



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RACE, CYBERBULLYING AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

***Mbeh Adolf Tanyi**

Senior lecturer in Faculty of Education/Uyi

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received 30th January, 2025

Received in revised form

17th February, 2025

Accepted 26th March, 2025

Published online 30th April, 2025

Keywords:

Cyberintimidation, Race, Violence
Conjugale.

*Corresponding author:

Mbeh Adolf Tanyi

ABSTRACT

Cet article explore les intersections entre la race, la cyberintimidation et la violence conjugale dans la littérature négro-américaine. À travers une analyse historique, théorique et littéraire, nous examinons comment les écrivains et écrivaines noirs américains ont utilisé leur plume pour dépeindre les expériences complexes des Noirs Américains face à l'intimidation et à la violence conjugale. L'article met en lumière les contextes historiques qui ont influencé ces représentations, les cadres théoriques qui sous-tendent ces œuvres, et les raisons de cette situation. Enfin, nous discutons de l'impact de ces concepts sur la société.

Copyright©2025, Mbeh Adolf Tanyi. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Mbeh Adolf Tanyi. 2025. "Race, cyberbullying and intimate partner violence", *International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Research*, 12, (04), 11127-11130.

INTRODUCTION

The rich and diverse African American literature has always been a space where marginalized voices seek to be heard. Among these voices, African American voices occupy a special place, as they navigate the intersection of multiple identities and oppressions. This article explores the intersections of race, cyberbullying, and domestic violence in African American literature, examining how writers address issues of race, gender, class, and other forms of marginalization. We will analyze how these writers use their writing to deconstruct stereotypes and reclaim their humanity.

Historical Context

Domestic Violence: A Historical Overview: History of Domestic Violence in African American Literature Domestic violence is a recurring theme in African American literature, reflecting the social, historical, and cultural realities of African American communities in the United States. From the earliest accounts of slavery, such as Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), domestic violence is discussed as a direct consequence of systemic oppression. Black women, subjected to both racism and sexism, were often victims of physical and psychological violence, both at the hands of slave owners and their own partners. These accounts highlight the double oppression experienced by Black women, a theme that

persists in later literature. In the twentieth century, authors such as Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright addressed domestic violence in their works, but from different perspectives. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Hurston explores the quest for autonomy of Janie Crawford, a Black woman who endures violence from two husbands before finding love and freedom. Wright, in *Native Son* (1940), depicts violence as a symptom of the frustration and anger generated by systemic racism. These works show how domestic violence is often linked to oppressive social structures.

In the second half of the 20th century, writers such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker explored this theme further. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Morrison describes domestic violence as a destructive cycle that affects generations. Walker, in *The Color Purple* (1982), shows how black women can overcome domestic violence through female solidarity and personal empowerment. These works emphasize the importance of resilience and community in combating violence. Today, authors such as Jesmyn Ward continue to explore this theme. In *Salvage the Bones* (2011), Ward addresses domestic violence in the context of poverty and natural disasters, showing how these factors exacerbate family tensions. Black American literature, through these narratives, offers a unique perspective on domestic violence, always linking it to broader issues of race, gender, and class.

History of Cyberbullying: A relatively recent phenomenon, cyberbullying has not yet had as strong a presence in Black American literature as more traditional themes such as racism or domestic violence. However, some contemporary authors are beginning to explore this issue, reflecting the modern challenges faced by African American communities in the digital age. Cyberbullying, often linked to issues of identity, race, and gender, is approached as an extension of traditional forms of harassment and discrimination. In recent works, cyberbullying is often presented as a tool of domination and control, exacerbating social inequalities. For example, in Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give* (2017), while the novel focuses primarily on police brutality and racial injustice, it also touches on the consequences of social media and online hate speech. Characters encounter racist comments and virtual threats, illustrating how cyberbullying can amplify real-life trauma. Similarly, in Nic Stone's *Dear Martin* (2017), the protagonists must deal with online attacks after being involved in high-profile incidents. These stories show how young African Americans, already vulnerable to systemic racism, are also exposed to modern forms of harassment that cross the boundaries of the virtual and the real. Black American literature uses these stories to highlight the psychological and social impact of cyberbullying on individuals and communities. Finally, authors such as Jason Reynolds, in *Long Way Down* (2017), while not directly addressing cyberbullying, explore themes of violence and social pressure, which are often linked to the dynamics of online harassment. These works invite us to reflect on how new technologies influence interpersonal relationships and exacerbate existing conflicts. In sum, although cyberbullying is not yet a central theme in Negro-American literature, it is emerging as a relevant topic, reflecting the complex realities of modern life. The authors use these narratives to explore the intersections between race, technology, and violence, while offering perspectives on resilience and resistance.

Theoretical Framework: Explanatory Theory of Domestic Violence: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Approach. Domestic violence can be explained through the ecological model developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, which proposes a multidimensional analysis of the factors influencing violent behavior. According to this theory, domestic violence does not result from a single cause, but from the complex interaction between several levels of factors: individual, relational, community and societal. This approach allows us to understand how personal and social dynamics combine to create a context conducive to violence. At the individual level, factors such as a history of violence in childhood, personality disorders, alcohol or drug use, and sexist beliefs can increase the risk of violent behavior. For example, an individual who was exposed to violence during childhood can reproduce these patterns in their adult relationships. This level highlights the personal characteristics that influence aggressive behavior. At the relational level, couple dynamics, such as frequent conflict, power inequalities, or communication difficulties, play a key role. Domestic violence is often linked to an imbalance of power, where one partner seeks to dominate or control the other. Relationships marked by jealousy, social isolation or economic dependence are particularly vulnerable. At the community level, factors such as poverty, lack of social resources, or cultural tolerance for violence can contribute to its maintenance. For example, in communities where violence is normalized or minimized, victims may hesitate to seek help. This level highlights the importance of the social context in

which individuals evolve. Finally, at the societal level, cultural norms, laws, and public policies influence the prevalence of intimate partner violence. Societies that perpetuate rigid gender stereotypes or that do not adequately protect victims create an environment conducive to violence. This level highlights the role of social and political structures in preventing or perpetuating violence. Explanatory Theory of Cyberbullying: Liminal Spaces Theory Cyberbullying can be explained through the liminal spaces theory, which draws on the work of Victor Turner and other researchers in anthropology and social psychology. This theory suggests that digital spaces, such as social media, create "liminal" environments where traditional social norms are temporarily suspended or altered. In these spaces, individuals often feel less constrained by the rules of conduct that apply in the physical world, which can foster aggressive or intimidating behavior. Central to this theory is the idea that the anonymity and physical distance afforded by digital platforms reduce empathy and personal responsibility. Cyberbullies, hidden behind screens, do not directly see the consequences of their actions on their victims, which facilitates disinhibition. This online disinhibition, theorized by John Suler in his concept of the "online disinhibition effect," explains why some people engage in behaviors that they would not dare to engage in face-to-face. In addition, liminal space theory highlights the role of group dynamics in cyberbullying. Digital spaces allow for the rapid formation of communities where aggressive behaviors can be reinforced by peers, creating a culture of teasing or harassment. For example, negative comments or online attacks can be amplified through likes, shares or replies, which encourages bullies to persist in their actions. Finally, this theory highlights the importance of the social and cultural context in which cyberbullying takes place. Cultural norms, values, and expectations influence how individuals interact online. For example, in environments where competition and aggression are valued, cyberbullying may be perceived as a way to gain social status or power.

The assertiveness of black American women in the face of domestic violence: Black American women have developed a variety of strategies to assert themselves and resist domestic violence, drawing on individual, community, and cultural resources. These strategies are often influenced by their history, culture, and the social structures in which they operate. The assertiveness of these women involves a combination of personal resilience, community support, and collective action.

Personal resilience and empowerment: Many black American women draw on their personal resilience to overcome domestic violence. This resilience is often informed by cultural values, such as religious faith, which plays a central role in the lives of many African American women. Black churches, for example, provide a space for spiritual and emotional support, as well as practical resources for women facing violence. Authors such as bell hooks have highlighted the importance of self-affirmation and self-love as tools for resisting oppression.

Community Support and Solidarity Networks: Black women often rely on solidarity networks, whether family or community, to escape domestic violence. Women's circles, support groups, and community organizations play a crucial role in providing a safe space for survivors to share their experiences and receive help. Works such as Alice Walker's

The Color Purple illustrate how solidarity among women can be a source of strength and liberation.

Using Institutional Resources: Although Black American women may face systemic barriers, such as racism and sexism within institutions, they are increasingly using available resources to protect themselves. This includes social services, women's shelters, and legal aid. Organizations like the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) work specifically to support Black women and other marginalized groups.

Artistic and Literary Expression: Art and literature are also powerful ways for Black women to speak out and speak out against domestic violence. Writers like Toni Morrison, in *The Bluest Eye*, and Maya Angelou, in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, have used their works to explore the trauma of domestic violence and celebrate the resilience of Black women. These stories provide a platform to raise awareness and inspire other women to break free.

Activism and Leadership: Finally, many Black American women are engaging in activism to combat domestic violence and advocate for systemic change. Figures such as Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo movement, have highlighted the experiences of Black women and other marginalized women, placing them at the center of the public debate on sexual and domestic violence. In summary, Black American women are asserting themselves in the face of domestic violence through a combination of personal resilience, community support, use of institutional resources, artistic expression, and activist engagement. These strategies reflect their ability to transform traumatic experiences into forces for change and liberation.

Mechanisms for Combating Cyberbullying in African American Literature: African American literature, while not always directly addressing cyberbullying, explores related themes such as resilience in the face of oppression, community solidarity, and the search for identity, which can be applied to combating this phenomenon. Through fictional and autobiographical narratives, African American authors offer mechanisms for dealing with modern forms of harassment, including cyberbullying.

Community Solidarity: African American literature often highlights the strength of community as a means of resilience in the face of adversity. In works such as Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*, characters find comfort and support in their circles of family and friends. This solidarity can be applied to combating cyberbullying, where victims are encouraged to turn to their loved ones and communities for emotional and practical support.

Education and Awareness: African American authors emphasize the importance of education in combating injustice. In Nic Stone's *Dear Martin*, characters use dialogue and learning to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices. This educational approach can be applied to cyberbullying, educating young people about the consequences of their online actions and promoting a respectful digital culture.

Empowerment through Expression and Inner Strength: African American literature often celebrates the power of self-expression as a tool of resistance. Writers like Maya Angelou in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* show how sharing your

story can be liberating and transformative. For victims of cyberbullying, writing or speaking about their experiences can be a way to regain control and raise awareness about the issue. Characters in African American literature often embody extraordinary resilience in the face of adversity. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, the protagonists overcome deep trauma through inner strength. This resilience can inspire victims of cyberbullying to draw on their own resources to overcome challenges and rebuild their lives.

Activism and Advocacy: Finally, African American literature highlights the role of activism in bringing about social change. In Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, the characters take action to defend their rights and dignity. This tradition of activism can be applied to combating cyberbullying, encouraging young people to get involved in awareness campaigns and demand stronger policies against online harassment. In summary, African American literature offers a variety of mechanisms to address cyberbullying, emphasizing solidarity, education, self-expression, resilience, and activism. These narratives offer inspiring models for dealing with modern challenges while remaining grounded in a tradition of resistance and hope.

Intersection of Cyberbullying and Domestic Violence in African American Literature: African American literature often explores the intersections between different forms of violence, including domestic violence and, more recently, cyberbullying. Although cyberbullying is a more modern phenomenon, it can be linked to domestic violence in literary narratives, reflecting the complex realities of intimate relationships in the digital age. These works show how digital technologies can become tools of control, harassment, and oppression, while also offering perspectives on resistance and resilience.

Technology as a Tool of Control: In some narratives, cyberbullying is used as an extension of domestic violence, where abusive partners use social media, text messages, or emails to monitor, harass, or humiliate their victims. For example, in contemporary works like Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*, while the focus is on police and racial violence, we see how digital technologies can be used to intimidate and control. This dynamic reflects a reality where abusers use modern tools to perpetuate their dominance.

Psychological and Social Impact: African American literature highlights the psychological and social consequences of domestic violence and cyberbullying. In Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, although the story is set before the digital age, themes of isolation, humiliation, and loss of control resonate with the experiences of victims of cyberbullying. Characters must deal with deep trauma, but also find ways to free themselves and rebuild their lives. African American narratives often emphasize resistance and solidarity as ways to overcome violence. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, characters struggle with the legacy of slavery and domestic violence, finding strength in their community connections. Similarly, victims of cyberbullying and domestic violence can draw on their support networks to protect and defend themselves. Literature shows how solidarity can be a powerful weapon against oppression.

Intersection of Oppressions: African American literature also explores how race, gender, and class influence experiences of domestic violence and cyberbullying. In

Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*, characters face multiple forms of violence, both in their homes and communities, reflecting the complex intersections of their identities. These narratives highlight the need to understand violence in a broader context, taking into account the systems of oppression that perpetuate it.

Hope and Reconstruction: Finally, African American literature offers stories of hope and reconstruction. In Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the author shows how it is possible to overcome trauma and find one's voice. For victims of cyberbullying and domestic violence, these stories offer models of resilience and transformation, showing that it is possible to free oneself and reclaim one's power. In summary, African American literature explores the intersections between cyberbullying and domestic violence by highlighting dynamics of control, psychological impacts, strategies of resistance, and intersections of oppression. These narratives offer profound and inspiring perspectives for understanding and combating these forms of violence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, cyberbullying and domestic violence among African Americans reveal complex dynamics where race, gender, and technology intersect. African American literature, through poignant narratives, highlights how these forms of violence intertwine, exacerbating trauma and inequality. Whether through digital control in abusive relationships or online harassment, these forms of violence reflect larger systems of oppression. However, these works also offer models of resistance, solidarity, and resilience, showing how individuals and communities can free themselves and rebuild. By exploring these themes, African American literature invites deep reflection on how to combat these forms of violence, while celebrating the strength and dignity of survivors. It reminds us of the importance of education, community support, and activism in creating a future where these forms of violence no longer have a place.

REFERENCES

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Random House, 1969.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Harvard University Press.
- Cixous, Hélène. *Le Rire de la Méduse*. L'Arc, 1975.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241–1299.
- Heise, L. L. (1998). Violence against women: An integrated, ecological framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), 262–290.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2015). *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*. Corwin Press.
- hooks, bell. *All About Love: New Visions*. William Morrow, 2000.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. J.B. Lippincott, 1937.
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. 1861.
- Johnson, M. P. (2008). *A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence*. Northeastern University Press.
- Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S. P., & Agatston, P. W. (2012). *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the Digital Age*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). *Resources for African American Women*. Disponible sur ncadv.org.
- Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place*. Viking Press, 1982.
- Reynolds, Jason. *Long Way Down*. 2017.
- Stone, Nic. *Dear Martin*. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2017.
- Suler, J. (2004). The Online Disinhibition Effect. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7(3), 321–326.
- Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. Balzer + Bray, 2017.
- Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Cornell University Press.
- Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Ward, Jesmyn. *Salvage the Bones*. Bloomsbury, 2011.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: WHO.
- Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. 1940.
