

The colour purple theme



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The title of the book is a very important symbol. Celie goes through life having a hard time noticing the beautiful aspects and appreciating them. She had a difficult life and was abused as an adolescent. " The color purple is continually equated with suffering and pain. Sofia's swollen, beaten face is described as the color of 'eggplant'. Purple is the color of Celie's private parts: the site of her sexual violation. However, later Shug points out to her that life must be enjoyed. When they were in a field of purple flowers, Shug tells Celie to look at the flowers and embrace their beauty. You must look at all the good and acknowledge them because God placed them all on earth". After learning this, Celie has a better respect for life and everything it has to offer. Themes, Motifs & Symbols Themes Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. The Power of Narrative and Voice Walker emphasizes throughout the novel that the ability to express one's thoughts and feelings is crucial to developing a sense of self. Initially, Celie is completely unable to resist those who abuse her.

Remembering Alphonso's warning that she " better not never tell nobody but God" about his abuse of her, Celie feels that the only way to persevere is to remain silent and invisible. Celie is essentially an object, an entirely passive party who has no power to assert herself through action or words. Her letters to God, in which she begins to pour out her story, become her only outlet. However, because she is so unaccustomed to articulating her experience, her narrative is initially muddled despite her best efforts at transparency. In Shug and Sofia, Celie finds sympathetic ears and learns lessons that enable her to find her voice.

In renaming Celie a “ virgin,” Shug shows Celie that she can create her own narrative, a new interpretation of herself and her history that counters the interpretations forced upon her. Gradually Celie begins to flesh out more of her story by telling it to Shug. However, it is not until Celie and Shug discover Nettie’s letters that Celie finally has enough knowledge of herself to form her own powerful narrative. Celie’s forceful assertion of this newfound power, her cursing of Mr. _____ for his years of abuse, is the novel’s climax. Celie’s story dumbfounds and eventually humbles Mr. _____, causing him to reassess and change his own life. Though Walker clearly wishes to emphasize the power of narrative and speech to assert selfhood and resist oppression, the novel acknowledges that such resistance can be risky. Sofia’s forceful outburst in response to Miss Millie’s invitation to be her maid costs her twelve years of her life. Sofia regains her freedom eventually, so she is not totally defeated, but she pays a high price for her words. The Power of Strong Female Relationships Throughout The Color Purple, Walker portrays female friendships as a means for women to summon the courage to tell stories.

In turn, these stories allow women to resist oppression and dominance. Relationships among women form a refuge, providing reciprocal love in a world filled with maleviolence. Female ties take many forms: some are motherly or sisterly, some are in the form of mentor and pupil, some are sexual, and some are simply friendships. Sofia claims that her ability to fight comes from her strong relationships with her sisters. Nettie’s relationship with Celie anchors her through years of living in the unfamiliarcultureof

Africa. Samuel notes that the strong relationships among Olinka women are the only thing that makes polygamy bearable for them.

Most important, Celie's ties to Shug bring about Celie's gradual redemption and her attainment of a sense of self. The Cyclical Nature of Racism and Sexism Almost none of the abusers in Walker's novel are stereotypical, one-dimensional monsters whom we can dismiss as purely evil. Those who perpetuate violence are themselves victims, often of sexism, racism, or paternalism. Harpo, for example, beats Sofia only after his father implies that Sofia's resistance makes Harpo less of a man. Mr. _____ is violent and mistreats his family much like his own tyrantlike father treated him.

Celie advises Harpo to beat Sofia because she is jealous of Sofia's strength and assertiveness. The characters are largely aware of the cyclical nature of harmful behavior. For instance, Sofia tells Eleanor Jane that societal influence makes it almost inevitable that her baby boy will grow up to be a racist. Only by forcefully talking back to the men who abuse them and showing them a new way of doing things do the women of the novel break these cycles of sexism and violence, causing the men who abused them to stop and reexamine their ways. The Disruption of Traditional Gender Roles

Many characters in the novel break the boundaries of traditional male or female gender roles. Sofia's strength and sass, Shug's sexual assertiveness, and Harpo's insecurity are major examples of such disparity between a character's gender and the traits he or she displays. This blurring of gender traits and roles sometimes involves sexual ambiguity, as we see in the sexual relationship that develops between Celie and Shug. Disruption of

gender roles sometimes causes problems. Harpo's insecurity about his masculinity leads to marital problems and his attempts to beat Sofia.

Likewise, Shug's confident sexuality and resistance to male domination cause her to be labeled a tramp. Throughout the novel, Walker wishes to emphasize that gender and sexuality are not as simple as we may believe. Her novel subverts and defies the traditional ways in which we understand women to be women and men to be men. Motifs Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes. Letters Walker uses the novel's epistolary (letter-writing) form to emphasize the power of communication. Celie writes letters to God, and Nettie writes letters to Celie.

Both sisters gain strength from their letter writing, but they are saved only when they receive responses to their letters. Therefore, although writing letters enables self-expression and confession, it requires a willing audience. When Celie never responds to Nettie's letters, Nettie feels lost because Celie is her only audience. Nettie grows disillusioned with her missionary work because the imperialists will not listen to her and because the Olinka villagers are stubborn. Only after Nettie returns home to Celie, an audience guaranteed to listen, does she feel fulfilled and freed.

The Rural Farm Community Walker sets most of her novel in a rural farm community that has few visitors, and she focuses on colorful portraits of each of her characters. By focusing on the personal lives and transformations of her characters, Walker renders public events almost irrelevant. When Shug and Celie hear news of current events from the outside world, it all just sounds "crazy" to them. The unspecific time and

place broaden the novel's scope, making its themes more universal. Colors Throughout the novel, the appearance of brighter colors indicates the liberation various characters experience.

Walker uses color to signal renewals and rebirths at several points in the novel. When Kate takes Celie shopping for a new dress, the only color options are drab ones—brown, maroon, and dark blue. Later, Celie and Sofia use bright yellow fabric from Shug's dress to make a quilt. When Celie describes her religious awakening, she marvels how she never noticed the wonders that God has made, such as "the color purple." Upon Mr. _____'s transformation, he paints the entire interior of his house "fresh and white," signaling his new beginning. Symbols Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Sewing and Quilts In general, sewing in *The Color Purple* symbolizes the power women can gain from productively channeling their creative energy. After Sofia and Celie argue about the advice Celie has given Harpo, Sofia signals a truce by suggesting they make a quilt. The quilt, composed of diverse patterns sewn together, symbolizes diverse people coming together in unity. Like a patchwork quilt, the community of love that surrounds Celie at the end of the novel incorporates men and women who are bonded by family and friendship, and who have different gender roles, sexual orientations, and talents.

Another important instance of sewing in the novel is Celie's pants-sewing business. With Shug's help, Celie overturns the idea that sewing is marginal and unimportant women's labor, and she turns it into a lucrative, empowering source of economic independence. God In the early parts of the

novel, Celie sees God as her listener and helping hand, yet Celie does not have a clear understanding of who God is. She knows deep down that her image of God as a white patriarch “ don’t seem quite right,” but she says it’s all she has.

Shug invites Celie to imagine God as something radically different, as an “ it” that delights in creation and just wants human beings to love what it has created. Eventually, Celie stops thinking of God as she stops thinking of the other men in her life—she “ git man off her eyeball” and tells God off, writing, “ You must be sleep. ” But after Celie has chased her patriarchal God away and come up with a new concept of God, she writes in her last letter, “ Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear Everything. Dear God. This reimagining of God on her own terms symbolizes Celie’s move from an object of someone else’s care to an independent woman. It also indicates that her voice is now sufficiently empowered to create her own narrative. < Previous Section Analysis of Major Characters beginning. The Color Purple: This color, the color of royalty, exemplifies the endless possibilities available to Celie and other black women if they stand up for their own rights. Rightdock: 1 year ago The book is entitled Color Purple because Purple symbolizes hope which is largely given importance in the story. It was written by Alice Walker and released in 1982.