

The elements of women's persecution and dissent in Alice Walker's: The Color Purple

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary Afro-American women examines not the stereotyped roles Assigned to women in the society, yet a few significant problems experienced by the female protagonist with their father, sibling, lover, spouse, sister, society and culture at crucial points in time. The quest for cell definition is stressed the experience of people of color from that point a view is projected with all its power, variety and intricacy. howsoever disputable, there are ready to dig into their horrifying past revise and change their current hardships into a significant presence and try for self-entertainment. Their Battle against sexist and racist mistreatment is full of the desire of sharing power and commending the qualities and trusts Uniquely characteristic of women.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Women writers have “an imaginative Continuum,” says Showalter and accordingly, “there is the recurrence of certain patterns common themes , problems and images Generation to generation”. (Showalter 11). The feminist critic has been a leading to the themes and images of a particular tradition and culture. But one is amazed to recognize the common concern of women writers or over the world. The fundamental reason behind this unified disquietude the knowledge women forever and everywhere are marginalized by the patriarchal prejudices. against this long lasting victimization, the creative female consciousness has set out to enquire into the legitimacy of racial and sexual discrimination and class segregation practiced by the Male judgement. In the androcentric culture ideas of womanhood firmly entrenched in society and by masculine attitudes, have held women responsibility for all sufferings. She is also considered inferior to men as she is said to be motivated only by “erotic longings” (Freud 48).

With the revolt of people of color journalists since 1960s artistic investigations of race and orientation have recorded eagerly the variety of women's voices recently avoided or hushed Afro American authors have partaken in the battle more overwhelmingly than others since they have thought of themselves as supported in the "triple operation": as blacks in white supremacist society, as women in a patriarchy , and as workers under capitalism” (Ruthven, quoted in

Leitech,310). With assurance they have imparted the practices of their local area and furthermore have partaken in the new modalities of social pluralism.

Black women writers have unequivocally Stated their intentions of writing. Frances Harper in *Lola Le Roy* (1892) headset out to establish the positive image of black women. the process of empowering black women can no longer be halted and it is realized through and emphasis on the community and the black culture but in the seventies black women writers change their stance and project in the black community as a force of a nation that bring about all the tragedy(the bluest eye, the third life of grange Copeland). By the mid-70s once again the wind of change is perceptible. Women can no longer be isolated and thrust outside her community she may willingly depart or remain inside Revolting against the operation and redefining herself. Thus, pictures of women's victimization are followed by the language of protest women writers have Realized that for them silence is seldom golden. if they do not record their subjective experiences other word and do it badly. Alice Walker's women in 'The Colour Purple from being the 'mule' of the world emerge as Rider with the Reins in their hands.

The very conclusively overcome the crippling circumstances and their lives.

The conventional image are demolished and new concepts of womanhood are established Their physical and psychological operations and muted expressions are recorder the problem with body language a woman is not smothered But included insistingly; lesbianism Accepted as a strengthening force not to be disparaged ;The challenges of the new consciousness are accepted within alien in short walker "DE maximizes" (miller, ed. Showalter 341). Her women characters and motivates them to handle their problems.

Her intentions are well reflected in her Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Colour purple* 1982 it spans the life of the black protagonist Celie and mirrors her experience is collected through the difficult process of self-encounter. The inter mingling of the American history with the African culture heritage is credibility and authentically brought out through her sister Nettie's Story. Walker presents an account of Celie degeneration and regeneration through the epistolary Method the conventional favorites mode of women's expression this also happens to be the central technique of the other two novels the third life of grange Copeland and meridian. With the use of this method Walker conveniently mingles and shuffles the subjective and the objective points of view.

Cilie's account of physical and psychological exploitation and her last victory over the Dynamics of oppression is uncovered through her sensitive letters. In the entirety of her book's walker supports that the inspiration to Battle against the cultural activity and a compartment libation ought to come from inside however the salvage activity might be vitalized by others inside the ethnic gathering Cilie's survivor in the determinative society is connected with the issues of Nettie, Shug, Sofia and others. The social and racial subjection by the whites is principally insight by Sofia and Nettie ; Others fortunately stay solid by its marking. it arrives at Shug and Celie Step daughter in – law it ends up being a deteriorating bad dream. the threatening a showdown between the blacks and the white men and females isn't just unique yet additionally indicative of individuals of color's endurance sense.

The novel opens with Celie's first letter to God. The reader is horrified with contents. She recoils from revealing her extremely degrading experiences to others. She craves for impersonal distancing anonymity and thus She writes to God; "Dear God I am fourteen years old I have always been a good girl" (Walker 1982:1). The cancellation of the word "I am" clearly demonstrates that She no longer considers herself to be 'good'. Ironically though the victor being raped by her stepfather yet it is she who has been defiled. The androcentric culture refuses to admit it's crime. It is the woman who is content as unchaste and immoral. This is a form of oppression that is practiced by the male dominated society. Celie's so called loss of virtue vitiates her mind with 'interiorization'. She would never enjoy the pleasure of normal sex life. Her mother screams at her and 'cuss' (curses) her. She cries and is physically hurt by the sexual violence committed by her 'pa'. He 'choke' her and say "You better shut up and git Used to it"(ibidem:2). Her pathetic words are "I don't never git used to it."(ibidem 2). Her trauma is aggravated when her two children born out of the sexual violence are forcefully removed from her breasts overflow with milk but she has none to feed. She is ordered by the callous father to look decent and miserable answer is, " what I am supposed to put on? I don't have nothing" (ibidem:4) Her rural idiomatic language clearly voice and her pain physical oppression, emotional distress and impoverishment. One comes to realize that sexist abuse of black women is not an up- shoot of racist philosophy only the disease is rooted in the patriarchal society. Celie Because his left has been satisfied and also because like a mother figure she persistently protects Nettie, her younger sister from his illicit advances. She is handed over to a video with four children who inspect serve as a protective buyer of animals. Her dehumanization and vulnerability as a woman is too obvious to be missed. The man Albert very reluctantly agrees to marry her because his help had deserted him, " he could do everything just like he want to"(ibidem9) With her; she was good with children she could work like a man and he could also take the cow that she had reared. She is bullied into Matrimony a typical Male gesture to demonstrate his Supremacy and authority. Treated worse than a slave by her step children and husband she is abused in all possible manner; she is beaten ,belted, humiliated, "cause she is my wife. plus she is stubborn all women good for-"(ibidem 23). No, one asks her, "How come you his wife?" (Ibidem:23). Celie's Questions compels The Reader to ponder over a woman's plight in society. Even though individual freedom is a fairy tale for Celie, yet she resists the inhuman treatment and oppression by becoming the 'mule' of the family: "This form of submission, humility, self- repression, resilience, is a form of revolt of into be observed in women." (Alder 13). The combination of the docility and stubbornness place Celie's mode of protest. Her husband, defeated by her inner strength that he can neither break nor destroy, torments her mercilessly.

Celie's quest for meaningful identity and self-exploitation begins with the first sexual exploitation. She asks God, "Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (Walker 1). Her Questioning mind widely battles with the Dynamics of all possible oppressions. She desists from following the method of vociferous protestations lodged by Shug and Sofia. When assaulted, she makes herself 'a wood'. Her dignified resignation, nonviolent dissent, unquestionable perseverance, enable her to establish finally her endangered identity.

Celie's relationship with Sofia, her step daughter-in-law, begins on a wrong footing. Psychologically and physically strong, Sofia, unknowingly reminds Celie that she 'jumps' every time her husband calls her "and like she pretty me [Celie]." Thus, torn by jealousy she advises

Harpo, her step-son, to beat her. But the next time when she finds “Harpo his face a mess of bruises”. (Ibidem:38). Her envy is transformed into admiration. She begins to appreciate Sofia’s strength and realizes is that Sofia can challenge Harpo and defeat him. Sofia’s victory satisfies have repressed desire and also minimizes the impact of the physical and psychological torture inflicted on her by her husband. They join hands as sisters and it is symbolically presented through the act of quilting. The image of quilt making as a symbol of sisterhood is central in Walker’s novels.

Celie’s psychological and physical humiliation continues unabated. Albert throws Nettie out of his house, and keeps her letters away from Celie for some twenty years just to punish the sisters and to make an Exhibition of his power. Celie exploitation touches the crest when her status in the family is jeopardized by the arrival of Shug Avery; the mistress of her husband. Shug is Celie’s traditional rival: beautiful, confident, glamorous and enticing; in short, everything that Celie, always wanted to be but could never be. Shug had destroyed Albert’s first wife, and again she joins the forces of oppression. Though ailing, she comes to annihilate Celie, psychologically and physically. Celie, is pressed into service like a bonded laborer by her ruthless husband. she cleans Shug’s filth and body with dignified silence and very soon falls in love with the arch- enemy. Shug, a heterosexual, responds with love and Celie begins to mend with the realization of being human, an individual. “Walker approaches the forbidden subject of incest and black lesbianism as something natural and liberating.” (Christian 1985: 94). Lesbianism is not ostracized, but is presented as a strengthening process for both.

For Celie, love acts as a defense mechanism and Shug finally surrenders before the woman whom she had come to conquer. Her appreciation of Celie’s non-violent struggle for self- identity is demonstrated through her participation in the quilt-making activity shared by Sofia and Celie. The design of the quilt, suggestively known as the ‘sister’s choice,’ welds together the two women. Shug partially overcomes Celie’s sexiest oppression by asserting that she must accompany her to the nightclub. The husband disapproves because “wives don’t go to places like that” (walker 1982:76). Walker pointedly refers to the dual standards of morality practiced in society and suggests means of conquering it through the concept of sisterhood, the savior of black women. Celie is given an opportunity to savor and build from this experience. Shug, again, boosts up her confidence by dedicating a song to Celie and surprise reaction is, “First time somebody made something and name it for me” (ibidem :77).

Celie, the throwaway, while waging a brave battle against the oppressive forces of society, realizes that her husband would never permit her to wear a red or purple dress because it would make her happy(walker 1982: 22). She observes from a vantage point this conscious manipulation to keep her impoverished emotionally and physically. Much later, when she overcomes such crippling maneuverings and attain sovereignty, she decorates her room with the royal purple color. Her action proclaims right to be happy. This is the shape her protest takes: silent, dignified but effective. Celie liberates herself through to the support of black sisters and reciprocate by lending her strength to other needy women. She nurses Shug back to health, loves her when men spit at her, protects Nettie from the lecherous advances offer step-father, advises Sofia not to take Harpo’s beatings quietly, and also helps her to overcome the emotional shocks of racial discrimination. Celie learns to stitch

pants, wear them, and thus symbolically reclaims the lost identity, individuality and power. Despite her lack of education, the rejuvenation, begins slowly but definitely. Increasingly, her self-awareness propels her towards the search of personal liberty and finally she hoists the flag of revolt by severing the destructive relationship with her husband. The humiliating remarks of men she refuses to digest and strikes back, "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here". (Ibidem: 24). With this statement, she moves beyond the reach of all oppressions perpetrated by patriarchy. Her victory over her husband, the symbol of male hegemony, is complete when he requests to remarry him. She refuses but accepts him as a friend. The novel closes with the complete reversal of circumstances: We find Albert learning to stitch under Celie's supervision. Her marginal existence changes into a central one.

It is interesting to note that Celie's relationship with God also changes radically as she moves towards self-actualization. She begins with being completely dependent on him like the stereotype black women characters. She would not be buried alive as "long as I can spell G-o-d".(ibidem:18). This blind reliance and faith fades and soon she becomes critical as her confidence grows. To Nettie she writes, " The God I have been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other men. I know. Trifling forgetful and lowdown" (ibidem: 199). It is Shug who enlightens her, "God ain't a he or a she, but a it" (ibidem: 202). If God looks old tall, grey bearded and white , it is because the white folks white Bible" (ibidem 201). Have taught them so. One cannot but agree with Shug that the Christian God has become a white man merely to impose the concept of white Supremacy over black people. She is right when she comments, "God is inside you and everybody else"(ibidem: 202). The realization of this highly philosophical idea in Shug and Celie is a sign of their development from ignorance to knowledge. Walker makes it clear that the prevalent concept of God and religion are popularized because of the sexist and the racist politics. Shug had overcome these constricting Influencers long back and now she initiates Celie into its mysteries. It is not that Celie and Shug's world is godless. The fact becomes amply clear through Celie's last letter addressed to "Dear God, Dear stars, Dear trees. Dear Sky Dear peoples. Dear everything, Dear God" (ibidem: 292). It is quite evident now that she can no longer be deceived by the religious dogmatism preached and practiced by the androcentric culture. Her god is all- pervasive and immanent in creation.

Nettie, Celie's sister, who is chiefly exposed to racial discrimination has a taste of Gender and sexual exploitation also. There 'pa' and Celie's husband, the primitive, sensual prototype of black men, obsessed by their virility, attempt to oppress her sexually, but it is thwarted by her and Celie's efforts. To liberate herself from this oppressive situation, " All day she read, she studies, she practices her handwriting and try to git us to think"(Ibidem:17). Nettie, being educated , is not restricted by space . She accompanies black missionary team to Africa and has a better opportunity of interacting with her own people her expectations are shaken when she finds that men all over the world are just the same she is ostracized and considered an 'outcast' an object of 'pity and contempt' because she neither has a father nor an uncle nor a husband to protect her. (Ibidem:167). She recounts in her letters how black men four wives, treat them as their slaves prevent girls from being educated because "a girl is nothing to herself only to her husband can she become something". (Ibidem:162). The institution of motherhood is eulogized on the assumption That women self-sacrifice to self-realization. these experiences disillusioned her but she is really

shocked to have the first taste of racial discrimination. Her white bishop in England accuses her of having an illicit relationship with the head of the missionary team Mr. Samuel, because he had lost his wife. The body shop is more concerned about appearances than the grievances of the Olenka people. Nettie rightly wonders if the same humiliation would have been meted out to a white missionary woman. She feels quite powerless in the male dominated white culture. But she can no longer be intermediated or crushed. She records protest through the striving for self-betterment and the betterment of our own people.

Through Sofia, Walker scrutinizes the dangerous implications of racist and classist oppression. The strong-willed and built Sofia is a victim of gender and sexual oppression. In the beginning, Harpo, her husband, wishes to have a docile wife and thus beats her to tame her. She retaliates by giving him 'a black eye'. Soon, it is she who is wearing the pants in the family. Her husband's desire to prove his sexual supremacy is defeated through ages only botheration and nothing more. The real damage to her indomitable spirit is brought about by racial oppression. Punished for insulting a white couple and forced to work as a maid in the same family, she is separated from her children for twelve long years. This turns the vibrant Sofia into stone. Walker presents the confrontation with the white culture through an emblem and not through definite characters, but it continues till the end. Eleanor, the white Master's daughter, brings her son to Sofia with the hope that she would love him, but her unequivocal answer is, "I don't love Reynold.... He can't even walk and already he is in my house messing it up" (ibidem: 271).

Her strong protest against racial and sexual exploitation is symbolically articulated through dismemberment of all relations with the white society. Her non-conformity with the established culture is registered definitely.

Shug Avery, radically different from other female characters, is introduced into the society as a force of oppression. Independent and unconventional she wears 'red pants' and 'sings in night clubs'. She has enough confidence to ignore society ostracism and resurrect her damaged reputation. Shug had come to destroy Celie but Celie's silent determination to find the gender and sexual exploitation compels her to change her attitude. She is the one who gives Celie courage to rebuild herself. She also teaches her to stitch and wear pants and become financially independent. Shug can have a deep emotional physical relationship with a man of her age or half her age or women and emerge enriched by the experience. In the presence of forceful Shug, oppression and sexual exploitation are empty words. Through this emancipated woman, Walker emphasizes that black women must assume ultimate responsibility for their behavior if they wish to overcome social, racial, sexual oppression.

The novel, 'The Colour Purple', indubitably, reveals the dark dynamics of oppression practiced by men against women, but it also suggests the ways and means two women to articulate their protests to activate the liberating process. Shug ignores the concept of oppression altogether; 'Celie rises from ashes'; Sofia wages a never-ending battle against racism and finally can see the light at the end of the tunnel; Nettie overcomes white and black male dominance through sheer grit and self-education. Mary Agnes throws off the chains of oppression by becoming financially independent. The Liberty of these women is realized through covert and overt protests. They recreate themselves

by their individual and combined efforts. The multi- hued quilt of Alice Walker epitomizes women's power. the striving towards wholeness stalls and stops the Dynamics of exploitation and oppression. Celie leaves the March of revolt true silence, resilience, determination and the final result, through inconsequential is favorable. Walker, through the trials and tribulations of some black girls, narrate the story of their community and emphatically drives home women's protests against sexism, gender discrimination and racism.

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