

An ExamThe dynamics of power and desire: gender and sexuality of Alice Walker The color purple

R Gulnaash¹,K . Shakila ^{1*}

Abstract

The Color Purple by Alice Walker is a fascinating novel that speaks about the complex themes of gender and sexuality .The novel was written in early 20th century south and tell the story of Celie who is a young 14 years girl ,ugly ,black African girl .Who faced various hardships from her childhood and at last found empowerment and self – discovery .The aim of this novel is to explore the representation of gender& sexuality focusing in the themes of domestic violence , sexual abuse and about the lesbian relationship .This novel highlights the struggles focused by women of color in a patriarchal society . Ultimately, this novel aims to contribute to the understanding of how the color purple address crucial issues of gender and sexuality, through is thought provoking themes .

Keywords

Alice Walker ,The color purple , god ,violence , suffering , gender roles , abuse , feminism and sisterhood

¹ PG & Research Department of English, Jamal Mohamed College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli – 620020

Alice Malsenior Tallulah – Kate walker (Pen name is Rebecca Walker).Alice Walker was born 9th February 1944. Alice Walker know for her impactful novel. Her First novel “Once” was published in 1983.She was the first to became an African American woman to win prize for fiction in 1982.Sev-enteen novel and short story collections published by him . Her was a American novelist and social activist etc . . . Twelve non – fiction and essay collection by him.

The Color purple several meaning symbolizes royalty, power and spirituality. Story related to full spectrum of human experience .Different people have different experience like hardship and success , happiness and sadness .Emotion and suffering and pain and joy & happiness . Purple refer to complexities and richness of life , particularly for the main character Celie happiness behind enduring so much pain .In this novel Celie project husband is Mr..

The novel color purple is based on a girl named Celie who writes letter to god about the struggles faced by her. Celie was a young 14 year ugly rural Georgian and she lived with her violent father , sick mother and beautiful younger sister Nettie.She was tortured by her father from her childhood. He used to rape her, beat her and even made her impregnant once. He made celie pregnant and tookaway the kids each time. Celie mother died and after that Celie’s father bring home his new girlfriend but even after that he didn’t stop disturbing Celie .Celie felt uncomfortable with her father during her childhood.Her father didn’t support or stand by Celie side.

Mr.wants to marry Netti but Alphonso (Celie’s father) didn’t approve that and he told Mr. to marry Celie because she is the only who is ugly. Mr. also married to Celie but they both didn’t lead a happy life . Celie was not happy even after her marriage .Nettie ran out from her father’s house and lived with Celie because her father starts to abuse Nettie also.

When Nettie lives in Celie’s house Mr. starts approaching Nettie in a wrong manner because of his desire by using his power. Then Nettie again ran out from celie’s house and told to celie that she will update her thought letter .

Then Mr. has a girlfriend her name is Shug Avery. One day Shug became ill and Mr. brough her home. First and all Shug was being rude to Celie but later they came closefriends because of Celie is the one who takes care of Shug . The relationship between Celie and Shug became intimate but Celie is not sure about her feelings. Shug realizes that when she is not home Mr. was abusing Celie so, Shug decided to stay with Celie. Her author tell about lesbian relationship.

Mr.’s son falls in love with a girl Sofia. Sofia became pregnant and married Harpo who is Mr’s son . when Sofia came home after marriage Celie was amused by Sofia ‘s defendance. Each time when Harpo tries to slap or harras Sofia she fails . Author shows how Sofia handle male domination . One day Sofia was called by mayor’s wife and she asked Sofia to be her made but Sofia replayed with a swag”Hell no”. Mayor’s wife slapped Sofia for her savage slang but Sofia return’s the same to mayor’s wife and knock out her. For that Sofia was arrested and she was in jail even if she return Sofia had work for that mayor’s wife as a maid for 12 years but squeak take Sofia out before 6 months.

Shug gets married to another man but still Shug and Celie share the bed often. By getting tired of Harpo’s torture Sofia went out from the house with her children . Harpo has a new girlfriend squeak . When Sofia returns to visit Harpo she saw Squeak and fought with her , after few months Harpo starts a juke joint .Celie assumed that Nettie was died because there was no letter or emails from her . But Shug told Celie that she saw many mysterious emails that is in Mr.’s email .When Celie and Shug checked Mr.’s trunk they found not

that there years .Celie starts read the email in order in that nettie informed that when she ran out from the house she meet one missionary couple with whom she did ministry work and she became close with the Nettie.

Nettie told that she learnt something that there is the couple with whom she was living the couple are Samuel and Corrine and they have adopted 2 kids they are Olivia and Adam. The biological mother of the kids were Celie and their father Alphonso was not their real father humans their step father . After reading this Celie went to meet Alphonso and he confirmed that whatever Nettie said was true. Corrine notice that her adopted kids and Nettie are little similar. So she doubted whether Nettie and Samuel have any past together and decided to keep Nettie in her limits , not to allow her to be close with her family . Nettie told Samuel to tell how he adopted the kids to Corrine. Corrine falls ill and she was not ready to accept what Nettie was saying she keeps on doubted them . Just before Corrine death only Corrine believed that whatever Nettie said are true and she also died .

In one family dinner Celie decides to pour out her feelings whatever she dumped inside her all these year and she cursed Mr. and left from there with Shug and Squeak and Tennessee. Their celie starts to design and stitching sheturned her hobbied into her business . Here author show how Celie overcome the male dominates all over these years . Gender is not barrier for women to be successful . After many years Celie returns to Georgia and she came to know that Alphonso died, and she was his child so all his properties are now hers . So, she came back to her house and she found that Mr. refound his way . She starts her business there and Shug also not bothering Celie.

Now Mr. and Celie genuinely starts to enjoy each other company Sofia and Harpo become together again and lead their life . People learns and change . Nettie married to Samuel and she moved to America with her family . Before moving her son Adam falls in love with a native girl named Tashi and married to her and they all moved to America . After many years of emotionally drenched now Nettie and Celie become old but celie realizes that they never had been young because since their childhood they had faced lots of struggles and abuse . If Celie defended herself at first itself then it would not come this far.

Nothing is so unprotected that it cannot be liberated . Self – realization of Celie: Celie overcome oppression and abuse to achieve fulfillment and independence . The survival of black women in a male – dominated society .

Racism : Celie believes herself to have been ugly in the past because she has dark skin. Women’s are facing suffering from men.

[2] Foca, A. (2024, April 10). The Color Purple. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Color-Purple>

[3] Book Summary. (n.d.). <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/c/the-color-purple/book-summary>

References

- [1] DLaGrone, K. (2009, January 1). Alice Walker’s The Color Purple. Rodopi.