

**Solidarity and Idea of Writing-A Means to Achieve Female Freedom in Alice Walker's  
'The Colour Purple'**

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**Mahammad Azam <sup>1</sup>**

Research scholar

Department of English

Kakatiya University Warangal

**Malde Srisailam <sup>2</sup>**

Faculty of English

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**Abstract**

The fundamental objective of this research study is to ascertain the steps via which Celie, the protagonist of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, achieves liberation. Celie's liberation is derived from two critical sources: the solidarity of the female community, which provides her with support and magnificent role models to copy, and her letter-writing, which enables her to express herself while also purifying herself of the trauma she has endured. Celie's journey for independence includes physical, spiritual, and economic stages, culminating in the establishment of her own business. According to Alice Walker, the patriarchal system and racism are to blame for the appalling conditions under which Afro-American women live in their communities, which is why she promotes 'womanism' as the ideal.

**Keywords:** Womanism, Feminism, Solidarity, Community, Racism, Patriarchy, Writing

**Introduction**

Women have had a significant impact on writing, affecting a large number of authors. Woman is portrayed differently in diverse literary works because she exists solely through the eyes, ideas, and lives of men and not for herself. Women are compelled to play minor parts in men's lives not because they lack the ability to manage themselves, but because of societal and cultural factors that contribute to a lack of respect for women's individuality, distinctiveness, dignity, and position. As a result, a new Feminist movement emerged in the nineteenth century to advocate for women's rights, arguing for men and women to have equal rights and duties. Additionally, it is a firm believer in women's capacity to engage fully in all aspects of society, including politics, education, and economics. Alice Walker is widely

regarded as one of the movement's most ardent supporters, and her novel *The Color Purple* brings attention to the plight of Afro-American women who face a variety of forms of discrimination, including segregation.

### ***Alice Walker's Colour Purple***

The novel *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker is widely recognized as one of the most important literary works exposing the sufferings of African-American women as a result of patriarchy and racism. "The right of men to govern female bodies is a cornerstone of patriarchy," writes Carole J. Sheffield. Violence and the threat of violence against women symbolize patriarchy's need to deny the woman's body as her own property" (400). In this work, Walker not only exposes women's deplorable surroundings, but she also demonstrates her ambition to change their social rank and position by instilling in them a strong sense of their right and place in society. The goal of writing this story is to give black women a voice and show them how to emancipate themselves.

Celie, the novel's major female character, is an African-American woman subjugated by her patriarchal family. In general, family is where people find affection and care, and family members tend to support one another. In this work, Celie's family, on the other hand, is more of a burden to its members. She is more of a passive victim of her circumstances, as she admits: "But I don't know how to fight." All I know how to do is survive... I keep my mouth shut. I do as I am told. But I'm still alive." (*The Color Purple*, 26-29, ) Celie's father, on the other side, takes advantage of his daughter. Alphonso is a vicious man in all of his deeds, but his most horrible crime is selling Celie under the premise of marriage to a widower with four children who wants a woman to serve him, handle his housekeeping, and raise his children. Celie had her own children before that, but she never got to see them grow up because her father hastily sent them to foster parents, a couple who later became African missionaries. Celie's independence is most fruitful and profitable when she is learning. Celie's sister, Nettie, educates her and helps her become more conscious of her environment. At this point, the heroine is allowed to express herself more freely. Celie is a typical black lady who is denied the opportunity to attend school in order to perpetuate her marginalization and ignorance of her fundamental rights. Nettie is adamant about teaching her sister how to develop her own identity and confidence, which will inspire her with fresh ideas and motivate her to pursue independence. For black women who see teaching as a practical means to educate people about their rights, it is a critical step.

### **Solidarity: A Means to Freedom**

Celie's independence is immensely supported by female solidarity, a formidable force. Celie is primarily motivated to transform her life and set herself free physically and spiritually by these women, who range from her sister, Nettie, through her daughter-in-law, Sofia, and her husband's mistress, Shug.

The Colour Purple demonstrates unequivocally that patriarchal dominance over black women was achieved by both physical force and considering women as simple animals, as shown by Mr. Albert's vindictiveness against Celie, Harpo's hatred of Sofia, and Mr. Alfonso's resentment. Thus, a woman is isolated from her regular life, becomes lonely, and is forced to seek comfort, care, security, and unity from other women. Sisterhood is definitely the novel's foundation or focal point. (Brenda10)

Female bonding is thus a topic that unites women in sharing not only their feelings, joys, sorrows, and perspectives, but also their household responsibilities, child care, and other demands. It enables women, such as Celie in the book, to overcome their difficulties and achieve freedom. She founded her own tailoring business with the assistance of other women, relocated, and regained custody of her children and sister. Celie looks to Nettie for guidance and optimism. Both individuals are members of an emotionally impoverished family. Celie is subjected to brutal treatment by her stepfather, which continues when Celie marries her husband. In contrast to Celie, Nettie attempts to console her sister after witnessing her being beaten and humiliated by her pompous husband, Mr. Albert, and pushes her to confront him in order to put an end to his abuse.

This attitude demonstrates her fortitude and personality, as well as her potential for change. Additionally, Nettie encourages her sister to respond to any abuse she receives from Albert's children by emphasizing to them that she possesses her own personality and is capable of displaying her superiority. Miss Beasley, Nettie's teacher, is a rebellious woman with her own beliefs and an aggressive way of thinking, and she leaves an indelible mark on her. Miss Beasley aids Nettie in developing her own self-awareness, sensitivity, and capacity to overcome obstacles. Celie handles Nettie similarly, as if she were her own instructor, mentoring and coaching her on how to deal with her challenges. Nettie aids her sister in surviving the apocalyptic conditions by teaching her basic skills such as writing and reading. This exemplifies Nettie's unwavering determination to carry out her plan to save her sister. Nettie is continuously attempting to keep her sister informed about what is happening in the world, and thus keeps her informed about everything. While living with Celie at Albert's house, Nettie is acutely aware of the abuse and cruelty inflicted on her sister. As a result, she makes extraordinary efforts to educate her sister, employing various ways such as tiny cards that she places on items bearing the cards' names. Nettie establishes this educational objective in order to free Celie from servitude. Celie's trust in God begins to deteriorate as a result of her capacity to blame God for all of the dreary aspects of her life.

Additionally, she is capable of reading Nettie's letters from Africa, which she receives via her sister. Celie, in a role reversal, plays a critical part in aiding Nettie during her trying

times. She owes her sister a dual obligation: first, she must compensate Nettie for their mother's absence, and second, she must attempt to protect her sister from her stepfather's brutality. They are maintained by their love connection even after they are separated, and they believe they will reunite one day, providing them with the hope necessary to overcome any challenges. As a result, the tight link that has grown between the two sisters is critical, as it provides the heroine with the energy she requires to overcome the obstacles ahead, discover her own identity, and become self-sufficient. Shug is also recognized as the central character due to her assistance in achieving Celie's liberation. Their relationship is diametrically contrasted to that of the previous two characters. Indeed, Nettie embodies the image of trust that motivates Celie to fight for her rights and liberation, whereas Sofia embodies the image of disobedience that motivates Celie to fight for her rights and liberation. Shug, on the other hand, is associated with sensuality and desire. She is recognized as a seductive lady who also happens to be Mr. Albert's love interest. Eventually, she becomes Celie's closest confidante. She acts as a mentor or mother figure for Celie, encouraging her to rediscover her lost identity, confidence, and independence, as well as to be self-sufficient. She instills in her a desire to fight all types of enslavement and prejudice. Shug's presence aids Celie's transition. She embodies a mother who is concerned about her children and works to protect them from the outer world. She is seen as Celie's mentor, teaching her in the right manner in order to overcome her ordeal. Shug aids Celie in establishing her own personality and freedom.

Spiritual liberation, as a reflection of self-determination and self-reliance, is one of the most significant themes illuminated in *The Colour Purple*. Celie formed an image of God based on the Bible's depiction of Him at the opening of the narrative as white and aged. She adheres to the Bible's teachings and conducts the appropriate rites. She feels that by following God's commands, He will assist her in overcoming the awful circumstances that surround her, isolating and marginalizing her. However, as a result of the problems and violence she is experiencing, she has lost confidence in God. Additionally, she asserts that God views her in the same manner that white people do, and thus fights to overthrow the patriarchal system in order to gain spiritual liberation. Shug's representation of God has an effect on Celie's faith in God. Shug attempts to reinvent God. Shug disbelieves in the church's portrayal of God because she believes the church does not provide a complete picture of God; as a result, she seeks her own realization of God. The protagonist learns through Shug's interpretation that the ultimate goals of life are love, admiration, and pleasure from beauty. Celie is able to transcend the patriarchal God and experience life through Shug's eyes. Celie then achieves independence, marking a watershed moment in her life and establishing a favorable circumstance for her, making her feel as if she has been reborn since achieving her dream of independence. She is satisfied with herself now that she has reclaimed her lost sense of self-worth and originality. This enterprise enables her to achieve self-emancipation and a close examination of the world, which calms her and enables her to alter her vision of the world.

### **Letter Writing: as a Necessary Step to Freedom**

The Colour Purple, by Alice Walker, is written in the epistolary form common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite the fact that this form of writing was not widely used in nineteenth-century African American literature, it flourished in the late twentieth century. The epistolary novel is a genre or a form of writing in which stories are told through letters. Females in particular use this genre to express their opposition to the stereotype that prevents women from expressing themselves, as well as to reflect their inner feelings about any issue, such as fighting for their rights or rejecting the unfair treatment they received from men when society denied them basic rights such as education. Walker intentionally used this literary technique to elevate the voices of disadvantaged women, particularly African American women, who suffer in their communities not only in the United States, but also in other countries. She aims to use this kind of writing to aid women in expressing their emotions and communicating their difficulties to other groups in the hope of finding someone who will listen and support them.

Samuel Richardson is considered the most prominent novelist who wrote in the epistolary literary form. His celebrated novel, Clarissa, is constructed in a way that shows the communication taking place between different characters of the novel that reflect their inner thoughts and psychological states. (Campbell95)

One of the book's defining characteristics is that the reader gets the idea that the characters are not characters at all, but genuine individuals, because they behave regularly and express their honest emotions in letters that should not be seen by others. As a result, when we read their letters, we picture the two sisters, Nettie and Celie, as true individuals. Even the wording used in the letters is informal, reflecting the individuals' psychological circumstances. Additionally, this format enables the reader to track the development and evolution of the characters' personalities and lives, notably the numerous phases through which the protagonist passes from humiliation to release. Celie prefers to communicate her unhappiness with her stepfather through letters. Celie is a helpless protagonist who lacks the authority to express her individuality; nonetheless, Celie does not despair and instead chooses to document her issues and suffering through letters to her sister, which is interpreted as a form of defiance against the current circumstances. Celie made a pact to herself and her stepfather to keep her stepfather's sexual abuse a secret from everyone save God. Celie writes letters to face her stepfather, who has raped her numerous times. This type of writing is viewed as retribution against those who have frequently abused her and attempted to marginalize and suppress her.

By utilizing her writing and persistence, she is able to overcome her obstacles and transform the isolation and segregation of slavery into glory. Thus, in The Colour Purple, the novelist illuminates the transformative power of writing by imbuing the protagonist with the

will to resist oppression. Celie, like the author, is an Afro-American woman who, through the power of writing, is able to persevere in the face of adversity. When an individual writes, he or she is striving to alleviate psychological and emotional stress. He writes truthfully because he has no need to mislead himself. Celie writes these letters in try to mend her emotional and psychological wounds caused by the abuse she endured from those closest to her. While writing letters does not alleviate her sufferings and pains, it does provide her with the strength and energy necessary to overcome and manage the grief and sadness that have isolated her from the outside world, where she can rebuild her personality and live normally with hopes and wishes for a prosperous life. As a result, writing enables Celie to be aware of every circumstance in her own life. Additionally, Celie is able to create a world for herself through her works, one that is distinct from the repressive reality in which she lives. In this universe, she is free to do whatever she wants. This encourages her to pursue liberty, oppose segregation and tyranny, as well as to comprehend her situation and the means by which she may achieve liberation. As a result, writing becomes a vehicle through which she reclaims her identity and uniqueness.

### Conclusion

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is an excellent novel that deftly reconstructs the character of a new black woman, Celie, as she transitions from mistreatment by patriarchy to self-sufficiency. Additionally, the concept of solidarity and the act of writing are two of the most noteworthy milestones in Celie's road to emancipation. Celie utilizes writing as a kind of therapy. Celie gradually comes to understand what is occurring to her as a result of the letters. She develops reservations about herself and her position. Her bonding relationship is as vital as her writing, which has inspired her to achieve independence in all aspects of her life. Celie's capacity for self-expression is comparable to that of a therapist attempting to heal a patient's spiritual and psychological wounds following a horrific experience; it enables her to manage and control the heinous conditions she meets. Celie's identity is composed entirely of letters. Celie discovers a new form of freedom in her world of letters, which helps her make sense of her humiliating predicament and inspires her to consider taking this freedom into her everyday life.

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