

The color purple



The character chosen is Celie's stepdaughter-in-law, Sofia. Although a main character, she is often ignored or dismissed by many readers. Sofia is dismissed often due to her strength and stubbornness. When compared next to the main character, Celie, Sofia comes off as crude. However Sofia is one of the characters in *The Color Purple* that grows, but never really loses her core personality. She is strong. Sofia is the opposite of Celie's character. Celie has a soft outside, but an inner strength. Sofia has a harsh outside, but a compassionate inner side that emerges as the book progresses. Sofia did not conform to the gender expectations of the time. She worked in the field like a man, fought like a man, and would bow down to no one. When she got pregnant with Harpo's baby, she could have cared less if he married her or not. She was going to have her baby and take care of it herself. When Harpo tried to beat her into submission, Sofia fought back. Harpo showed up with bruises. Sofia ended up leaving Harpo for a prizefighter. She took the intuitive to leave him. During that time most women were dependent on a man, but not Sofia. She was a very strong black woman. Sofia also possessed pride. She was proud of her strength. Sofia did not feel the disadvantage of being black in Georgia. She did not see that white people or men were any better than her. When the mayor's wife asked her to be a maid, Sofia replied " hell, no" (Walker 2006: 85). She repeated it to the mayor's wife and the mayor. When the mayor hit her, she punched him back. As a result, Sofia was beaten badly. She even lost sight in one eye. After serving time in jail, Sofia had to work for the white woman in the end. After all her troubles, Sofia seemed to bond with her white employer. She actually cared about the children and the whole family. At first it seemed like she was broken forever, but hints of her old self came back. For example, when Celie was telling Mr.

she was going up North. Sofia supported her. She laughed in Harpo's face. When he made a comment about her being the mother of his six kids, she corrected him and told him he only had five children with her. Although Sofia was strong throughout her life, she also showed compassion latter on. When Squeak decided to go up North, she promised to watch her and Harpo's little girl. It did not matter that Squeak had moved in with her husband. Going to comfort Miss Eleanor's family after tragedy was another example. Sofia learned to have compassion for her fellow women, black and white. This was captured better in the book than in the movie. The movie just showed a broken down Sofia with a little spark at the end. This was a disservice to the whole Sofie character. This exercise impacted me personally. Sometimes when black and white issues are examined other issues are pushed aside. The gender issue is one of these issues. Black women also suffered from a patriarchal system, just like white women. Sometimes the white dominating over black issue overshadows this. Men can be cruel to women. Celie's problems were caused by black men. She suffered from the Tom Crow laws, but black men really traumatized her. These issues are covered up to focus on the given agenda. Slavery and racism are wrong. However incest, domestic violence, cheating spouses, and child abuse are wrong too. Alice Walker shines a light on these issues to show that blacks are humans too. There are good and bad people, whether black or white. Walker also shows in this novel that people can change. Celie's father never did, but Mr. did. In the end they were friends. Harpo and Sofia were friends in the end. People are humans and can change.

Bibliography The Color Purple. Pref. Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, Oprah Winfrey, and Margret Avery. Dir. Stephen

Spielberg. Warner Bros, 1997. Walker, A. (2006). *The Color Purple*. New York: Mariner.