TONI MORRISON’S A MERCY: THE BLACK WOMEN’S REACTIONS TOWARD THE WHITE’S TREATMENTS IN THE 17TH CENTURY

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS
Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Letters

By

VICTORIA SULISTYANINGRUM
Student Number: 074214013

ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAMME
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY
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August 15, 2012

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Defended before the Board of Examiners
On 27 August 2012
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(UNKNOWN)
Dedicated to

My Beloved Parents,
My Lovely Family and
My Beloved Janu
Abror Arfian
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Pada tanggal: 15 Agustus 2012

Yang menyatakan,

Victoria Sulistyaningrum
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I honestly declare this thesis, which I have written does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, August 15, 2012

Victoria Sulistyaningrum
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Victoria Sulistyaningrum
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ABSTRACT


A Mercy is a story about a black slave girl named Florens in the 17th century in America. America was still a New World and was not an independent land in the 17th century. The European came to America to make colonies and settle there. The white people used black people as slaves, the black people were used to cultivate the land.

The main character in the novel is Florens, she is a daughter of a slave. Florens became a slave as she inherited her mother’s status as a slave. Florens was sold to another trader because of the bad debt of her mother’s master. Florens became a slave to the family of European trader, Jacob Vaark. She became a good slave at her new working place. Florens was sent in a errand in order to find a healer for her Mistress. Florens had to face the social and racial problems during her errand. She had to face the discriminations toward her race and the judgements based on her status as a black slave. Florens’s reactions toward the white’s treatments will be discussed in the thesis.

The thesis discussed about the reactions of a black female slave in the white’s environment during the 17th century. Therefore, the first problem to be discussed in this thesis was the characteristics of Florens as the main character in the novel. The second problem was the treatments of the white people to the black people during the 17th century. Third was to find historical reflection in the Florens characteristics with the treatments of the white people toward the black people reactions in the 17th century.

The writer used the library research to analyze the story. The writer also used the sociocultural-historical approach as the point to analyze the story. The topic discussed in the thesis is about the female character’s reactions toward the white’s treatments.

Female character is Florens, she is obedient, tough, naive, clever, brave and also trustworthy. The black people have the difficult life during the 17th century because they were the marginalized people. The black slaves were considered as the white’s personal properties and the discrimination was very strong. The main character in the novel uses her own abilities to react toward the bad treatments of the white people. The slaves struggle for the better treatments and the equality in the society. Florens, as a black slave used her abilities and cleverness to solve the problems in order to be able to be independent and be as she was.
ABSTRAK


Penulis melakukan penelitian dalam perpustakaan untuk menganalisis cerita ini. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan sejarah, sosial dan budaya sebagai fokus dalam analisa. Topik yang dibahas adalah mengenai reaksi seorang budak perempuan berkulit hitam terhadap perlakuan dari orang kulit putih.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The history has been the part of human beings for a long time. There are several events which are important and consist of knowledge to learn. It is very interesting to study the history of black people and their society, especially women. The racism and discrimination toward black people has happened for hundreds of year in America. The whites make the bad condition of black people and they have to live in misery. Literary work is the one of the media to reveal and express the history and experiences of human beings. Literature also gives the portrayal of human’s life and how it goes. Edgar V. Robert and Henry E. Jacobs (1987: 2) in An Introduction to Reading and Writing state that

Literature helps us to grow both personality and intelectuality. It provides an objective base for our knowledge and understanding. It enables us to recognize the human dreams and struggles in different societies that we would never otherwise get to know. It helps us to develop mature sensibility and compassion for the condition of all living thing.

By reading the literary works, people can understand the different problems in life and how to face the problems. Literary works also show how the characters solve their problems and survive in the society. The study shows that the writer is interested to study about the women reactions toward the white’s treatments and their survival in the unfriendly environment.
The story of black women in the 17th century is quite interesting because they experienced racism and discrimination at that time, the worst condition is being a slave. Toni Morrison is the author that brings the story of black people and racism to her novels. Her novels are *Sula, Beloved, The Bluest Eye,* and *Paradise* discussed about the black people and its society. She is the author who reveals the theme of women issues, they are mostly about the black womanhood, gender, racism, and patriarchy. The main characters in her novel are mostly black women and they have to survive in the society.

Black women in general are depicted in poverty and have the difficult life. They will do anything to survive and gain a better life. As a black woman, Toni Morrison understands the difficulties being black people. Racism in Southern caused Toni Morrison and her parents move up to the North. She became critical toward the black people and racism. Toni Morrison beautifully reveals the story of black people in her novels.

Black people suffered a great deal and they were also treated unequally in the society. In the beginning of slavery in America, slavery had existed in the old world since the dawn of history. While working in the plantations and farms, women and men had labor-intensive work. Some of the labor-intensive jobs given to women were cooking for the owner’s household, sewing, midwifery, pruning fields, and many other laborious occupations. Angela Y. Davis (1981: 8) in *Women, Race and Class* state that
The bell rings at four o’clock in the morning and they have half an hour to get ready. Men and women start together, and the women must work as steadily as the men and perform the same tasks as the men.

In the cotton, tobacco, corn and sugar plantation, women worked alongside the men. Women have to do the same tasks as the men and women have a large proportion of works. Women as individuals they were owned, and while they were also recognized as human beings. Their fundamental characteristics were that they were commodities.

*A Mercy* examines the psychological and moral intricacies of slavery, it takes place at slavery’s birth in America. In this study, *A Mercy* is used as the object of the study. The center in this novel is a black girl named Florens, she was offered by her mother to the New York farmer. Florens as the main character has been rejected by her mother, in payment for her master debt. In Toni Morrison’* *A Mercy* we see life through the eyes of people physically and emotionally abandoned. “While the main character of *A Mercy* is Florens, a slave from Africa, the conflicts of the novel are not merely between white and black, free and slave. Indeed, every character throughout the novel has his or her unique prejudice based on their social standing” (http://www.litreact.com/reactions/a%20mercy_morrison_conejos.html)

This study focuses on the story about black women in the 17th century as seen in the novel *A Mercy*. The study is try to reveal the life of black woman in the 17th century and her reactions toward the white’s treatments. The writer hopes this study can contribute some knowledges about the black women’s life and her reactions in 17th century.
B. Problem Formulation

1. How is the female character described?

2. How do the Whites treat the Blacks?

3. How does the female character react toward the white’s treatments?

C. Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on the female character in the story, the analysis of characters will show the characteristics of people, how they behave and treat each other. Characters have the important role in the novel, the characters are author’s tool to deliver the message to the readers. The readers will understand and feel the story through the characters. They can see the conflict and the situation in the story through the characters. The author of the novel *A Mercy* believed that the character in the novel is comparable to the black women in the 17th century. This character can reflects the life of slave at that time.

First, the writer will explore how the female character characterized in the novel. The writer will analyze the characteristics of the female character as the major character in the novel. The characteristics can be seen from the acts, speech and the reactions toward something. The writer will explain the quality of the character based on the theory of character and the characteristics of the character itself.

Then, the writer will describe the treatment of the white people toward the black people at the time. The description will shows the social cultural
and historical condition at the time during the settlement of the colonies in America.

This study is written to see American slavery in very early, seventeenth-century form. The aim is not only to see early American slavery, but also to find out the life and the reactions of black people toward the white’s treatments at the time.

D. Definition of Term

The thesis takes about the reactions of the black women toward the white’s treatments as the main discussion. First, the writer needs to emphasize that this thesis is based on historical perspective, and thus the writer needs to give definition from the historical point of view. This is important to discuss some terms that are included in the title in this study. The definition of terms are expected to give explanation about women and the reactions as the subject of this study.

The first is black woman, as defined in Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies by Cashmore, black people is the African people who live in USA (2004: 9). While Soukkhanov in The American heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the word woman has meaning an adult female human being (1996: 2052). The meaning of women is the plural of woman (1996: 2053). Based on the explanation above, the word black women can explained as a group of black adult female human being who live in USA.

The meaning of word reaction as seen in The American heritage Dictionary of the English Language by Soukhanov is a response to a stimulus
and the state resulting from such a response (1996: 1503). Based on the explanation above, the reaction has meaning as something that has felt or done because of something that has happened or been said. The writer defines the reaction as a response toward something that the characters feel and do to a stimulus.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review of Related Studies

*A Mercy* is a novel about the story of both mother and daughter. *A Mercy* takes on familiar Morrisonian themes, the agony and the ecstasy of motherhood. As black women, there are no protections. Black women got ill treatment in the society. On the other hand, Marry Whipple stated that The condition of black women stated as “Throughout the novel, women are victimized by the social expectation of the day and, often, by the fact that they have no standing either in the law or in religion. They are people who “never shape the world, the world shape us”. As the women, journey toward self-enlightenment on this remote farm in New York, Morrison describes their progress in often Biblical cadences, and by the end of this novel, the readers understand what “a mercy” really means (http://www.mostlyfiction.com/history/morrison.htm)

In her novel *A Mercy*, set in the 17th century American wilderness, Toni Morrison again explores the interaction between women and nature, and the juxtaposition of wilderness and civilization. *A Mercy* explores the lives of indentured servants who worked alongside African and Native American slaves. Here, women has many different roles such as mother, sister, servant and slave. Some of the labor-intensive jobs given to women
were cooking for the owner’s household, sewing, midwifery, pruning fields, and laborious occupations.

Michael Miller in his article titled “Morrison, Mellowed” states that “Toni Morrison's new book, "A Mercy," tackles the very origins of America's blood-soaked racial history. Set in Virginia during the last decade of the 17th century (http://www.newsweek.com/id/172633). A Mercy examines what might be called a pre-racial America, the formative years at the end of the 17th century when our forebears still had a chance of turning their collective backs against slavery.

Morrison goes back to the beginning of slavery in America, in the late seventeenth century, this the period during which America was diverse and complex than is generally. The novel includes Portuguese, Dutch, English, Native American, African, and mixed-race characters, all struggling for a place in this new world. Tim Adams, in his article state that Morrison structures the novel in her familiar manner, giving one chapter by turns to each competing voice, collapsing time frames, seldom letting her characters directly rub up against one another, trapping each of them in their biographies (http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/oct/26/mercy-toni-morrison)

A Mercy reveals poetically, introducing these characters through following points of view that contrast the landscape with the struggle to survive, much less prosper. Here Morrison jumps over America's legacy of victimizing women and minorities to claim the more provocative turf that infuses much of her fiction.
Meanwhile, this study focuses on black women in the 17th century, particularly on the reactions toward the white's treatments. This is the main reason why this study is different from the other studies about this novel.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theory on Character

To understand clearly and answer the problem formulation stated above, some theories are needed to formulate analysis. The first problem is about the character of the novel. Character is a part of intrinsic elements which takes an important role in a story. In *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman and Harmon stated that

Character is, A complicated term that includes the idea of moral constitution of the human personality (Aristotle’s sense of ethos), the presence of moral uprightness, and the simpler notion of the presences of creatures in art that seem to be human beings of one sort or another (1986: 81)

From the quotation above, character is not only individual, but character also has certain qualities inside. In the works of literature, the readers not only recognize the character from the certain name. They also recognize a character from the characteristics and how the author characterizes the character. The readers also can recognize the character through the action, the speech way and behavior.

While in *Understanding Unseen: An Introduction to English Poetry and the English Novel for Overseas Students*, M.J Murphy mentions there are nine ways to make the characters understandable to the readers. They are as follows
a. Personal Description

From the personal description, the author describes the physical appearance of the characters. They can be described from their clothes or certain characteristics of their body. For example is the person tall or short, skinny or fat, teenager or middle-aged. Certain appearance and clothes will give clues related to his characteristics. He stated that “The author can describe a person’s appearance and clothes” (Murphy, 1972: 161). Besides personal appearance and clothes, personal descriptions also cover his build, skin-colour, hair, outer coat, hands and the scar on his face (1972: 162).

b. Character as Seen by Another

The author also describes the person through another point of view. The author considers the opinion of another through the eyes toward the person. He stated that “instead of describing a character directly the author can describe him through the eyes and opinions of another” (Murphy, 1972: 162). The author convinces the reader through his choice of words and phrases such as unquiet eyes, dim smile, and rare sound of her voice, unapproachable aspect, gazing at him stealthily (1972: 163).

c. Speech

Murphy explains that the clues of the characteristics can be found through the speech of the character. It can be seen in the following quotation

The author can give us insight into the character of one of the persons in the book through what that person says. Whenever a person speaks, whenever he is in conversation with another, whenever he puts forward an opinion, he is giving us some clue to his character (Murphy, 1972: 164).
From the quotation Murphy shows the speech and conversation is the important aspect, through the speech and conversation the author can gives some clues toward the person’s personality. The way of the person talking also gives some clues to identify characteristic of person itself.

d. Past Life

Past life is character’s experiences that can shape the characteristics of a character. It is shown in this following quotation

By letting the reader learn something about person’s past life the author can give us a clue to events that have helped to shape a person’s character. This can be done by direct comment by the author, through the person’s thought, through his conversation or through the medium of another person (Murphy, 1972: 166).

The other aspect that makes the characters understandable to the readers is about the past life of the character. The author gives some description about the past events that shape the personality of the characters.

e. Conversation of Others

Murphy explains the characterization through the characters’ speech. He states

The author can also give us to a person’s character through the conversations of other people and the things they say about him. People do talk about other people and the things they say often give as a clue to the character of the character of the person spoken about (Murphy, 1972: 167).

Murphy explains that characteristics of a character can be revealed through other character’s conversation. The author gives clues to the person’s character through the other people and the things they say about the character.
f. Reactions

Murphy states that “the author can also give us a clue to a person’s character by letting us know how that person reacts to various situations and events” (1972: 168). From the quotation, action here is in the form reaction. Reaction as a response to a stimulus, reaction is explained as a clue to know the characteristics of a character.

g. Direct Comment

The characteristics of a certain character can be shown by an author’s comment. The author can give comments about the character directly. Murphy said in Understanding Unsee, he stated that “the author can describe or comment on a person’s character directly” (1972: 170). It means that the author states directly what the characteristics of a character are.

h. Thought

The character’s characteristic also can be shown through what the character thinks. From what the character thinks we can see the characteristics directly. It is explained in the following quotation

The author can give us direct knowledge of what a person is thinking about. In this respect he is able to do what we cannot do in real life. He can tell us what different people are thinking. In the novel we accept this. The reader then is in privileged position; he has, as it were, a secret listening device plugged into the inmost thoughts of a person in a novel (Murphy, 1972: 171).

Although the character gives direct opinion, the readers need to give an interpretation what kind of qualities inside the character has.
i. **Mannerism**

Besides the reactions, an action of character, mannerism is one of the important aspect. From the character’s manners, the characteristics will be revealed. Murphy stated that “the author can describe a person’s mannerism, habits, or idiosyncrasies which may also tell us something about his character” (1972: 173).

Based on the quotations above, these the ways that makes the readers understand and aware about the character and personality of person that author writes in the novel.

2. **Theory on Black Women in 17th Century**

Black women have always worked outside their homes. The enormous space that work occupies in black women’s lives today follow a pattern established during the very earliest days of slavery.

According to Hine and Thompson in *A Shining Thread of Hope*,

The artistic expression of black women should also be recognized as part of pattern of resistance. They affirmed an identity separate from that “laborer”, the only one recognize by most of white society, and in itself was a significant form of resistance to their enslavement (1999: 27).

Women are workers and they were expendable as people and exploitable in the fields and kitchen. This time is the period when life becomes difficult even get worse for black women. The early Europeans brought Africans with them to the America, and it was not long before the institution of slavery was established in what would become the United States.
While in *Women, Race & Class*, Davis state that

Slave women and children comprised large portion of the work forces in most slave-employing textile, hemp and tobacco factories (1981: 10)

The black women have been ignored even more, they have been considered historically inferior to the white female in the United States and at the same time a member of an entire family of people that was considered little more than chattel for more than 200 years. When the African women arrived in the "New World", they were put in auctions to be bought or sold off to the strange-looking people, the whites. After the women were bought, they were brought to the plantation in which they would work for long hours.

Black women has to face the more difficulties than the men. The slavery is horrible for the all black people, but it is more horrible for black women. Harriet Jacobs quoted from the *Introduction to Black Studies*, he stated that the black women experienced injustice and sufferings and humiliation their own. These practice resulted of sufferings for instance were sexual exploitation as well as racial and class oppression. They also included the burden of motherhood and being a wife in a system that devalued Black women, and allowed white men to rape, beat and sell mother, child and husband with impunity (1993: 124)

The black women experienced the difficulties of being slaves. They faced the class oppression and the racial injustice. Moreover, the black women could not do anything under the supervision of the white people.
C. Review on Historical Background of America in the 17th Century

1. Slavery in America in 17th Century

Kellog stated in the *American History: The Easy Way*, “Slavery was a factor in American life since the first colony. African American were brought to Jamestown in 1619 to help create wealth by working in tobacco fields” (1995: 131). During the seventeenth century, European created the new agricultural system in the Western Hemisphere. European traders seized and bought millions of Africans and transported them across the Atlantic Ocean. The black slaves were unloaded and sold at the American ports. Slavery in America in the late 17th century, was a result of a labor deficit in the English colonies.

Current and Williams’ *The Essentials of American History Second Edition* stated that

The slaves found themselves almost completely under the control of their owners. Identifiable by their color, black slaves could not run away and merge themselves with the mass of free humanity as white servants (1976: 16)

Colonists regularly tried to attract laborers to the colony and mainly relied on Indentured Servitude. The headright system was a method of getting cheap laborers as well as increasing the population of the colony by giving the indentured servant independence after a certain number of years of service. When this method did not enough and laborers were still not enough to supply a demand, the colonists turned to a different labor force, African slaves. Gavin and Hamm, in their book *The American Story*, state that
To increase their business the slave traders were always on the lookout for new markets. Hardly had the English colony of Jamestown become firmly established when a vessel came there with twenty Negroes (1957: 265)

Slavery in America began when the first African slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, to help in the production of such profitable crops as tobacco. Slavery was practiced throughout the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, and African-American slaves helped build the economic foundations of the new nation. The decreasing population combined with a need for a labor force, led colonists to believe that buying African slaves was the most efficient way to gain a labor force.

The slave system defined Black people as moveable possessions. Black slaves in America were items of privat properties. The master regarded the slaves as inferior creatures who could be bought and sold. In America, the enslaved African was profitable on three basic level, as a commodity to be sold, as and object of labor to be rented, and as a producer of cash products such as cotton, sugar, tobacco and rice. Tobacco was an expensive crop. Tobacco was the major crop of the 17th century in the English colonies. Tobacco is a plant that drains nutrients from the soil and requires the rotation of crops, in order to refill the soil. It could be grown profitably on large acreages worked by servile labor, while the demand for tobacco in England was so great that there seemed to be danger that Virginia could produced more than the market would absorb. These condition stimulated the expansion of old plantations and the establishment of new ones, and the
plantation became the economic and social unit which dominated the life of the colony.

2. Social Condition of the Black Women in the 17th Century

The term of black people were given to the African people. The African people came to America because they were taken from their homeland. The black people were kidnapped by the white people. The black people were treated as an animal and as personal properties.

Hine and Thompson in their book *A Shining Thread of Hope* stated “In the early colonies, most black women were agricultural workers on farms or domestic servants in cities, often working alongside white indentured servants (1999: 13). The black women also have skills, such as healing skills that can be used to help other slaves. Women were skilled agricultural workers and skillfully in spinning and weaving. The black women could cooked, prepared the medicines and planted gardens. Other than working on farms, black women also had role as midwives, delivering both black and white chlidren. Hine and Thompson’s *A Shining Thread of Hope* stated that,

Survival: in the slavery meant obedience to the slaveholder. The laws saw so that. The whip guaranteed it. But, even more important, there was loyalty to the family and to fellow slaves (1999: 72)

Their position was completely under the control of their master. The disobediences would give bad treatments or abusive action. Another expert, Henretta et al in the book American’s History to 1877 stated that

They forbade their black workers to leave the plantation without special passes and, to enforce these regulations, installed special night watches and rural patrols. Beatings and whipping become regular
features of plantation life, and penalties for resistance-disobedience, refusal to work, running away-increased in severity (1987: 102)

Whipping, dismembering, castrating or killing a slave were legal under many circumstances. The discrimination separated black people toward the society. They were separated because of their race, color or sex.

Being black women was very difficult at the time, and the position of black women was complicated. Women in Africa could trade, own property, and sometimes collectively influence political decisions, but they did not exercise power over men (Hine and Thompson, 1999: 10). Often, when the black people were freed, they still have a fear of being kidnapped and reenslaved. The difficult condition made the black women slaves have strong connection with the other slaves. Their relationship was strong and they support each other.

As the children of the black people, especially girls, they have some difficulties than the boys. Their childhood lasted only for few years. The girls had short years to enjoy their childhood. At first, the children could played as other children, but finally they have to work. The black people’s children must learn to work as well, and “girls usually began working at an earlier age than their brother, and they shifted from the jobs accorded children to their adult jobs earlier as well (Hine and Thompson, 1999: 69)”.

D. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses some theories in this study to help answer the problem formulation. The theory of character is needed in this study to explain clearly
about the characteristics of the character of the novel. This theory can help in solving problem formulation number one, about the character described.

The next theory is about the black women. The theory needed to enrich knowledge about black women’s definition and the history at the time. These theories are applied in this study to support the answer of the analysis and to make the answer clear. The theory of the historical background at that time is needed to understand the character acts in certain way toward something. The description of the historical background can gives the clues about the character should experience.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The object of the study is a fiction novel titled *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison. *A Mercy* is Toni Morrison’s 9th novel, it was first published in 2008 by Random House Inc, New York. *A Mercy*, the Nobel Prize winner’s ninth novel and her first since *Beloved* to depict American slavery in very early, seventeenth-century form. *A Mercy* is the story Jacob, an Anglo-Dutch trader in 1680s United States when the slave trade is still in its infancy. Reluctantly he takes a small slave girl in part payment from a plantation owner for a bad debt. Feeling rejected by her slave mother, 14-year-old Florens can read and write and might be useful on his farm. Florens looks for love, first from Lina, an older servant woman at her new master’s house, but later from the handsome blacksmith, an African, never enslaved, and who comes riding into their lives.

Continuing themes that she has been developing since the start of her career, Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison creates an intense and involving philosophical novel set in the Atlantic colonies between 1682 and 1690. Her impressionistic story traces slavery from its early roots, using unique voices African, Native American, and white, while moving back and forth in time. The primary speaker is Florens, a 16-year-old African slave. In a flashback to 1682, we learn that when Florens was only eight years old, her
mother suggested to the Maryland planter who owned the family, that Florens be given to New York farmer Jacob Vaark to settle a debt. Florens never understands why she was abandoned by her mother.

**B. Approach of the Study**

The approach used to analyze this novel is the sociocultural-historical approach. The historical context is the social, cultural, and setting for a particular event at certain time. In order to better understand something in history, this context is very important. Those things that surround it at certain time and place, gives meaning to the history. According to Rohrberger and Woods (1971: 9) in *Reading and Writing about Literature* state that

The traditional historical approach to literature usually takes as its basis some aspect of the sociocultural frame of reference, combining it with an interest in the biographical as well as a knowledge of and interest in literary history.

This approach researches the work of literature chiefly as a reflection of the life of characters in certain times. The sociocultural-historical criticism is the right approach to analyze *A Mercy* because this novel contains the historical values about the slavery in 17th century in America. This criticism is to see the slavery revealed by Toni Morrison. This criticism is suitable because the focus of the historical approach is the characters’ life and times of work of literature. This approach also shows the relation not only the work of literature itself, but also the period of the work of literature was produced. The novel shows the experiences of black women as a slave in relation with the American’s society in the 17th century.
C. Method of Study

The method of the study is a library research, to produce the analysis from the story. The writer uses a novel by Toni Morrison titled *A Mercy* as the primary sources. The study also uses the theoretical books and online references from the internet. The books that were used to analyze the story were the books that contained of the theory of character and theory of black women in the 17th century. *A Mercy* is the kind of new novel, so there were no many of the printed sources and the journal about this novel as the references. But, the writer uses the references from the internet. That is more useful for this study.

The steps used in this study are; the first is read the novel and understand what the novel tells about. The writer also reread the novel until get the essence and the interpretation of the story. The focus of the study is toward the female character. The writer also study about the white’s treatments toward the black people included the reactions of black women at the 17th century based on the novel.

After find the idea and the essence of the novel, the writer can takes the second step. The second step is formulate the title of the study, then make the background of the study, next is formulate problem formulation for the analysis. Here, the writer has three problem formulation that need to be analyze further.

The next step is looked for the theoretical reviews as the data of the study. The writer uses the books or the jounals that related to the study from
the library. The writer also uses the internet references to find some information about review of related studies. The internet sources is useful since the writer was not able to find it from the library.

The fourth step is formulated the evidences from the primary sources to support the answer of problem formulations. The first problem is analyze the female character in the story. Here, the theory about character from the books is applied to analyze the characteristic of the character. Then, to find the description about the white’s treatments toward the black people in the story. Last, the writer analyzes the relation between female character’s characteristic and the description of the white's treatments to show the reactions of the female character toward the treatments in the 17th century.

The last step is the conclusion of the study. Before a conclusion is made, the writer reread the novel, the theory and the analysis. That is needed to crosscheck that every chapter is clear. Then, the last was the references.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer will give the analysis of the three problem formulation stated in Chapter I. The analysis will be divided into three parts. In the first part, the writer analyzes how the female character is described. Then, the writer will analyze how the white people treat the black people in this novel. In the last part, the writer will analyze how the characteristics of the female character and the description of the whites treatment show the reactions of women in the 17th century as seen in the Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*.

A. The Characteristic of Florens

In *Understanding Unseen*, Murphy said that the characteristic of character can be seen through what the character said. The author can give us an insight into the character of one of the persons in the book through what that person says (1972: 164). The speeches of characters can be a clue to decide what characteristics the character has. The characteristics of a character also can be known from the speeches which are stated by another characters. The characteristic of the character is shown through the conversation of others (1972: 167).

The female character in this novel is Florens, a slave born in America of an African mother. They were originally owned by Portuguese plantation
owners. She was sold by her mother in part payment from a plantation owner for a bad debt.

From the Florens’s speech, she is described as a slave. She is black, her mother is an African. In the beginning of the novel stated that Florens worked in the plantation with her mother. Florens said, “I spend my days picking okra and sweeping tobacco sheds, my nights on the floor of the cookhouse with a minha mãe” (pp. 5-6)

Most of slaves are uneducated, they cannot read or write. But Florens has ability to read and write. From Florens speech, she and her mother are learn to read and write once a week. “Once every seven days we learn to read and write” (p. 6) They got the skill from the Reverend Father who teaches them.

Florens has some characteristics, she is obedient, naive, clever, brave, and trustworthy. Those characteristics can be found in the novel after the writer analyzes her actions, her conversation with others, her thoughts and her mannerisms or behavior that is shown by Florens.

1. Obedient

As a slave, Florens must do the tasks are given from her Mistress. She obeys all the comands from the Mistress. She shows her obedience by doing all the tasks and commands from her Mistress. She obeys every commands and instructions given to her. She also keeps them in her mind. The Mistress trusts her to find a blacksmith. The blacksmith is a freeborn African-American blacksmith who had been hired by her master to construct an iron
gate at the entrance of his palatial new home. Her master, a trader named Jacob Vaark, has surrendered to infection and his wife, Rebekka is dying of the same illness. Believing the blacksmith will be able to heal her sickness, Rebekka sends Florens on a solitary errand to bring him.

Her obedience is shown by her own speech, she said, “She wants you here as much as I do. For her it is to save her life. For me is to have one.” (p.37) Florens doesn’t have any option, she must obey her Mistress to find the Blacksmith. The errand is the task for Florens, she has to fulfill her task in order to heal her Mistress. Florens can not give rejection to do the errand, because she belongs to her Mistress. She has to fulfill the command.

2. Tough

Florens is a tough girl. She is a person who has a difficult life. She already bears her mother status as a slave, and because of the bad debts of her mother’s master, she was sold to the Anglo-Dutch trader. As a young girl, Florens already works in the her plantation of her new master. Florens lives separated from her mother since she was young.

Florens is a person who can able to deal with the difficult situation. Her strength shows when she was in the plantation. Her strength shows by her thought.

I never cry. Even the woman steals my cloak and shoes and I am freezing on the boat no tears come. These thoughts are sad in me, so I make me think of you instead. How you say your work in the world is strong and beautiful (p. 69)

Florens can manages herself to keep strong in the difficult situation. Although she knows that her life is not beautiful, Florens has faith in her
heart that someday her life will be better. These faith make her become a tough girl. Florens shows her strength with her thoughts.

Florens also shows her strength with her action to do the errand in order to heal her Mistress. She was sent to find the blacksmith, a free black man who believed can heal the Mistress’ disease. She was alone in her errand.

I have cold stone in my chest. I don’t need Lina to warn me that I must not be alone with strange men with slow hands when in liquor and anger they discover their cargo is lost (p. 41)

Florens speech shows that she is tough enough to do the errand. She do not need companion in her errand. Florens knows about the danger in her errand. She is alone with the stranger that is the white people, who can hurt her. Florens’ speech and thoughts show that she is a tough girl. She manges herself to be strong to face her difficult life.

3. Naive

Florens is naive. She always says something as the truth. Because she is naive, Florens can be easily deceived and fooled. When Florens has a journey from her farm, a woman approached her. “A woman comes to me and says stand up. I do and she takes my cloak from my shoulders. Then my wooden shoes. She walks away” (p. 7). From her speech, it shows that Florens is so naive. So she lets other people take what is belong to Florens. Because of that, Florens can be deceived by other people and they can take advantage from her.

Again, Florens shows her naivety when the blacksmith came to the farm, Florens directly falls in love with him. She never met a male that makes
her happy and feel protected before. From her thought, she shows her naivety. She knows that the Blacksmith is a free man and they had the same race. She thinks this similarities can bring her into marriage. Florens’s thought leads to her speech about the Blacksmith. She badly falls in love with him. Florens does not think about her condition at the time, the fact that her status is a slave. Her status makes her life difficult at that time, and everything doesn’t easy as she thinks.

Learning from Mistress that he was a free man doubled her anxiety. He had rights, then, and privileges, like Sir. He could marry, own things, travel, sell his own labor (p. 45)

Florens is a naive person, it shows from her thought and her speech.

4. Clever

Florens is a clever girl, she can finish the task which is given to her correctly. Florens also learns quickly about her surroundings. Other than Florens, a black servant named Sorrow always breaks things. Sorrow is unable to finish a task. Her cleverness is shown by her Mistress’ speech toward her. “Already Florens could read, write. Already she did not have to be told repeatedly how to complete a chore. Not only she was constantly trustworthy, she was deeply grateful for every shred of affection, any pat on the head, any smile for approval (p. 61)

Florens also shows her cleverness when she was sent to seek a medicine for her Mistress. Florens uses her knowledge to survive and keep her safe in the forest. She knows that she will face danger in the forest at day
or night. When it gets dark, the forest became more dangerous. That is the time to Florens to find a shelter to protect herself from animals and others.

I am watchful for snakes that ease down the trees and over ground, although Lina says they do not prefer to bite us or swallow us whole. I lie still and try not to think of water. Thinking instead of another night, another place of wet ground (p. 67)

Florens manages herself to keep calm and think positively. She tries to keep calm when a danger or wild animal approaches. “It is smell of wet fur that stops me. If I am smelling it, it is smelling me, because there is nothing with odor left in my food cloth, only bread” (pp. 41-42). She uses her knowledge and her instinct to protect herself during the errand. When she smells fur, she knows that there is an animal near her. She thinks that she prefer to stay away from the animal. One of the ways, she decides to climb a tree and stay higher from the ground to avoid the wild animal. By her actions and her thought, her cleverness is shown.

5. Brave

Florens was sent to the dangerous errand in order to find the blacksmith, who is believed can heal the Mistress illness. She goes to the errand by herself. On her errand, Florens knows that she will face risks and dangers that can harm herself. But her bravery leads her to continue her errand. On her errand, when Florens stays in the wagon, suddenly the wagon stopped and all the passengers must come out. They do not know what happened, Florens knew that she is in danger. She makes a decision, she does not follow the group. She stays in the wagon, she wants continue her errand. Florens shows her bravery by her action and her thought.
I don’t follow. Neither can I stay in the wagon. I have a cold stone in my chest. I don’t need Lina to tell me that I must not be alone with strange men with slow hands when in liquor and anger they discover their cargo is lost. I have to choose quick. I choose you. I go west into the trees. Everything I want is west. You. Your talk. The medicine you know that will make Mistress well. You will hear what I have to say and come back with me. I have only to go west. One day? Two nights? (p. 41)

Her reaction is an act of bravery, she knew when she took the decision, she must continue her errand alone. Florens only cares about how to get to the blacksmith safely and complete her errand. Florens has to travel alone, she passes the forest. Because of her bravery, she manages to survive in the forest. She has bravery to take all the risks during her errand and strong willingness to finish her task.

Night is thick no stars anyplace but sudden the moon moves. The chafe of needles is too much hurt and there is no resting there at all. I get down and look for a better place. By moonlight I am happy to find a hollow log, but its wavy with ants. I break off twigs and small branches from a young fir, pile them and crawl under. The needle prick is smaller and there is no danger of falling…I am watchful for snakes that ease down trees and over ground, although Lina says they do not prefer to bite us or swallow us whole. I lie still and try not to think of water (p. 67)

Florens never has experiences to live in the woods, her bravery and cleverness lead her to use her basic knowledge about nature to keep her safe. She manages to survive in the wilderness.

6. Trustworthy

From Florens’ Mistress point of view, Florens is a good person. The Mistress puts her confidence in Florens to find the blacksmith, who is believed can heal the illness. The Mistress’ speech shows that Florens is trustworthy. “Not only she was constantly trustworthy, she was deeply
grateful for every shred of affection, any pat on the head, any smile for approval” (p. 61). Therefore, Florens has shown to her Mistress that not only is she trustworthy, she also has good personality. If Florens does not trustworthy, it is not possible she does not continue the errand. Florens shows that she can be trusted by finishing the errand. She says it is the long errand and very hard. “My journey to you is hard and long and the hurt of it is gone as soon as I see the yard, the forge, the little cabin where you are” (p. 135). Florens finally arrived to the blacksmith’s house, and she told him what really happened. She told the Blacksmith that she was sent by her Mistress. She seeks the medicine to heal her Mistress from the disease, and they believed that only the Blacksmith has the medicine of the disease.

B. The Whites’ Treatments toward the Black People

The novel *A Mercy* tells a story about slavery during the colonization era in America. *A Mercy* gives the description about the social condition in the new world at that time. The novel tells about the daughter of an African woman who was taken to America. At that time, the black people were not considered as human. The African slaves were not treated as human. The black women faced more racial and gender discrimination from the society. The Black people were similar to commodities rather than human.

In the time of slavery, the black people was brought to America in 1619. The black people were brought to Jamestown. At that time, they worked in the tobacco fields. Kellogg stated in the *American History: The*
Easy Way, “Slavery was a factor in American life since the first colony. African Americans were brought to Jamestown in 1619 to help create wealth by working in tobacco fields” (1995: 131). Slave did not only work on the crops but they also became commodities. The Black people were taken from their homes in Africa.

There we see men we believe are ill or dead. We soon learn they are neither. Their skin was confusing. The men guarding we and selling we are black. Then the whitened men devided we and placed we in canoes. We come to house made to float on the sea. Each water, river or sea, has shraks under. The whitened ones guarding we like that as much as the shraks are happy to have a plentiful feeding place (p. 164)

From the quotation above, the blacks are confused when meeting with white men for the first time. They are confused about the color of the White’s skin. When they were taken and brought to the new world in America, they are confused and frightened. The white people showed their action of slave trade. They took the black people and arrested them. They treated the black people as commodities. The white people prepared the black people before the black people were brought to the new world.

Rough treatments happened to the black people in America. Kellogg stated in the American History: The Easy Way, “On the whole, life for the slaves was bleak” (1995:131). The black people live without any pleasant and comfortable features. The black people were taken to America by a ship, they were put inside a room. The room was very small to move their body. The black people were treated cruelly, they were chained, bad feeding, and they were placed in a room without sanitation.
I welcomed the circling sharks but they avoided me as if knowing I preferred their teeth to the chains around my neck my waist my ankles. When the canoe heeled, some of we jumped, others were pulled under and we did not see their blood swirl until we alive ones were retrieved and placed under guard (p. 164)

This journey was very unpleasant and frightening. Because of the great suffering caused by the whites’ bad treatments, some of the black people would rather die. They faced the miserable life when they were taken to America. In the story, some of the black people committed suicide. They jumped from the ship, and they were eaten by sharks.

Some of we tried; some of we did. Refusing to eat the oiled yam. Strangling we throats. Offering we bodies to the sharks that follow all the way night and day (p. 164)

Slaves’ trade is the part of the white’s treatment toward the black people. When they arrived in America, they are not a human anymore. They soon become slaves, the Negro slaves. The Negro slaves were sold to landowners or slaveholders. Before they were sold, the Negro slaves were checked and bargained. Soon, in America human being becomes commodities. Normally, people do not trade, what are traded is livestocks and goods. In the story Jacob Vaark, a trader visited a plantation owner named D’Ortega in Chatolic Maryland. He takes a small slave girl in part payment for a debt. The trade of slaves shown from the conversation between Jacob Vaark and D’Ortega. D’Ortega has a unpaid debts, and he offered one of his slave. He bartered with Jacob Vaark for his debts

“You don’t seem to comprehend my offer. I not forfeiting my debt. I honoring it. The value of seasoned slave is beyond adequate.”
“Not if I can’t use her.”
“Use her? Sell her!” (p. 25)
Black people were traded for their services and their power, especially to cultivate the plantation. The landowners need workers to work in their plantation. His action shows that slaves had lost their rights as human. Because people are not bartered, they are commodities for the white people. The black people are worthless for the white people. The blacks were treated as they want. The black people can be sold or exchanged depend on the white people’s needs.

They wrote new papers. Agreeing that the girl was worth twenty pieces of eight, considering the number of years ahead of her and reducing the balance by three hogheads of tobacco or fifteen English pounds, the latter preferred (p. 27)

Slavery is the solution of the landowners’ needs. Slaves do not need wages and they have ability to work on the plantation. The black people has experiences when they worked on their home land. The landowners need cheap workers, they want to gain profit as much as they can.

Another treatment of the white people is the exploitation of black people. The white people exploited the black people especially for economical purpose. Slavery became a highly profitable system for white plantation owners. Slavery gives cheap and permanent workers for the plantation owners. They realized that the crops could make them rich. The landowners found the need to import more African slaves to clear the swamps and then cultivate the crop. Many of the Africans knew how to grow and cultivate the crop. The enslavement is shown by the speech of Florens. She and her mother were worked in the plantation by white landowner.
Before this place I spend my days picking okra and sweeping tobacco sheds, my nights on the floor of the cookhouse with a minha mãe. We are baptized and can have happiness when this life is done (pp. 5-6)

From the quotation above shows that the enslavement makes their life in misery. The black people had been forced to work without wages. Implicitly, the last sentence of the quotation above shows their live is unhappy. The whole life of the black people was spent to work in the plantation. They did the hardest works in the plantation. They believed they can find happiness after their life is done. It means when they die. The white people exploited the blacks for their power. As people who bear a slave status, they must obey every command. They had to work in the plantation, it was their obligation to complete the works.

They are certain their years of debt are over but the master says no. He sends them away, north, to another place, a tannery, for more years. I don’t understand why they are sad. Every one has to work (p. 40)

The exploitation toward the black people gave benefits for the white people. The black people were treated as their properties. The black people are forced to work.

The white people controlled the whole life of black people. The part of whites’ treatment is trickery. The black people did not have a chance to develop during the enslavement. The black people were not allowed to study, the white people were afraid if they will be smarter than them. If they become smart, it is possible that the black people did not want to work in the plantation anymore.
The white people thought that is dangerous to teach the blacks how to read and write. That will make them smarter. They thought that slaves do not need education. According to Hine and Thompson in *A Shining Thread of Hope,*

On the other, they declared that it was “dangerous” to teach blacks how to read and write. It unfitted them for the role of slave…Being able to read opens up the world. People who know something other than slavery are unlikely to remain convinced that it is their only option. Slaveholders knew this and most did everything they could to keep enslaved people illiterate (1999: 73-74)

Florens, the female character in the novel experiences the difficulties when she wants to study. Florens wants to learn read and write in order to have knowledge. It was illegal to teach slaves to read and write, but a Reverend Father do it.

Once every seven days we learn to read and write. We are forbidden to leave the place so the four of us hide near the marsh. My mother, me, her little boy and Reverend Father. He is forbidden to do this but he teaches us anyway watching out for the wicked Virginians and Protestants who want to catch him (p. 6)

Education is not suitable with their status as slaves. Slaves do not need the ability to read or write to cultivate the crops. The white people need to keep slaves illiterate. The white people are afraid if the black people will fight for their rights and gain better life.

The next white people’s treatment toward the blacks is intimidation and verbal harrassment. In the past the black people have been known by many names. They were called Negroes, Blacks and Coloureds. The term “nigger” was used in the southern part of the USA, where discrimination against them was very bad. They were differentiated from the society. From
the way the white people call them shows that black people subjected to verbal harassment. The black people experienced intimidation and verbal harassment toward their race and color. Florens experienced that when she was on her errand to find the blacksmith. At the night, she stayed at the widow’s house.

I step into the room. Standing there are a man, three women and a little girl who reminds me of myself when my mother sends me away. I am thinking how sweet she seems when she screams and hides behind the skirts of one of the women. Then each visitor turns to look at me. The women gasp. The man’s walking stick clatters to the floor causing the remaining hen to squawk and flatter. He retrieves his stick, points it at me saying who be this? One of the women covers her eyes saying God help us…One woman speaks saying I have never seen any human this black. I have says another, this one is as black as others I have seen. She is Afric. Afric and much more, say another…The Black Man is among us. This is his minion (p. 111)

The whites react differently to the black people. They saw Black people as something terrible and awful. They thought that Florens was someone who carried diseases to the village. Because she was different and her skin was black. They thought that black is related to devil. Florens were intimidated by the people in the house. The white woman said that Florens is a devil, she never seen a black human. The white man also done something bad to her. Florens were intimidated, a man pointed her with a stick. The man was trying to scare Florens. Florens was treated as she is not a human.

The treatment of white people did not stop through the verbal harassment, but they also do physical abuse to the black people. Again, the black people were treated as an animal. They were chained and tied. Florens
saw the physical abuse when she was on her errand. She saw a boy was tied on the wagon floor. This boy is owned by a white man.

A boy with yellow pigtail sits on the wagon floor, his hands tied to his ankles. He and I are the only ones without rugs or blankets covering our feet (p. 39)

The quotation shows that the boy is the same race as Florens. He can not afford to have a blanket to cover himself when cold, because the master did not give him one. Perhaps, he was tied to prevent the possibility of him to escape. Physical abuse is not only through the binding, the slaves are also being hurt physically so that leaves a scar. The violence is caused by the master. The novel tells that D'Ortega offers a slave to Jacob Vaark to pay his debts. D'Ortega had many slaves, and asked Jacob to choose one. He interrupted their half day’s rest and ordered some two dozen or more to assemble in a straight line, so that Jacob Vaark could see and select it.

The two man walked the row, inspecting. D'Ortega identifying talents, weaknesses and possibilities, but silent about the scars, the wound like misplaced veins tracing their skin (p. 22)

He hid the wound suffered by the slaves from Jacob Vaark. The injury may be caused from the whites who tortured blacks. When D'Ortega brought them in a boat trip from the origin of black people, they are treated poorly, even to death. The black people were treated cruelly, they were chained, bad feeding, and they were placed in a room without sanitation.

A third of his cargo had died of ship fever. Fined five thousand pounds of tobacco by the lord Proprietary’s magistrate for throwing their bodies too close to the bay; forced to scoop up the corpses-those they could find (they used pikes and nets, D’Ortega said, a purchased which itself cost two pounds, six) and ordered to burn or bury them.
he’d had to pile them in two drays (six shillings), cart them out to low land where saltweed and alligators would finish the work (p. 16)

The blacks are not treated as human beings even after they die, white people threw their bodies. Even the law only gives financial penalties to D’Ortega, due to dispose of their bodies were too close to the bay. Current law does not punish the actions of D’Ortega, who has caused the loss of the lives of blacks.

The life of black people were controlled by the whites. They did the hardest work for the lowest wage, or nothing. They live in misery under the power of white people. Their life is getting worse when the laws do not support them.

By eliminating manumission, gathering, travel and bearing arms for black people only; by granting license to any white to kill any black for any reason; by compensating owners for a slave’s maiming or death, they separated and protected all whites from all others forever. (p. 10)

The states passed laws that said the black people and the white people could not use the same facilities, such as schools, restaurants, parks, and public bathrooms. Henretta et al in the book *America’s History to 1877* stated that,

They forbade their black workers to leave the plantation without special passes and, to enforce these regulations, installed special night watches and rural patrols. Beatings and whippings become regular features of plantation life, and penalties for resistance-disobedience, refusal to work, running away-increased in severity (1987: 102)
Whipping, dismembering, castrating, or killing a slave were legal under many circumstances. The discrimination separated black people toward the society. They were separated because of their race, color or sex.

The rights of the black people were taken by the white people as they were taken from their home land. The discrimination and social justification that they faced makes them live in misery. They got bad treatment, and they not allowed to do things as they want. The whites’ treatment made them inferior in the society. The black people lost their rights as human because they treated as commodities and properties. They did not have any chance to develop.

C. The Reactions of the Female Character

In the beginning, America was a land with so many resources. The people came from Europe to America to make a colony and settle there. The European came to the America to search for a better life. Then, the European landwners took the land from the native Americans, but the European did not have the skill to cultivate the land. This condition supports the Africans slave trade, and the trade was popular at the time. During the seventeenth century, European traders brought the Africans and shipped them across the ocean. The European traders sold the Africans to the European landowners who used the Africans as their slave.

The black people were taken from their land in Africa to work in the plantation of white landowners. Since they were taken to America, they were
treated as the property of white people. The black people were checked and bargained as they were commodities. The black people were not African people anymore, they are slave of white people. The black people worked in the plantation of white people as slaves.

The black people need to survive in the wilderness in the unknown land. They need the ability to keep alive under the supervision of white people. The bad treatments of white people made the black people never able to life in their own way. The white people made them as their property, and the black people felt the inferiority in the society. Current and Williams’s *The Essentials of American History Second Edition* stated that,

> The slaves found themselves almost completely under the control of their owners. Identifiable by their color, black slaves could not run away and merge themselves with the mass of free humanity as white servants (1976: 16)

From the quotation, the beneficial condition makes the landowners interested in black people as slaves for their plantations. The slavery increased in the landowners, because they could control the slaves. The slaves could not get out of their slavery to fight with the masters. The right of black people was lost by the treatments of white people, they were discriminated because of their race. The black people have to keep struggling to survive under the white people supervision. They were discriminated and their status were lowest in the society in the 17th century.

The female character in this novel is Florens. She is a daughter of an African woman, her mother was taken away from her home in Africa to be a slave. Florens’ mother is a slave, because of that she bears her mother status.
Florens also became the property of her mother’s master. When she was a child, Florens was sold to the trader by her mother’s master. She was sold in part of the payment of debt. Then, Florens spent her life working in her master’s farm. She has to struggle in the wilderness. Hine and Thompson’s *A Shining Thread of Hope* stated that,

Survival in slavery meant obedience to the slaveholder. The laws saw so that. The whip guaranteed it. But, even more important, there was loyalty to the family and to fellow slaves (1999: 72)

As a slave, Florens decides to be obedient to her master. Florens hopes that her master would see that she is not a threat. The disobediences would give the bad treatments or abusive actions. Florens decided to follow the rules and orders of her master. She did not show the refusal reaction when she was ordered to do the works. The obedience would satisfy the master and keep away from punishments.

Florens is an obedient girl, her obedience makes her look harmless. Obedience will give the impression that she is calm and nice girl. Because of that impression, the white people will not see her as a threat and probably will trust her. Florens needs to show that she is harmless to prevent the bad treatments of white people. Florens chooses to be obedient girl. Florens does not use the violence, she decides to act calm and silent. Being obedient is her reaction toward the white’s treatment. She needs to be strong to show her obedience under the supervision of white people. Naturally people will give reaction to protect themselves when they got the bad treatments, Florens shows her reaction in different ways. She manages herself to keep calm and
obey the orders of white people. One example of the situation Florens shows her reaction when she was in her errand in order to find the blacksmith. She was in the widow’s house, the widow is a white woman. When she was there, the others white people saw her. They are afraid of Florens’ appearance and look her as frightful creature.

Florens got the bad treatment from the white people when she was in the widow’s house. A white man pointed her with a stick, he was trying to scare Florens. Florens was afraid when the white man intimidated her. Florens was treated as she is an animal. Florens knew, that the people around her looked Florens as a threat and disease. Florens thought that she was in danger, Florens did not give refusal reaction. She made a decision to be calm and silent.

I am not understanding anything except that I am in danger as the dog’s head shows and Mistress is only my defense. I shout, wait. I shout, please sir. I think they have shock that I can talk. Let me show you my letter I say quieter. It proves I am nobody’s minion but my Mistress (p. 111)

Florens’s reaction toward the white’s treatment was calm. She was not show the suspicious reaction. Florens did not want to argue with the white man, she told the white man that she was in her errand in order to heal her Mistress. She asked the white man to read the letter from her Mistress, but no one would not touch the letter. They did not trust Florens. The white people wanted to examine Florens, one of them said to Florens to put off all her clothes. The humiliation made Florens felt ashamed but she could not give
rejection. Florens obeyed their command, and she decided to silent because she did not want to make the white people angry.

Florens does not give refusal and violence reactions, she manage herself to be calm. She followed the orders of the white people. Florens also tried to make them believe her and think that she is not a threat by showing the Mistress’ letter. Her obedience toward the white’s orders make the white people react softly. The white people do not take the abusive action. Florens has the opportunity to make the white people believe that she is not threat. Florens thought that her obedience would gave her security. Her obedience helps to save her in the difficult situation among the white people. On the other hand, Florens realized that she has to continue her errand as soon as possible. Florens tries to show that she could be trusted at the widow’s house by showing the letter from her Mistress. Again, she thought that obedience and trustworthy person would get security. Florens reacts toward the white’s treatment with being silent, she takes the calm action and run away from the house when she gets chance to run. She runs away to the stream and forest.

As the writer discussed about the white’s treatments in part B, the white people gave the bad treatments toward the blacks. The white people controled the life of black people and resisted them. The condition that showed the black people were under control the white people was about the education. The white people did not give permision to the black people to study. When Florens was child, she and her mother were not allowed to learn how to read and write.
Once every seven days we learn to read and write. We are forbidden to leave the place so the four of us hide near the marsh. My mother, me, her little boy, and Reverend Father (p. 6)

The white people were afraid if the black people were smarter. The black people would get knowledge, so they could improve their ability. If the black people could improve their ability, they could be better than become a slave. The white people were afraid if the black people smarter they would not want to work in the plantation anymore. One of the characteristic of Florens is clever. Florens managed to learn how to read and write, although she was forbidden to do that. Because Florens is clever girl, she secretly learned how to read and write from the Reverend Father. The Reverend Father is forbidden to teach the black people, or the consequence is he would be in the prison, paid some money or both. She hides from the white people when she was learning how to read and write.

Florens has the desire to escape from the white people’s supervision, because she did not want to be stupid person. Florens wanted to escaped from the illiteracy, if she could read and write she has ability to develop herself. Her reaction to learn secretly how to read and write is her way to escape from her blindness of education.

We have sticks to draw through sand, pebbles to shape words on smooth flat rock. When the letters are memory we make whole words. I am faster than my mother and her baby boy is no good at all. Very quickly I can write from memory the Nicene Creed including all of the commas (p. 6)

She learn how to read and write, so the white did not see her as a stupid black girl. She was able to stand from the white people supervision,
she took the opportunity to learn when she could. Florens thought, if she educated she would show her abilities and she would not get bad treatments. Her cleverness leads her to think critical about the condition around her. Florens used her abilities to solve her problem in the difficult situation, and find the way to escape from the difficult situation. Florens knew, the skills in read and write will lead her to get her own way to live. She could make her own decision in her life, she would not treated badly by the white people.

Florens always tried to solve her problem in the some conditions that she faced. Florens has her own way to avoid the bad treatments from the white people. One of the white treatment is the discrimination toward the black people in every terms of life. The black people got the discrimination because of their race. The discrimination of the black people leads the rejection and the harrasment to the black people. The black people were believed that they are evil, they carried the disease to the society. Florens reacts softly to the white’s treatments. She does not show the rejection toward their judgement. Florens does not show the rebellion action, that is her way to face and stay alive from the white people. Florens uses her cleverness to solve the problems when she faced problems. She also can think fast to make her own decision.

In part of her life, Florens was sent by her Mistress to do the errand in order to find the healer of Florens’ Mistress disease. As a slave, she must obeyed the commad of her Mistress. Florens was in a wagon when she was in her errand to find the blacksmith, the one who believed can heal the Mistress.
Suddenly, the wagon stopped. Florens thought that she was in danger. She saw that the women inside the wagon must get down. She also saw that the men were drunk.

Quiet, quiet six drop down, the men catching the women in their arms. The boy jumps alone. The three women motion to me. My heart turns over and I drop down too. They move off back down where we are coming from, stepping as best they can figure in tree shelter at roadside, places where the snow is small. I don’t follow. Neither can I stay in the wagon. I have a cold stone in my chest. I don’t need Lina to warn me that I must not be alone with strange men with slow hands when in liquor and anger they discover their cargo is lost. I have to choose quick (p. 40-41)

Florens confused with the chaotic condition when she was in the wagon. Florens used her cleverness to make the right decision that she must leave the wagon. The first reaction that she takes is Forens decided to run away to the forest, she knew that she was in danger situation. She was in situation which made her realized that the men could hurt her. She made the best decision at the time to avoid the danger that probably caused by the white people.

Not only the bad treatment of the white people, Florens also faced the danger in the wilderness as the result of the Mistress’ order to find the blacksmith. Florens was in the forest when the night. Florens realized that it was very dangerous being in the forest at the night. She decided to be calm and think the way to survive in the forest. Because Florens is the clever girl, she used her knowledge to survive in the forest. She tries to avoid the dangerous of the forest with her cleverness. She used her knowledge to avoid the wild animal that could attack her. She knew, when she smelled fur there
was an animal around her. She decided to stay away from the animal, to keep her save.

It is the smell of wet fur that stops me. If I am smelling it, it is smelling me, because there is nothing with odor left in my food cloth, only bread. I cannot tell if it is bigger than me or smaller or if it is alone. I decide for stillness. I never hear it go but the odor fades at last. I think it is better to climb a tree (p. 41-42)

Florens was alone in the forest to keep alive and continue the errand. Her errand is the effect of white people treatment. Her Mistress ordered Florens in the errand to find the blacksmith. Florens must obey of the orders of her Mistress, because she is belong to the Mistress. If Florens does not follow the orders, she will gets the punishment. Luckily, Florens is a quite clever girl. Her cleverness helped her to solve the problems. She could stay in the forest without assistance.

Florens decides to climb a tree when the night comes. She also tries to find shelter during her errand to find the blacksmith. She tries to find shelter and ask some food and water. She uses her cleverness to make people believe she is not threat. Florens believed, to be clever were very necessary for her to face the white people. Her status as a black and slave also makes her in difficult situation. She can not predict what will happen during her errand in order to find the blacksmith. She is alone in the New World of white people. Her race may caused the discrimination and refusal if she need some helps from other people. Florens showed that she could give the right reaction with her cleverness. She could make quick decision, so she could avoid the dangers.
The black people were not seen as human since they arrived in the New World, they were slaves and properties of white people. The white people could easily control the life of black people. The black people have been discriminated and treated badly by the white people. Florens as a black, she gives reaction from the discriminations and the bad treatments. She needs to stand on her own faith to gain her own life. Florens wants to show that the white people would not take her life and control her. Florens showed she could survive with her characteristics. Her cleverness and obedience help her to avoid the bad treatments of the white people. Her characteristics lead her to react wisely toward the condition around her, and help her to make the best decision and take the right action to face these difficulties.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The black people were taken from their own land by the white people to the New World. The black people were forced to work as slaves in the white’s plantations. The condition in the 17th century was terrible and difficult to the black people. They had to stay alive under the supervision of the white people and their bad treatments. The black people were not seen as the human beings, they were the personal properties for the white people. The black people got the bad treatments and they were not allowed in every access of education and jobs. The black people could not access the chance to develop themselves to get the better life. The white people were afraid if the black people were smarter, the black people will refuse to be a slave. If the black people were educated, they will know that they had opportunity than become slaves.

In the 17th century, the condition of the black slaves especially women were difficult. The black people were discriminated because of their race and class. The white people also made system to keep the black people uneducated. The point of view that the black people were frightful creatures made the hard life of the black people. The white people thought that the black people is the disease and trouble maker. Because of that point of view, the white people controlled the black people.
The female character in the novel is Florens, she is a black girl who bear her mother’s status as a slave. Florens was sold by her mother’s master in payment of his debt. Since she was children, Florens had to work in the plantation of her new master. Florens has some characteristics such as obedient, tough, naive, clever, brave and trustworthy. Her characteristics help her to face the white people treatments. Her cleverness and obedience make her Mistress trust her. In part of her life, Florens was sent to the errand in order to find the blacksmith. He is the person who believed can heal the Mistress’ disease. Florens had to do the errand in the wilderness. She could find the danger and the stranger that could hurt her. Florens is a clever girl and she could adjust her needs in a difficult situations.

In her errand, Florens met the white people and she saw how the white people judge her skin color and treated her. Florens face the white’s treatments with her own abilities. The white people judged Florens as a evil and disease, the white also gave the bad treatments. Florens manages herself to stay calm toward the white’s treatments. She uses her obedience to react toward the treatments. She thought her obedience will give her security. The obedience will give her away from the punishments and will not make the white people angry. Although it is a bad condition, she manages herself to keep herself tough under the supervision of the white people. Florens’ reaction is being calm and silent. She takes her action to be obedient person, and run away when she gets a chance. She run away pass the stream and forest.
Florens faces some dangers in the wilderness during her errand. Florens able to read the situation and decide the action and reaction that she should take. Her characteristics help her to face the difficulties. Florens uses her knowledge to survive and avoid the wild animal. She decides to climb the tree, and find shelter at the night. Her reactions such as running away, hiding, and being silent and obedient are chosen related to her inferiority as a black slave.

As a slave, the women had to stand on their own to get the better life. They have to protect themselves and save their rights as human beings. They had to struggle to fight against the white people. The white people give the bad treatments and make the system of controlling the black people. The black people were made inferior and uneducated, but they were fight against the white people with their abilities.
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APPENDIX

Summary of *A Mercy*

Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* is the story of a young slave girl named Florens. Florens is 16 years old and living on the D'Ortega, a plantation. The D'Ortegas have fallen on difficult times. Jacob Vaark, a trader, arrives at the plantation to collect a debt owed by D'Ortega. D'Ortega admits that he cannot pay the debt but offers one of his slaves as partial payment. Vaark is offered Florens and her mother, but her mother encourages Vaark to take only Florens because her mother is still nursing a baby boy. Florens, about eight years old when she is taken, recounts her pain at this abandonment by her mother.

Florens, a slave, lives and works on Jacob Vaark's rural New York farm. The deaths of his subsequent children are devastating, and Vaark accepts a young Florens from a debtor in the hopes that this new addition to the farm will help alleviate his wife, Rebekkah’s loneliness.

Years later Florens falls passionately in love with a visiting blacksmith, a free black man who has come to work on a fancy gate for Vaark’s new house, and who miraculously cures Sorrow of a deathly illness. When his work is done, however, the blacksmith leaves without say goodbye.

Vaark contracts smallpox and dies, after which Rebekka, Vaark’s wife, finds two small sores inside her mouth. The household is quarantined, and Rebekka has sent Florens to bring back the blacksmith, who has medical knowledge.
Florens was sent in the errand in order to find the blacksmith. Florens settles for the night in a tree, the only place she is safe from human and wild animals. As her journey continues, she seeks a shelter at a widow’s house. The widow lives with her sick daughter. The morning after, came some white people to the house. They seemed surprise to see Florens in the house and they all stare at her then converse as if Florens was not there and accused her as the Black Man’s minion that caused the illness. She knew she must convince them that she is no harm to any person. Therefore, she showed them the letter written by Mistress.

When she finally reached the blacksmith’s house, she told him what happened and why she was sent there. Florens found that the blacksmith lives with a child whose father is dead and no one have claimed the boy. Florens was unable to manage a good relationship with the boy. Florens felt the boy does not like her, and she found that her shoes were gone. Florens forced the boy to tell her where her shoes were. When the blacksmith returns, he chooses the boy and not her. This made Florens disappointed. She could not face rejection anymore, because she feels rejected by her mother already, and the society who look her down.

However, when she feels rejected, she could not take it. Moreover, the blacksmith accuses her as a stupid girl. He does not see her as what she is, and Florens stands up for her pride. It was brave to do such thing, because she put aside her feeling and she would not let anyone underestimate her
anymore. She chooses her dignity rather than being under the control of the man power.