

Power of a woman (the colour purple)



The Power of Women Every country on earth is affected by a common issue – discrimination. Discrimination is the prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially in regards to race, age, or sex. Such an issue began to affect the world in the seventeenth century, and has continued till this day. African Americans were first targeted by the Caucasian race due to the significant difference within their skin tone. In the Colour Purple by Alice Walker, people are faced with several types of discrimination: sexism, domestic abuse and racism.

Discrimination is one of the most devastating events that mankind may have to potentially face. In the seventeenth century, sexism was leading this era. Women were not thought of very highly and were often taken advantage of. Till this day there are still sexist comments being targeted towards women. This social issue in society plays a large role, which dictates the opinions and views of when perceiving a gender. In the novel, The Colour Purple there is a very sexist setting, causing frequent beatings, the stereotypes based on African American women, and the thoughts and feelings towards them.

Throughout this novel many different strong women are mistreated, the strongest of them all being – Cellie. Sexism played a large part in women's lives, as they were judged upon a woman's beauty, clothing and children. When young Cellie was sold and married to an older man, she did not know the devastating events that her life would bring. Cellie's husband makes her cook, clean, take care of his kids, shave him and have sexual intercourse with him.

Cellie accepted the stereotypes that were presented to her and she was obligated to think that the way she was treated was acceptable “ When a women marry she spose to keep a decent house andfamily” p47. When Cellie says this she is sharing her thoughts on how a married woman should act and her place in the home. This forces Cellie to be prejudice and think that all men are horrible and sexist. There comes a time in every strong woman’s life, that hurtful words are said about appearance, imagine and behaviour.

This young woman was told every single day by all the men in her life how ugly she was. She was reminded every single day about her flaws, this lead to the down fall in her self- esteem issues. Her husband never showed her love because he thought she was “ too black” to actually love or evenrespect. The reason why Cellie’s father sold her and not her younger sister was because she was too pretty for any man, and young Cellie was not. She was reminded every day of her flaws. “ He black as tar, nappy-headed, got legs like baseball bats, and I hear she got that nasty women's disease”.

This quote is said to Cellie by her father in law while they are having a family dinner. Cellie begins to feel embarrassed because her whole family begins to laugh and agree. Sexism is a type of discrimination, and is still an issue in today’s society. Thousands of homes have been affected bydomestic violence. The conformational battle between spouses, ex spouses and children has been affecting society for a long time. Each year thousands of females are beaten by their husbands, fathers, or even their brothers. Before Cellie married, she was harassed by her own father.

He would rape her and give her cruel and unusual punishments. She thought she had no options and had to endure the pain that her father had infused upon her. Cellie did not know that the pain she was enduring from her father was against the law, because she had been surrounded in this environment her entire life and it was all she knew. Cellie did not understand that being raped by her father and getting her daughter taken away from her was against the law. “ He [Pa] never had a kind word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.

First he put his thing up against my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it. I don't never get used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook” p1. Cellie's father was physically violent and he caused extensive emotional damage by not showing respect for his daughter, he treated her like she was his personal slave and he never said a kind word to her.

She was under her father's influence as she was not able to tell anyone about the events that were taking place in her home and the way she was being treated. Cellie struggled her whole entire life in search for happiness. When Cellie was sold and married to a man, she was glad because she was unconfined from her father and his cruelty. Her husband had no intension of loving her, he not only physically abused her but he was verbally abusive as well. He ordered her to take care of all the housework- because she is a female and he insisted that she look after his kids.

If Cellie refused and defied her husband she was severely punished. It is common for any human being that is put forth in these traumatizing events to lose respect for themselves, forget how to live life as well as love. Cellie's life has always been full of sorrow and darkness, until a miracle occurred. Cellie met a powerful woman who changed her perspective in life, and reminded her how to laugh, have fun and stand up for herself. She found the courage to stand up for herself and get a divorce from her husband. "I curse you, he say what you mean?"

"I say until you do right by me everything you touch will crumble" p122. Cellie realized that a woman does not need a man to survive and that woman can live their lives the way they want to. She managed to establish self respect and obtain higher self esteem. Racism is the discrimination of different races and is the thought of one race or color of skin has more physical and mental abilities than another. Why do we think such things of other people? Is it really right to think of people differently because of the color of their skin?

In the seventeenth century it was considered tolerable to be divided by the colour of your skin. Caucasian's were known to be successful store owners and filthy rich. Whereas people from the African American decent were slaves or small store owners and were considered poor. The Caucasian decent at the time were the wealthiest and always wanted the cleanest African Americans to be their slaves and take care of all their household chores. If an African American refused to become a slave then they were forced to become one and had to endure cruel and unusual punishments.

In the novel, another powerful woman Sofia is taken away from her family and friends to become a slave. She was a slave for the most powerful woman, Sofia had chosen to stand up for herself and say that she did not want to be the mayor's wife's slave, she had even slapped her for asking, Sofia was then put into jail. Once she was released from jail, she was sent to the mayor's house to become their slave, once again and now became their property. " Miss Millie finger the children some more, finally look at Sofia and the prizefighter.

She look at the prizefighter car. She eye Sofia wristwatch. She say to Sofia, All your children so clean, she say, would you like to work for me, be my maid? Sofia say, Hell no. She say, What you say? Sofia say, Hell no. Mayor look at Sofia, push his wife out the way. Stick out his chest. Girl, what you say to Miss Millie? Sofia say, I say, Hell no" p137. Any African American woman would be honoured to work for a wealthy Caucasian family but Sofia was unwilling and had enough self respect not to degrade herself.

Sofia is standing up for herself, her children and her beliefs, but she is thrown into jail to be beaten and come out a scared black woman. Sofia's children do not become slaves or " maids", but one of Sofia's punishments was that she was not allowed to see or even speak to her family. One Thanksgiving Day, Sofia was rewarded for being a good slave and was allowed to go visit her family with one condition, Miss. Mille would have to drive her there and back to make sure she would not run away. When they got there Miss. Mille was not able to turn off her car, so Sofia's brother had tried to help, but Miss.

Mille got scared and thought she was being sexually abused. Miss. Mille had forced Sofia to drive her home and she was never to come back to see her family again. “ Come on Cellie, let’s go these people are going to hurt me and your the only one I trust” p150. Even though Sofia’s brothers were only trying to help Miss. Millie, she was scared because they were “ black” she was being racist and stereotyped that all “ black” people were not decent individuals. Racism played a very important role in African American families; it broke them apart and/or made them stronger.

It had broken bonds and made African Americans live throughmemoriesthey have of each other. Discrimination is a social issue that still influences people all around the world. This issue has many different aspects and people are affected and treated by it differently. The novel The Colour Purple is a historical novel that involves many different forms of discrimination: sexism, racism and domestic abuse. Discrimination is affecting many people around the world and we need to put an end to it, putting an end to it is the only way we will be able to change the world!