# A Black Woman’s Struggle In Color Purple By Alice Walker

In the novel, Walker deals with the powerful, expressive fiction about a black woman’s struggle for survival, wholeness, and sexual, political, and racial equality. Alice Walker’s works, similarly, are closely related to issues of race and gender and self-exploration, she says that because of their double identity, black women are the victims of both racism and sexism. The Color Purple focuses on female black life in the 1930s in the Southern United States, addressing numerous issues including their exceedingly low position in the American social culture. Walker’s works on black women’s lives and survival mentalities in the Old South, as well as the complicated social network of oppression they encounter. Blacks in white American society were considered as mere objects; slaves, and afterwards, it took a long time for them to be considered as equals. Walker insists the significance of bonds between women as a means to contend with acism and sexism. The Color Purple is a novel of celebration of black women who fight to escape from some forced factors of identities that drive them along paths they have not chosen and the title of the novel signifies, ‘a celebration of the beauty, the pleasure of living and how that celebration is at the centre of spiritual and personal growth The novel presents the unfair treatment that blacks received by the whites in the South after the Civil War. Sofia is able to escape gender discrimination by leaving her house and her husband, but she is unable to fight against racial cruelty which is a more systematic evil force. Alice Walker’s novels explore racism which seeks to reduce black passivity and submission. The abuse of black women on account of their physical appearance is the most common and dangerous form of racism.

Alice Walker’s novels explore the obscenity of racism which seeks to reduce the black’s passivity and submission and destroy their capacity for resistance. Black women are abused on account of their physical appearance, and this forms the most common and dangerous form of race-based persecution. Black women’s physical image was denigrated and often made a target of the white man’s lust. Black women were the object of continuous exploitation and the ethnic violence against them is the patriarchal control of white superiority and black inferiority.

Nettie’s letters suggest that ‘the African male order is just like it’s American counterpart which denies the validity of expression’. Nettie’s letters say that in the African continent, gender oppression prevails and when she writes about the Olinkan belief that, ‘A girl child is nothing to herself, only to her husband she can become something’. A woman in black community should bear child abuse and rape because of her gender. She observes the sexist cultural practice of clitoridectomy and the letters expose the subjugated condition of women in Africa: ‘among the Olinkas, the husband has life and death powers over the wife, she can be killed’.

Walker feels the brutal nature of black men comes from their forefathers and the dominating nature of them is because of their socially defined sex role. She observes that men want to prove their manliness by beating their women and restricting them and in The Color Purple: ‘gender becomes a socially-imposed categorization’. But Albert’s change is genuine. Walker admits in “In the Closet of the Soul,” that she indeed loves Albert because he ‘went deeply enough into himself to find the courage to change, to grow.’ Celie and Albert cross over the gender roles and grow towards wholeness. They grow out of their culturally defined sex role. They become the mixture of the blend of both the male and female characteristics.

The blurring of gender roles sometimes involves sexual ambiguity, as in the sexual relationship that develops between Celie and Shug. Walker wishes to emphasize that gender and sexuality are not as simple as we may believe. The Color Purple subverts the traditional ways in which we understand women to be women and men to be men. In the novel, as we see, the assertion of what African-American femininity is compared to is the exploration of African-American male struggle with masculinity. The idea of femininity among African-American women is focused around the abilities of the husband to care and love for the wife and family. The normative roles by men are viewed as the source of oppressive behaviour and action by men. If the African American male is not fulfilling his role, it is unlikely for the African-American woman to fulfill her role of femininity because she is predicated on his abilities.

The Color Purple is more concerned with politics of sex and self than with the politics of class and race and serve attacks on male hegemony, especially the violent abuse of black women by black men, is offered as a revolutionary leap forward into a new social order based on sexual egalitarianism.

The Color Purple is a saga of the black woman's fight with racism and sexism to gain her identity. Walker says: 'black women among all women have been oppressed almost beyond recognition and oppressed by everyone'. Celie represents every woman who suffered from oppression and falls a victim to social tyrannies. These oppressions in Celie's life symbolize, 'the more or less subtle operations of patriarchal power in the lives of women everywhere'. The Color Purple helps the reader to realize what the members of the Black race have been put through in American history. Walker doesn't just describe the injustices against Blacks, but she forces us to become a member of an oppressed race as we struggle to hear the rhythm of Celie's mind moving.

In conclusion, the novel suggests the feeling of kinship and black identity that can bridge the gender differences and bring people together. Celie's children - Adam and Olivia return to America, to the South that reflects the continuity of generations. The novel starts on a pessimistic note and ends up optimistically: 'Beginning in the most abject misery, degradation and isolation, the work ends with joyous fulfillment and integration'. Walker presents her heroine trapped in the whole range of oppression and male domination. Celie struggles to create a self through language and she attempts to become free from the network of class, racial, sexual, gender ideologies to which she is subjected.