

Essay on alice walker's the color purple

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



The Color Purple by Alice Walker, it's a novel which discusses and narrates issues concerning gender inequalities, discrimination and racism within a community based in the South, in the early 1900's. The main character in the novel "Celie" is a young black woman abused and violated by close members of her family such as, her father and her husband. In this case the novel raised questions to readers of the novel, making them eager wanting to know why didn't "Celie" tell her mother what her father was doing to her? Another question triggered to readers is; did Celie really do what she was doing to protect her sister or was she doing this for herself?, this is understood differently by each reader who gets to read the novel, of which in my opinion I see it as a protective and caring way of her, to her sister.

The novel talks about the life of Celie as when she was a teenager at the age of fourteen, who is living a very harsh environment, which is full of racism and discrimination. Her mother is suffering from an illness, which because of that she frequently visits the doctor, of which when she does the visiting; Celie is left alone with her father back at home. Her father takes full advantage of Celie's mother's absence and rapes Celie.

After struggling with her illness for long Celie's mother dies, and her father takes full advantage of Celie's mother's absence and takes chances to rape Celie more and more often, saying " You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't" (pg. 1).

After the continuous rapes Celie is impregnated by her father and has two children by her father, both of which are brutally taken away right after they are born by her father. Celie because of her ignorance assumes that he has

taken the children into the woods and killed them, but actually and later Celie came to figure out from the help of her sister that Fonso sold her children. Fonso eventually remarries after Celie's mother's death, and Celie is a resemblance of guilty conscience to him, he decides to get rid of her and the guilty feelings, he is forced to be married by her father to a man who is only described as Mr. in the novel.

The life of Celie does not transform with Mr. It's described that her life does not change from what he had been with from her father. Mr. feels that the only way to keep a woman in her place is to beat her. Celie's sister, Nettie, is the only person that Celie has ever truly cared, loved and trusted, runs away from Fonso and comes to live with Celie and Mr. Nettie in the novel is described to be beautiful than Celie which makes her more attractive to men. Mr. finds her very eye-catching and tries in any way to seduce Nettie, but Nettie cleverly ignores and stays away from him. Mr. is embarrassed by Nettie's neglecting him and decides to send her away from the house. Before they Nettie leaves she promised to write letters to Celie. Nettie keeps her promise by sending Celie letters, which Celie never gets to; see them because Mr. intercepts and hides the letters before Celie can get a glimpse of them. Celie's ignorance makes her lose interest of the letters and assumes that Nettie must be dead.

During a visit to the South part of the Country Shug Avery, who is a blues musician, falls ill. She has no real home which is a result of her lifestyle, it ends up Shug Avery is hosted by a long time friend who is Mr. Celie takes care of Shug and helps her back to her health, Celie finds herself falling in

love with Shug, Shug decides that she will help Celie back to emotional health which leads to both of them having a homosexual relationship. Shug is now healthy and decides to go and get letters from the mailbox later for her to find out that there is a letter for Celie which has been sent to her from Nettie. Celie is overjoyed to realize that she is still alive and good in health. Later Celie and Shug come to realize that a bunch of letters were hidden from her by Mr. As Celie reads the letters she realizes that Nettie joined a Christian missionary group that has gone to Africa to spread Christianity. Nettie describes and confronts Celie that the missionaries who are leading them, have two children of which Nettie thinks that they are Celie's children. She also writes that the man who they thought was their father actually was their stepfather. She goes ahead and explains to Celie that their real father died at an early age and they moved in with another family.

The letters make Celie relieved that her two children were not born out of incest and hope that they are not dead. Celie is incredibly happy to learn that her sister and her two children are still alive, but on the other side she is also sad and fiercely angry with Mr. for keeping the letters from her. The anger finally gives her the courage to stand up to Mr. when Mr. attempts to slap her she stabs him with a knife. Then she decides to leave Mr., and move with Shug to Memphis. Mr. terrorizes Celie saying "you will leave over my dead body", and Celie responds with buoyancy. "It's time to leave you and enter into the Creation. And your dead body is just the welcome mat I need" (p. 207).

In Memphis, Celie starts a new business sewing pants. With the help of Shug she becomes very successful. Shug later leaves and falls for a nineteen-year-old boy named Germaine. Shug then leaves Celie to go and live with Germaine, so does Celie's happiness leave her.

Fonso, the man who claimed to be Celie's father, dies and leaves Celie to inherit his house. Celie moves in and continues her pants-making business there. Celie eventually becomes friends with Mr., who has malformed her behaviors since Celie's departure. He has learned about a great logic of absurdity in life and love since Celie left him, and near the end of the novel he declares that: " I start to wonder why us need love. Why us suffer. Why us black. Why us men and women. Where do children really come from? It didn't take long to realize I didn't hardly know nothing... The more I wonder, the more I love." (p. 289)

Celie develops a friendship with Mr., but decides that she can never love a man again and believes that love will never be back in her life. But then her sister Nettie returns from Africa with her two children. They are reunited, and Celie feels a happiness and love that she has never before experienced. Celie's final letter to God states that, despite her old age, " I think this the youngest us ever felt" (p. 295). The major themes behind Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* is as listed below.

Epistolary

The use of letters in the novel can be described or related to an epistolary novel, this can be experienced by how the letters written to God and to her

sister Nettie. *The Color Purple* is narrated by a number of diary entries and letters, that's why it's described as an epistolary novel.

Behind the novel lie the advantages and disadvantages of such structures and for the novel in particular?

The author of the book "Alice Walker" tried to put the novel in a way that the readers may see and understand the novel in their own point of view. One can realize that without the use of epistolary in the novel the story and theme of the novel would have sounded differently.

1) Vulgarity, violence, racism and discrimination

From the introduction of the novel one can realize that vulgarity, violence, racism and discrimination are being experienced by Celie who is the main character. The main questions which puzzled me after reading the novel were; what is the main reason of vulgarity, violence, racism and discrimination in the novel? Is it unfair to use these words when describing the novel? Were the readers supposed to notice the agony of the characters in the novel and understand their life situation? And what were the intentions or message of the author trying to convey?

Black Women were being mistreated and applied as animals in that era, as the novel describes them, as to the likes of Sofia and Celie experience a life of brutality and mistreatment from their husbands.

Vulgarity is practiced by many of the characters in the novel, one of the characters who practice this is, Shug Avery who is full of vulgar "as seen on page 116 listed of referring to sex by making love." Another case where this

is experienced is when Celie is being raped by her father this is well elaborated in page 161, through the following excerpt. “ He starts to choke me saying you better shut up and get used to it, or I will kill your mama.”

Violence can be seen from the very first beginning of the novel where Fonso denies Celie's right by raping her, this continues not only for Celie but also to several other members of the community who are being violated in different ways.

Racism is experienced and well elaborated in the novel, an example is when Celie was in a store and the white sales man asked her to walk out. This simply shows how uncouth the white salesman was to a black woman.

Discrimination in my own point of view I can suggest that it's the main idea behind the *Color Purple*. This is experienced in the author's real life and tries to relate her story to the novel, except that the novel is fiction. The novel tries to make the readers picture and imagine their selves being in an environment where discrimination is a common thing and is experienced by almost everyone. The novel also shows how women were being mistreated and applied as slaves, a good example is of what Sofia and Celie go through in life under the brutality and mistreat from their husbands.

Ignorance and irresponsible is the chemistry that builds Celie as the main character using the sense of ignorance and irresponsibility as a form of protection to herself, she ignores sharing her story to the public not even her mother, being afraid of what her father will do to her. The weaker afraid part of her makes her ignorant, irresponsible and also turning her into a slave to

the people around her. The way she accepts her father to take her children away after birth shows how irresponsible she is, not being concerned of where her children are by assuming that they are dead.

Rape was the main exploitation to women from men which made them feel unprotected, this can be seen where Celie is raped by her father and also when Mr. tried to rape Nettie. Is most evidenced in the general outline of the book. Celie who is the main character undergoes various stages of rape in her life. As a young child, her father rapes and at the same time threatens her. Also Mr. Who is Celie's husband carries out rape thinking that its love making, he doesn't consider Celie feelings, even though she is not in the right mood. (This is shown in page 81, " he did not consider Celie's bandage on her lead during intercourse".) When Squeak discovers the warden is her Uncle and on approaching for assistance, so that they can free Sofia. She ends up being raped in order for Sofia's release. This is also experienced when Mr. tried an attempt to rape Nettie.

Oppression and brutality is a dominant theme in this novel. Celie's father exhibits brutality by raping her daughter. Brutality of his father is also exercised when Celie's two children are taken from her by Fonso and sold in the market, soon after giving birth which makes her think that they are dead. Mr. also indicates brutality by beating up Celie, frequently and also forcing her to have sex. Both white men and black men practice brutality since they take advantage of defenseless black women. Sofia also faces oppression and brutality, when she declined taking up the job that the mayor had offered, she is beaten up and imprisoned and put as a slave in the house hold. Celie

has shown an element of jealousy and brutality. This is when Harpo who is Mr.'s son gets married to Sofia and Sofia starts becoming a thorn in his flesh and Celie advises him to beat her up. Nettie also experiences brutality when she is thrown out of Mr.'s house only because he refused to be seduced by him.

Troubled relationship experience infidelity in the novel. It shows how men were not faithful and committed to their relationships; one can see that Mr. beats his wife Celie which directly shows that the relationship between them is not doing well. Marriages in this novel are brought out as institutions of oppression, mistrust and infidelity. Mr. beats Celie up and has also infidelity issues. Harpo's marriage experiences infidelity, this can be seen when Sofia left Harpo, Harpo gets married to Squeak, even though Sofia has a few children, Harpo lets her go. Sofia is also involved in cheating on Harpo because when she returns back home, she has six children instead of five meaning the sixth child is not Harpo's child. Mr. who is Celie's husband clearly shows lack moral and infidelity, when she seduces Nettie who is Celie's sister.

Values of *The Color Purple* explain and show how Celie was motivated and inspired by Nettie and Shug Avery's and lifestyle. This tackles and challenges the sense of thinking of readers pushing and making them curious to know the chemistry on how Nettie and Shug Avery inspired Celie to change her style of living, to become a successful woman.

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