

# Discovering shug avery



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As one of the more important characters in Alice Walker's captivating novel, *The Color Purple*, Shug Avery as an individual, is probably the most interesting character of them all. Her character captivates all of the reader's attention and holds onto it. There are many things about Shug that we, as readers of the novel, aren't sure about. Things that we wonder about, make assumptions and theories about, but will never quite know the answer. Many a things she says and does that makes us wonder. One of those things that completely enthrall our curiosity is Shug and her religious affiliation.

Throughout the novel Shug never clearly states what religion she is affiliated with. However, Shug has said many things that we could even call clues, which help the reader try and figure out on their own which religion her beliefs could possibly be associated with. In the novel Shug says My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. Then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all.

I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed... (Walker 195). What Shug says in this quote agrees with the most fundamental belief of Neopaganism. The recognition of the divine in nature (Neopagan). Shug believes that God is everything that has been and everything that will be, " I believe God is everything, say Shug. Everything that is or ever was or ever will be" (Walker 195). Pagans revere the cycle of the seasons, which is regarded as an expression of the divine and a model for spiritual growth and renewal (Neopagan). The spiritual growth and renewal in Neopaganism is where Shug's belief that everything in nature grows and once will be.

Another religion that seems to agree with the beliefs of Shug Avery is Pantheism. The word Pantheism is derived from the Greek words, “ pan” meaning “ all” and “ theos” meaning “ God” (Pantheism). Pantheists believe that God is represented throughout the entire universe. Through nature and all that is around us (Pantheism). Since Shug believes that God is everything (Walker 195), the correlation between her beliefs and Pantheism seems to make sense. Christianity is one of the three major monotheistic world religions. Like Judaism and Islam, Christian beliefs contradict the beliefs of Shug Avery.

Christians believe there is one God who created the world and takes an interest in the humans who inhabit it (Christianity). “ God ain’t a he or a she, but a it” (Walker 195). Like Islam and Judaism, Christianity refers to God, or the divine power that rules over them, as the father. Clearly this contradicts the beliefs of Shug because Shug believes that God is neither a he nor a she (Christianity). However, there is a Christian belief that completely agrees with one of the beliefs of Shug. “ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (All). Shug explains to Celie that God loves them no matter what.

God’s love is unconditional and even though they are sinners God still loves them. As long as they do what they like and realize Gods love, God will love them (Walker 193). Shug doesn’t have just one set religion. She is a woman who realizes all of the different aspects of faith and has created a faith all her own. By believing in all different bits and pieces of different religions she has made her own unique religion that applies just to her. She believes in some Christian beliefs, but most of all she is a woman that recognizes God as

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an eternal being, who is within everything, even herself and other people. This thinking has proven to be most of a Pantheist and a Neopagan, with their beliefs of natural divinity.

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