

An Analysis of Black Women Sufferings, Self-Identity and strength in Alice Walker’s Novel “The Color Purple”

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Black literature is the Literature created by blacks and it is voice of several generations of an oppressed race. A study of black woman predictably leads one to the beginning of the Black American Literature. The revolutionary elements in Black American fiction is found from its beginning. Black woman were ill-treated in the houses of the owners and sexually assaulted in by white owners. Black woman were served as bearers in the houses of whites and their children of slaves were let out in the field of workers. Women were not so much interested in bearing children as they thought their children should not face the same problems of sexual harassment and slavery. The problem of slavery continued nearly 240 years after 1819. In spite of sexual abuse, slavery, black women had good relationship in their families. Offenders were whipped or even beaten to death. Whites sexually abused black women.

Quest for self-identity, literacy, freedom was the common among black American writing. The quest for self - identity is typically an American Quest from Huck to Eugene. The Quest for identity is also a particular concern white southern writers like Gail Godwin. Alice Walker described: “*The black woman is one of American’s greatest heroes... Not enough credit has given to the black woman who has been oppressed beyond recognition*”.

Alice walker captures the experience of black women in her works as a series of movements from women who are victimized by the society to women who have taken control of their lives consciously. She has explored the lives of black women in-depth and even questions their fate. She has courage to see through the seeds of time and declares that in future black women would no longer live in suspension. *The Color Purple* debuted as a motion picture and hit the American box office and it was produced by Steven Spielberg.

In “*The Color Purple*” Walker stresses the importance of understanding between black women to break the patriarchal way of life and thereby to scale new heights by their newly found liberation. Celie, is the central character, a black woman, suffers gender discrimination at the hands of the black men. She was abused by her (step) father, Alphonso who also warns her not to show this to anyone. Later Celie accepts this torture to protect her little sister, Nettie, from this brutality. She stands as a symbol of strength. Albert her husband, marries Celie only to give a mother to his children, a servant to his house and a sexual convenience for him. *The Color Purple* is remarkable language, radical, themes, and technique.

The novel *Color Purple* discusses the growth of black women. Black has nothing to lean of. She has no model to follow. She comes out of her demanding surroundings to scale the heights of liberation. The story of “*The Color Purple*” is given here with a critical note to form the background of this analysis. Relationships between women, love, friendship, shared domination. Celie’s letters not only brought the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award to Walker but also a world – wide recognition.

The Color Purple is hypothetical to be the story of Alice Walker's great grandmother who Trudier Harris states that, "*raped and abused at the age of twelve*" (The Oxford's companion to women's writing in the United States, p.903) and this paves the way for the theme of humiliation in this novel. Celie. Walker considers being a victory of her great grandmother. The novel follows what is known as black folk, speech, music and religion. It deals with the theme of what black woman should do and ought to do.

The Color Purple shows a characteristic feminist study. Celie in the first half of the story writes to God, in the second she directs them to her sister Nettie, A disconnected assessment of the characters in *The Color Purple* might suggest that every women end up strong and self-confidence, every men finally end up humbled and more caring.

The humility derives from Celie's own and is reinforced by the device of conveying the work through her letters. The novel is collected of friendly's letters from the protagonist, the Protagonist Celie, who first writes about the rapes by her (step) father, Alphonso. Celie's includes the tale of sexual subservience of her Mama by Pa and how she has been asked to take that role as soon as her Mama falls ill. She is made a sexual convince by her father. She is warned not to reveal this to anyone but God.

When Celie gives birth to a girl her Mama asks her whose it is. She does not want to name someone as its father and at the same time is too much bothered to show the incest, and says its God's. Alphonso takes it away and Celie believes the child is killed. After this incident her Pa says he cannot stand her any more but continues to do the same. Soon she gives birth to a boy and even the child is taken away by her Pa but she feels he couldn't have killed him that he would have sold in the market place. After her Mama's death Alphonso tortures Celie too much and even eyes Nettie. But Celie is so confident that she would save Nettie at any cost and accepts the torture. She writes,

*"I keep hoping he find somebody to marry. I see
him looking at my little sister, she scared.
But I say 'I'll take care of you'" (The Color Purple, P 13)*

She finds difficult to accept her father's standpoint but voluntarily takes up this role when her father eyes Nettie, Celie's younger sister. Alice Walker though Celie talks about the sexual oppressions of Black Women by Black Men.

Celie wedded Albert, a widower and an old man with four children, and he is interested in the wedding gift, a cow than the bride. Her husband is also a firm believer of Patriarchal authority. She is not received well even by the children. Harpo, the eldest son gives her troubles even in the very first day. In this marriage, "*Celie is passed like a piece of property from one cruel and domineering black male into the hands of another. The rest of the novel is Celie's struggle to gain self-respect*" (Alice Walker, p.86). Albert beats her as and when he likes. He beats his children. She writes to God. "*Harpo ask his daddy why he beat me. Mr. – say, cause her my wife. Plus, she stubborn.....Harpo ask me, How come you stubborn? He don't ask How come you his Wife? Nobody asks that*". (The Color Purple, 30)

Mellisa Walker says that "*striking similarities*" (Black women's Novel in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, p.60) between *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in explorations of body and souls, beating of wives, abuse of black woman and racial discrimination are well shown in this novel. The child Molester writes letter to God about the situations of young girls in *The Bluest Eye* and in *The Color Purple* Celie writes letter to God about her sexual abuse and her feelings. The Novel marks major advances for Walker's art.

Shug Avery, whose actual name is Lillie, a vivacious determinedly independent blues singer, is Albert's mistress, Albert brings her home one day and asks Celie to treat her well and bring her back to normal life from some disease. These two became friends and later loves. Self-Confident, and open-minded, Shug deliberated to be depraved by some religious widespread but on the other hand popular and appreciated as entertainer. She is clever in the ethnic values of the black community, and her occurrence has a converting outcome particularly on Celie and on others. Because of Shug Avery, Celie returns the letters by Nettie from Africa. With the support from Shug Avery and strength from her sister and decides to leave with Shug Avery to Memphis. Though Albert taunts her with her ignorance she determinedly leaves. Celie, in her new place she starts sewing pants, pants for every occasion. She becomes famous and luckily gets a house from her real father. She shifts her business to her new house and surprisingly finds Albert with some changes. In the meantime Albert has changed a lot and is content to live a peaceful life. The Chief motive in Alice Walker's works is revealed at this point of the novel. Celie doesn't lose hope after seeing the telegram. Celie writes, "I don't have him, Nettie. And I don't believe you dead" (*The Color Purple*, 229). Albert in the final part along with Celie, "I am satisfied that the first time I ever lived on Earth as a natural man. It feels like a new experience". Celie's achievement of selfhood is mainly accomplished with the help of Shug Avery, but Nettie's letters have also played an important role in it. *The Color Purple* is most widely read novels in America today. "Perhaps even more than Walker's other works". Celie at the end is self-confident and self-defined woman, who takes control over her own life and positions herself beyond the reach of those who had over powered her earlier. *The Color Purple* is Alice Walker's experiment to signify her own specific revelation of black feminism in a work that go beyond belief. Celie's growth tracks the wished-for feminist outline. Celie, first learns from the guides and from Shug Avery who is very much strong and then Sophia who gave her confident and courage to react on. Secondly, she understands the true love and receiving from others. Through she loved and cherished herself. Third, Celie studied the importance of encouraging anger. Celie disgrace at Albert for cover-up Nettie's letters permits her to getaway of a lifetime of submissive pain. Finally, she studies that she has talents that she can do things, and her production of pants becomes an appearance of who she is and of what she beliefs. Alice Walker reveals her compassion more for women characters than men to arouse the reader's indignation at the price black women pay as victim of racial and sexual exploitations. The sexual abuse of men, poverty and frustration and searching for self – identity are well pictured in this novel. Walker is highly regarded writer of powerfully expressive fiction. Her central theme is the black woman's fight for divine completeness and for sexual, radical and tribal equality. In conclusion, it is an attempt to find out how black women sufferings, self-identity, strength analyses in the novel of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Works Cited

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