

Similarities in cold mountain, the odyssey, and the color purple

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Similarities in Cold Mountain, The Odyssey and The Color Purple Cold Mountain and The Odyssey share many aspects of their plot. Both novels dominantly contain the theme of "The Journey." The adventure contained in the theme "The Journey," represents the journey of life and all that happens on life's voyage metaphorically. Cold Mountain and The Odyssey both exemplify said metaphor. Many characters in both Cold Mountain and The Odyssey share many traits with characters in Alice Walker's The Color Purple. The author of Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier, was born on November 4, 1950 in Asheville, North Carolina.

Frazier attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in hopes his aspiration of teaching literature would come true. Frazier accepted a teaching job at the University of Colorado after he achieved his Ph. D. Frazier and his wife returned to North Carolina in 1986, when Frazier accepted a job teaching at North Carolina State University. Frazier's first fictional piece of literature, "Licit Pursius," was published by Kansas Quarterly in 1987.

Frazier used his home of the Appalachian mountains as the setting for both "Licit Pursius" and Cold Mountain.

Cold Mountain was Frazier's first novel and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1997 (Werlock). Frazier researched the Civil War and North Carolina for around seven years before he began writing Cold Mountain (Contemporary Literary Criticism Select, "Cold Mountain"). According to Karen C. Holt, "Frazier's research took him to a Smokey Mountain valley. At Caldwell Fork, he found the single grave of two civilians killed by Federals. A similar grave near Mt. Sterling, a few miles away, was where a fiddler and a retarded boy, killed by Teague's home guard, shared one coffin.

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The two stories of murder and shared graves exhumed by Frazier's research—the Shelton Laurel Massacre and the Grooms brothers' executions—frame the historical context of *Cold Mountain*. " *Cold Mountain* has baffled critics for years as to which genre of writing to it would classify. " Critics have called it a Civil War novel, a historical novel, a tragedy, a love story, a picaresque, an epic, and a post-pastoral novel," (Gibson). Frazier used his father's story of his great uncle deserting the Confederate Army as the inspiration for *Cold Mountain*; *Cold Mountain* first emerged in 1997 (Napierkowski " *Cold Mountain*," 25).

While on the front lines of the Confederate Army, Inman, the main character of *Cold Mountain*, sustains a wound to his neck. *Cold Mountain* opens with Inman in a hospital for soldiers. However, the movie opens with Ada, a young woman from Charleston, and her father, Monroe, newly to be a preacher of the local church, on a carriage in pursuit of their new home in *Cold Mountain*, North Carolina. *Cold Mountain* and *The Odyssey* not only share the theme of " The Journey. " The main character of each novel, Inman in *Cold Mountain* and Odysseus in *The Odyssey*, share many like traits. " John C.

Inscoe regards Inman, the novel's co-protagonist, as an ' Appalachian Odysseus,'" (Piacento). For example, both men must leave their loved ones at home. Odysseus leaves his wife, Penelope and is gone for 20 years (Spires 323). Odysseus becomes entrapped on Calypso's island for 10 of those twenty years. Inman must leave Ada, just as they begin to have feelings for one another. Although Inman returns to Ada more quickly than Odysseus does to Penelope, Ada only gets one day with Inman before Birch kills him

(Napierkowski "Cold Mountain"). Both men also use deceit in order to return to their loved ones.

For example, Odysseus must hide his identity. Odysseus hiding his identity acts a crucial part of the epic (Van Doren). Inman must desert the Confederate Army in order to return home to Ada. Inman is aware that Teague and the Home Guard prowl for any deserter and anyone who helps a deserter. Wendy Perkins states, "When Inman decides to desert the Confederate Army and walk back to Ada and his home on Cold Mountain, he faces serious impediments to his safety, almost as grave as those he encountered on the Civil War battlefield." Although Odysseus is gone for 20 years, his wife still recognizes him as "The Wanderer" (Steiner).

According to Peter V. Jones, Argus, Eurycleia, and Laertes also recognize Odysseus. Although the men contain similar qualities, they do differ. For instance, Inman considered himself to be a particularly peaceful man (Napierkowski "Cold Mountain"). Odysseus often finds himself in tight situations and must find his way out by using wit (Napierkowski "The Odyssey," 313). Napierkowski also states, "In The Odyssey, however, we are given an opportunity to see Odysseus at the center of the stage, doing what he does best—getting out of difficult situations as easily as he gets into them..." These two characters share many like qualities. Like Odysseus and Inman, Ada from Cold Mountain and Celie from The Color Purple also share many traits. For example, at the beginning of the novels, each woman begins at their lowest point.

Although Ada's situation is bad, it does not compare to Celie's. *The Color Purple* opens with Celie being raped by her stepfather. As each novel progresses, both women find companionship through another strong, independent woman: Ada finds Ruby and Celie finds Shug Avery. Celie becomes liberated from her oppression because of Shug's intervention on her behalf," (Napierkowski " *The Color Purple*" 52). Celie becomes a stronger person because of Shug. After Monroe, Ada's father dies, she finds herself left at Black Cove without the slightest idea of how to run anything on the farm. Ruby finds Ada and teaches her how to do everything associated with the farm. Both women grow with the help of someone else. However, although Ada and Celie have similar traits, they do differentiate in certain ways.

For example, by the middle of *Cold Mountain*, Ada is still waiting on Inman; in a sense, he is her reason for living. Emily McDermott quotes page 325 of *Cold Mountain* , "' You don't need him,' Ruby said. ' I know I don't need him,' Ada said. ' But I think I want him. ' ' Well that's a different thing. '" In contrast, by the middle of *The Color Purple*, Celie despises men; she has moved out of Mr. _____'s house and moved in with Shug. The *Encyclopedia of World Biography* states, " Celie learns to lift herself up from sexual exploitation and brutality with the help of the love of another woman. By the end of each novel both women are more independent. Celie sustains financial stability by making pants, which Shug encouraged her to do. She now feels as though she belongs (Averbach). By the end of *Cold Mountain*, Ada has also become more independent. She had Inman's child and takes care of her. Ada not only can now tend to the farm and all the animals on it,

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she also can cook. Both Ada and Celie exemplify being defined by situations that may happen and making them a better person.