, it was argued, were 'slaves by nature', little more than apes or talking parrots, a savage, godless race whose 'impudent nakedness' was proof of their inherent immorality."	This quote illustrates that Europeans consider Africans as nothing more than an animal that can talk, has a race and has no god, they consider that Africans are born to be slaves.
2.	"To enslave them, therefore, was seen as an act of salvation, for it saved them from themselves."	This quote depicts African women who are constantly confronted with the dehumanizing, racist and sexist attitudes inherent in the slave trade, shaping public opinion and creating a social justification for slavery.

Based on the forms of violence and oppression perpetrated by slave owners or Americans against black women, it aims to:

1. Dehumanization, humiliation and sexual coercion.

Black women in the slavery system were treated as property where they were exploited to the fullest, they received cruel violence such as whipping, mutilation and forced extreme labor, these violent treatments aimed to subdue them, create fear, and also ensure their compliance. This was part of the colonial strategy to maintain control over the larger slave population, by showing cruelty slave owners could control the slaves so that they would not rebel. They also showed that black female slaves were nothing more than goods that could be used and discarded at will. Sexual violence against black female slaves became a method of domination used by slave owners to assert authority over their bodies and lives. Violence as the embodiment of white supremacy.

White slave owners not only took sexual advantage, but also as a way to dehumanize and ensure slaves remained in a subordinate position. This sexual violence reinforced racial and gender hierarchies, where black women were positioned as the lowest in colonial society. Black women's bodies became the political terrain of white supremacy, black women were sexually exploited for economic gain, as babies born to black women automatically became the property of slave owners. This reinforced that whites could literally control the bodies, fertility and future generations of black women. Apart from that, white supremacy also used black women as a means of production by treating them as slave factories. This system perpetuated white colonial power.

2. Psychological violence as a method for the destruction of dignity

Colonialism not only physically destroyed them but also aimed to try to erase the cultural and spiritual identity of black women. Black women were separated from their cultural roots and prohibited from using their native language, they were forced to accept the identity and norms set by the colonialists. This psychological violence was used to reinforce white supremacist ideology, where any form of resistance to black women's identity was seen as a threat to the colonial order. In the colonial legal system black women had no right to report violence or exploitation, as the legal system was created to protect slave owners and reinforce their social hierarchy based on race. These colonial laws aimed to perpetuate impunity for violence.

3. Violence as an instrument of enforcing political and economic supremacy

The system of slavery was a pillar of the colonial economy, and violence against black female slaves was an integral element of slave labor productivity. The forced labor performed by black female slaves not only in the fields but also in the domestic sphere, and kept wealth

flowing to slave owners, while also reinforcing white economic supremacy. slave owners often punished rebellious slaves in public. This was a form of symbolic violence used by slave owners or colonial rulers aimed at warning other slaves to remain obedient. in addition, this colonial system aimed to secure the stability of their power.

4. Gender violence as a dual mechanism of oppression

Black women experience a double violence where they are oppressed because of their race as well as their gender. violence against black female slaves has a different dimension from violence against male slaves. Female slaves not only work as slaves but are also forced to do household chores, care for the slave owner's children, and also serve the master's sexual needs. Their submission reflects a patriarchal and white supremacist social order that combines gender and racial violence to maintain dominance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research align with the theoretical framework of postcolonial feminism, which argues that colonialism not only established racial and economic hierarchies but also reinforced gendered oppression. Stella Dadzie's *A Kick in the Belly* provides a detailed account of how black enslaved women in the Caribbean and America endured multiple forms of violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, systemic, and cultural violence. The postcolonial feminist perspective allows us to see how these acts of violence were not isolated incidents but part of a broader system designed to maintain colonial control over black women.

of the key aspects of postcolonial feminist theory is its emphasis on double oppression—the intersection of gender-based and race-based subjugation (Hamil, 2024). The novel illustrates how black women were subjected to both colonial exploitation and patriarchal domination. Their bodies were commodified not only for labor but also for reproduction, as they were often forced to bear children who would become slaves themselves. This finding aligns with Spivak's (2010) argument that colonialism often manipulated women's roles to serve the interests of the colonial enterprise while justifying its actions as acts of "civilizing" the so-called inferior races.

The systemic violence described in *A Kick in the Belly* further supports the argument that colonialism institutionalized oppression through legal and economic mechanisms. Enslaved women had no legal protection, and their suffering was normalized by laws that treated them as property. This aspect is consistent with Loomba's (2016) view that colonialism functioned not only through physical domination but also through legal and cultural imposition. By stripping African women of their rights and identities, the colonial system ensured their subordination.

Moreover, the depiction of cultural violence in the novel highlights how colonial narratives dehumanized black women, portraying them as inherently inferior and deserving of their enslavement. This aligns with Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism, where the colonizers constructed racialized stereotypes to justify their rule. The novel demonstrates how black women were not only forced to abandon their cultural heritage but were also systematically devalued through racist ideologies. Another crucial aspect of the discussion is the role of resistance. While *A Kick in the Belly* portrays immense suffering, it also sheds light on the resilience and agency of black enslaved women. They found ways to resist, whether through subtle acts of defiance, maintaining cultural traditions, or escaping slavery altogether. This resistance aligns with the arguments of postcolonial feminist scholars who emphasize that colonized women were not merely passive victims but active participants in their struggle for liberation (Ilmia, 2023).

In conclusion, the analysis of *A Kick in the Belly* through a postcolonial feminist lens underscores the multifaceted oppression faced by black enslaved women. The various forms of violence depicted in the novel serve as a testament to the long-lasting effects of colonialism on gender and racial dynamics. By understanding these historical injustices, contemporary feminist and anti-racist movements can draw lessons to challenge ongoing systems of oppression that disproportionately affect women of color worldwide.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that Stella Dadzie's *A Kick in the Belly* depicts the violence against African women enslaved in the Caribbean and America. Through a postcolonial lens, it was found that forms of violence—physical, psychological, sexual, structural, and cultural—reinforce colonial dominance over Black women. These forms of violence not only devastate individuals but also damage communities and cultures as a whole. Dadzie effectively highlights the collective trauma inflicted by colonialism, showing how violence was used as a tool to perpetuate racial and gender supremacy maintained by the colonial system.

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