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AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER OPPRESSION AND BLACK FEMINISM IN ALICE WALKER'S THE COLOR PURPLE

ALİCE WALKER'IN RENKLERDEN MORU ADLI ESERİNDE CİNSİYET BASKISI VE SİYAH FEMİNİZİM ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the novel *The Color Purple*, written by Alice Walker, in relation to gender and black feminism. The article also shows black men's violence against black women, as well as an internalized system of brutality that has significantly affected black women's lives. The novel depicts the story of Celie, a black woman living in rural Georgia who is abused by her stepfather and her husband. The novel indirectly portrays the life of a black woman in the 1930s and the difficulties associated with women's poor social status in American society. The story takes place in a time when there was great tension between races in society and blacks were considered inferior beings in society. More specifically, black people in the novel are oppressed and pushed into a lower class, not only because of their skin color, but also because they are women.

Keywords: *The Color Purple*, gender, black feminism.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Alice Walker'ın *Renklerden Moru* adlı romanını toplumsal cinsiyet ve siyah feminizm bağlamında incelemektir. Makale, ayrıca siyah erkeklerin siyah kadınlara yönelik şiddetinin yanı sıra siyah kadınların hayatlarını önemli ölçüde etkileyen içselleştirilmiş bir vahşet sistemini de gösteriyor. Roman, üvey babası ve kocası tarafından istismar edilen Georgia kırsalında yaşayan siyah bir kadın olan Celie'nin hikayesini anlatıyor. Bu roman 1930'larda siyah bir kadının hayatını ve Amerikan toplumunda kadınların zayıf sosyal statüsüyle ilgili zorlukları dolaylı olarak göstermektedir. Hikâye, toplumdaki ırklar arasında büyük bir gerilimin olduğu ve siyahların toplumda aşağı varlıklar olarak görüldüğü bir zamanda geçiyor. Daha spesifik olarak, romandaki siyah insanlar, sadece ten renginden dolayı değil, aynı zamanda kadın oldukları için de baskı altına alınmakta ve alt sınıfa itilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Renklerden Moru*, toplumsal cinsiyet, siyah feminizm.

1. INTRODUCTION

In mainstream liberal discourse, race, gender, and other identity categories are often seen as relics of prejudice or domination, that is, as fundamentally negative frames through which social authority seeks to exclude or marginalize people who are different. As one of the discriminatory policies, the patriarchal system creates a problematic identity politics in which women face many difficulties. And this system has become very harsh and misogynistic, with devastating consequences. The patriarchal system is the greatest obstacle to women's freedom. Although the dominance relationships have changed, the underlying concepts remain the same, namely that men control their lives. Men exploit women for their own benefit and deny them the opportunity to develop in various fields, especially in schooling, social development, and even investment by excluding them from starting their own businesses. Among the tragic aspects of this structure is that they have various kinds of negative effects on women, especially

on their sexuality, economic status, spirituality and mental health. Foucault (1965) states: "Confinement was also a way of trying to organize madness." In this context, it can be said that the oppression of women has a negative effect on their mental health.

The patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and to some extent restricts the human rights of women. The term patriarchy refers to male dominance in both the public and private spheres. In this sense, feminists use the term "patriarchy" to define the power relationship between men and women and to identify the causes of women's subjugation. Patriarchy, according to Bhasin (2006:3) refers to "male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways." According to Mitchell (1971: 24) patriarchy "refers to kinship systems in which men exchange women." Women are deprived of their legal rights and prospects by patriarchy. Women's freedom of movement is restricted by patriarchal beliefs that deny them autonomy over themselves and their property. Patriarchy has a great influence on the emergence of feminism. Because, basically, patriarchy is the system that feminism is fighting against.

Scholars have divided the feminist movement into three distinct waves, each important to the movement in terms of achieving specific goals at different points in history. The first wave refers primarily to the campaign for women's suffrage in the United Kingdom and the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing on gaining the right to vote for women. The first wave of feminist movements focused largely on the promotion of equal rights and property rights for women. Women at this time were regarded much like servants, with few rights and possessions. Many authors and feminists argued that women needed recognition of their potential and innate nature, not simply equal rights. However, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that organized campaigns, associations, and movements for women's rights emerged, working to improve the situation of women in terms of education, the opportunity to work outside the home, reform of laws affecting married women, and, for the first time, the right to vote. Activities were largely focused on gaining political power, particularly suffrage for women, which was achieved towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the United Kingdom, the suffragettes and, perhaps more effectively, the suffragists fought for women's suffrage. Women's suffrage was seen not only as a sign of women's acceptance in society but also as a means of improving women's lives.

The second wave of feminism began after World War II and is sometimes called the women's liberation movement. It was concerned with the legal and social equality of women and, above all, with the elimination of discrimination against women. Simone de Beauvoir, a feminist icon of the early twentieth century, is also the author of *The Second Sex* and the phrase "a woman is not born, she becomes," which has become a cliché in feminist circles. De Beauvoir distinguishes between sex and gender and believes that gender is a component of one's identity that develops gradually.

The third wave of feminism sometimes referred to as post-feminism, began in the 1990s and continues today. It refers to the perceived failures of second-wave feminism and continues to fight for the same ideals held by feminists in previous waves. The focus of the movement, however, has evolved considerably. It is now less concerned with governmental procedures and regulations than with the individual self. Moreover, feminists are becoming more diverse. Whereas first- and second-wave feminists were predominantly Western, white, middle-class women, third-wave feminists include women of various nationalities, races, creeds, and social backgrounds.

The main argument of feminists regarding gender inequality is that it is not just a personal matter but is deeply embedded in the structure of society due to historical and cultural factors. Feminist critics have used literature as a tool to describe gender inequality and the oppression of women in society. Literature also has had a profound impact on how black women are viewed in society in general and in the Western world. Many women poets, academics, and supporters have bravely championed this cause around the world.

Alice Walker is a well-known black author who wrote one of the most popular novels, *The Color Purple*, in epistolary style, in which she passionately fights for the rights of black women who persistently fight for their rights. She also highlights the oppression that black women face socially, economically, physically, and sexually because of their race and gender. Walker mainly uses the method of correspondence to put the reader into the mind of an Afro-American woman so that they can fully comprehend her suffering. Celie, the protagonist of the novel, sends emotional letters to "God" describing her situation. Moreover, this approach helps the heroine assert her voice and restore her

identity and sense of self. Celie's letters give her the opportunity to articulate herself and express her thoughts, paving the way for her liberation.

Walker processed much of the frustration and misery of her life in her fictional works. She portrayed how difficult life could be for black women. Violence and abusive behavior play a very important role in *The Colour Purple*. Black female characters were often abused by black men, who still have the upper hand in black patriarchal culture. In the past, men had total control over their wives. Today, husbands are expected to exercise authority over their wives and children, while daughters are often expected to be submissive to their fathers and brothers. Like many black men before them, these men worked to maintain their patriarchy and used various types of abuse to gain power and dominance. Black men sexually abused and raped black women to make them feel inferior. Systematic violence was used as a form of domination by which women were kept under control by men. Although disadvantaged in some ways, black women deal with racism very differently. Some were physically and emotionally destroyed by racism, while others proved their ability to fight against it.

Female identity is an identity associated with the social and cultural norms of the patriarchal family structure and is usually defined within the parameters of women's social relationships with men. Therefore, female identity is often the basis on which gender inequality is justified. Gender roles and identity confusion within a patriarchal structure, therefore, create a crisis for women. For centuries, patriarchy has paved the way for women's silence, traumatic experiences, a negative self-image, stigmatization, and exclusion. It can be said that African American women, the first group to come to the fore in this regard, are struggling against the patriarchal world to gain a sense of identity in this crisis. In this context, *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, which is the focus of this study, addresses the oppression of African American women and the struggle against that oppression. The work was published in the United States in 1982 and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1983. The oppression of black women in their quest for freedom is the main theme of this study. In addition, it analyzes African American women's forms of resistance to rape, patriarchal domination, and white supremacy from their own perspectives.

1.1. Theoretical Background: Black Feminism

Within feminism, there is a group of African-American women who also fight against oppression, but they believe that it is important to emphasize how race and womanhood are inextricably linked. This particular current within feminism is referred to as "black feminism." As Hooks (2015: 92) states:

It was so evident that we did not all share a common understanding of being black and female even though some of our experiences were similar. We did share the understanding that it is difficult for black women to construct radical subjectivity within white supremacist capitalist patriarchy that our struggle to be "subject" though similar, also differs from that of black men, and that the politics of gender create that difference.

Although race, ethnicity, social class, and gender are all intertwined, there is an additional layer of oppression for African American women because they have also been subjected to gendered oppression, albeit in different ways than African-American men. Recognizing that race, ethnicity, class, and gender are interconnected (also known as intersectionality), it follows that there is a difference between feminism for black women and that for white women because they belong to different races and have different experiences of oppression in American society.

During the time of slavery, oppression already prevailed. The human rights of enslaved men and women were not recognized, as they were considered property and had no protection. Since black women were already considered promiscuous and prone to sexual acts, sexual assault often went unpunished. White men ignored the sexual exploitation of African American women and excused their behavior by believing it was their right because they were white and men.

The Black Feminist philosophy emphasizes how oppression based on gender, race, and economic status makes life miserable for Black women in the United States. Throughout African American history, the social hierarchy established during slavery has been with white men at the top, followed by white women, then black men, and finally black women at the bottom of the social hierarchy. When black women faced the sexism of black men and the racism of white women, they had two choices: Either they remained silent in the face of these injustices or they started their own movement to address their own problems. They chose the second option and founded their own movement to resist the persecution they were facing. "The theoretical resistance of slave women against the oppression of the whites, which

dates back to the era of slavery, is later named by the 20th century scholars as black feminism” (Davidson, Wagner & Ammons, 1995: 123). They seek rights in all spheres of society, including the social, physical, intellectual, and economic spheres.

After the end of the American Civil War (1831-1835), a group of women banded together to fight for the right to vote in the country. Suffragettes such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan Bronwell Anthony (1820-1906) were among the first to campaign for suffrage. The suffrage campaign became an important part of a broader movement of women's clubs and organizations in the early twentieth century.

After World War I and II women's aspirations in life changed in lockstep with the changing face of the United States of America. Women wanted to raise their voices to achieve economic and social equality, among other things. Most notably, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Simone De Beauvoir's (1908-1986) *Second Sex* (1949), and Betty Friedan's (1921-2006) *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) inspired women to break free from the confines of the patriarchal society that imprisoned them within their own four walls. They were looking for alternative personal and professional positions in a society dominated by men. As a result, they were increasingly interested in other aspects of life. In addition, working-class women used the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and pressured the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (created in 1965) to take action to eliminate discrimination in employment and pay.

In addition to the liberation of black women, the Civil Rights era also saw significant advances for women as well as the emergence of various feminisms, including radical feminism, Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, and lesbian feminism. The main focus, however, was on the rights of white and middle-class women. As a result, black women were overlooked, if not completely excluded, from all these initiatives. Before the advent of Black Feminism, Black women had always been excluded from feminist thought, just as lesbians were absent from feminist theory. The women's liberation movement emerged in the 1960s and lasted until the early 1970s. The hidden face of the movement, on the other hand, was different for impoverished white women and black women, both of whom often faced racism. These conflicts continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as black women faced racism in both first- and second-wave feminism. Both waves of feminism were marked by a racist ideology, as white feminists' struggle for social and political equality was directed at middle-class white women rather than all women. In both movements, white women ignored the reality of the subjugation of black women by racist ideology. In other words: White women were unable to see beyond their own gendered interests to how racism and patriarchal ideology affected black women.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER OPPRESSION AND BLACK FEMINISM IN ALICE WALKER'S *THE COLOR PURPLE*

The term "gender" is used to refer to the characteristics of men and women that are determined by social rather than biological factors. Gender is a sociological perspective that provides insight into how the characteristics and behaviors of men and women in a community are determined. Men are predestined to dominate the majority of the spheres of life, including business, politics, trade, and commerce. Men believe that they are superior and strong, and they often take advantage of their position of authority when dealing with women. In Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple*, gender plays a crucial role in the plot.

The novel depicts the life of Celie, a young black woman growing up in the impoverished Southern states. The novel follows Celie on her journey from a sexually abused child to a submissive wife and finally to a free woman. Celie suffered childhood trauma. When she is fourteen years old, she is sexually abused by her stepfather Alphonso. She bears him two children, both of whom are taken from her, and she sinks into an abyss of despair. As a result of her stepfather's abuse and mistreatment, she begins writing letters to God. "You'll do what your mammy would not do" (Walker, 3).

She communicates in a black vernacular and writes in a dialect of English that is heavily influenced by her oral language. The society in which she lives is strongly reminiscent of the post-slavery era: a society still marked by some lingering prejudices and racist stereotypes. Celie embodies the rape victim who is stripped of her children, her sense of self-worth, and her ability to take action against those who wrong her, and her narrative bears many unspoken similarities to the plight of those who came before her. She documents a variety of forms of abuse, not all of which she personally experienced.

Alice Walker embodies the stereotype of black suffering in Western culture in her works through the character of Celie, who protests against injustice and social constraints. Celie is a poor black woman who has been sexually abused by her stepfather and is married to a widower. Celie's relationship with her husband and stepfather is marked by and perpetuated by injustices that treat women through a prism of patriarchal ideologies.

In *The Color Purple*, black women face double oppression: they are harassed as both domestic servants and farmworkers, and they are also subjected to sexual assault by both white and black men. The story centers on Celie, the protagonist of the book. She is at the bottom of the social ladder: she is an unattractive, black, impoverished, and uneducated girl. The responsibilities placed on Celie because of her mother's physical and emotional weakness include everything from maintaining the household to satisfying her stepfather's sexual appetites. She is subjected to constant physical and verbal abuse by her stepfather and later by her husband. Alfonso is rude, insensitive, and sexually obsessed. He embodies the worst qualities of a patriarchal society. Fourteen-year-old Celie has been horribly sexually abused by her stepfather. "First he put his thing up against my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy" (Walker, 5).

She was raped by her stepfather and the experience has left her emotionally scarred and her wounds will never fully heal. This rape has a negative impact on her life and causes her to lose any chance of a better future. When her mother is gone, her stepfather rapes her and this is the first of many such instances in the story. Then he says "you better shut up and get used to it" (Walker, 4). Celie replies "But I don't never get used to it. And now I feel sick used to it. I am the one to cook. My mama she fusses at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long" (Walker, 5). Celie's words convey the extent of her fear, and her grief shows the anguish she is experiencing. Immediately after the incident, her father threatens Celie and warns her to hide the fact that she has been raped. Celie's stepfather, Alfonso, forces her to keep quiet about the rape. "You better not never tell anybody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (Walker, 6). Celie did exactly as she was ordered. She has kept silent about her torture and has expressed her feelings exclusively in letters to God. Celie has diminished self-esteem as a result of this rape, leading to a sense of defenselessness against her rapist. "I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive" (Walker, 19). After being sexually abused, she felt unable to see herself as someone worthy of respect and affection. Her stepfather's violent behavior causes everything to take a turn for the worse, including her interests and values. She begins to lose enthusiasm for everything, even life itself. The emotions in her prayers reflect what she is going through. She shares with God her entire life of torture and abuse at the hands of the men she has encountered throughout her life. As a result of the rape, Celie hates all men with an abysmal hatred. She views men as people with no feelings and not human beings. Her life has been miserable because of the men around her. Men have made her life worse because of their presence. She is already predestined to spend her life in a patriarchal society as a black woman. Celie has been mostly silenced, kept out of sight, and even more marginalized by her stepfather and husband. Because of this, Celie finds women to be more fulfilling than men. "I don't even look at men. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not scared of them." (Walker, 7)

Albert had sex with Celie in a callous and cold manner. Celie shows a lack of interest in Albert's sexual satisfaction when they have sex. She does not consider Albert a personal companion in their sexual activities. Celie believes that her husband does not care about her pleasure as he is sexually indifferent towards her. There seems to be no affection or mutual pleasure in their sexual relationship, making it seem like rape. Celie is very dissatisfied with sex and is not attracted to Albert. Celie lacks Albert's affection and respect, and their marriage is not centered on love, which explains why she is dissatisfied with her sexual experience.

Even in Sofia's relationship with Harpo, sexual intercourse without love is considered rape by Sofia. Sofia is only interested in sex accompanied by feelings of love and affection. On the other hand, Harpo uses sex primarily for physical pleasure or to force Sophia into submission. Sofia describes her sexual act with Harpo:

I don't like to go to bed with him no more, she say. Used to be when he touch me I'd go all out my head. Now when he touch me I just don't want to be bothered. Once he git on top of me I think bout how that's where he Always want to be. She sip her lemonad I use to love that part of it, she say. I use to chase him home from the fiel from the field. Git all hot just watching him put the children to bed. But no more. Now I feels tired all the time. No interest (Walker, 67)

The way the black men in *The Color Purple* mistreat their wives, daughters, and lovers mirrors the way the whites in the novel persecute. African-American families, as well as the slave-holding plantation families, view their black women as inanimate objects, allowing the husbands to take over. The legacy of the white masters was passed on to the black men. Just as the whites treated them, the men of color treat the women and their female counterparts. Black women have suffered sexual violence throughout their history, largely due to slavery. Black women who were enslaved were sexually and physically abused by their white owners or agents to varying degrees.

Black men used violence to subjugate black women. Physical violence is a frequent theme in *The Color Purple*. Although Celie has been a victim of sex-hungry men most of her life, she comes from a place where she is not fully accepted by the men around her. Her stepfather is quite hard on her, though he abuses her both physically and mentally. He has no regard for Celie's feelings, emotions, or dignity; he views her only as a body, not as an individual. He inflicted deep emotional damage on her by not showing even the smallest amount of respect for her as a human being. Instead, he gave her orders without showing even the slightest trace of kindness. "He beat me today cause he say I winked at a boy in church. I may have got something in my eye but I didn't wink. I don't even look" (Walker, 7).

Celie's treatment by men remained unchanged after her marriage. Her husband treated her in the same manner as her stepfather. The acts that Albert commits are much crueler than the cruelties that Celie's stepfather does to her. Albert shows disrespect to his wife on their wedding day, which should be a day to honour with love. But his nasty behaviour carries over to his children and they humiliate and beat Celie. Albert also encourages his children to show their new stepmother that they too are capable of behaving aggressively towards her. Her father and husband oppress Celie and make her feel worthless. This makes her feel like she has done something terrible, which is why she has to endure this ordeal. She believed she was worthless because she gave her stepfather and husband the authority to do all kinds of disgusting things to her. She felt controlled, dominated, and submissive by men.

Harpo's family situation, which involves physical aggression, is an example of how physical violence relates to relationships in general. Although Harpo and Sophia have a happy marriage, Harpo wants to prove his superiority when dealing with Sophia. His father urges Harpo to use violence to exert his influence on Sophia. Celie advises Harpo to beat Sophia because although she believes they are happy, she believes Sophia needs coercion to be controlled. Sofia confronts Celie about her advice to Harpo. Celie feels humiliated and reveals for the first time in her life that she is jealous of Sofia's ability to do what she can never do: stand up to those who abuse her. Celie tells Sofia, "I say it cause I'm jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can't [...] Fight" (Walker, 40). Although Celie recognizes that the main cause of broken marriages is violence, she does her part to cause violence in Harpo's home. Celie is jealous of the bond between Harpo and Sophia, which involves an intimate level of togetherness. Soon after, she begins to feel guilty about what she has done. There are different ways to harass a woman with psychological or emotional violence. One example is verbal humiliation, which leads to lowered self-esteem and major depression.

There are various methods of psychologically abusing a woman. One of the most common is verbal oppression, which results in women being humiliated and often considered less intellectual. Secondly, the isolation of the woman, preventing her from contacting relatives, friends, or social institutions, is seen as a kind of cruelty that prevents her from receiving help and support. Third, the wife is forced to rely on her husband for her financial well-being. In addition, the wife is usually frightened and threatened by the man that she is forced to live with. In Celie's life partner is undoubtedly using belittling words for her. Celie is also sexually harassed on a regular basis. In addition, her husband prevents her from having contact with her sister Nettie. His question about his wife's decision to leave him for Memphis could be interpreted as an attempt on his part to terrorize her. He is not the only one to do so. "Nothing up North for nobody like you... He laugh. Maybe somebody let you work on the railroad" (Walker, 186). He clearly tells his wife what she must do, and he seems to threaten Celie during his speech not to leave him. The realisation of his dream is in accordance with the patriarchal system. Celie is also beaten regularly to maintain patriarchy so that she is a submissive wife and does not question her husband's cruel power. Certainly, her husband's words, which become clear when she decides to call him, make her feel dehumanized and unworthy of being loved. Celie's manner of addressing or referring to her husband simply as Mr. _ seems to reflect the social divide between them. It may represent the authority he has established for himself. Celie also suffers from another kind of tyranny as she is separated from her family and close friends. This could be seen as a sign of the presence of the

patriarchal system in their lives. Albert is in control of his wife's life in every way. Since her voice is silent at the beginning of the story, we can observe the effects of patriarchal tyranny.

Several characters in the story seem to defy gender stereotypes and norms. Sofia is one of these characters who question her gender role throughout the story. When they marry, Harpo realizes that Sofia is not a typical woman. He begins to realize that Sofia knows what is going on and that she is making strong choices in her life. In patriarchal societies, it is not acceptable to behave this way. She takes a vigorous stand and does not simply follow her husband's instructions unthinkingly. Harpo feels compelled to argue with her and seek her opinion on important matters. Harpo seeks advice from others, including his father, who advises him to punish her rather than please her. The belief that women are inferior to men is clearly passed down from generation to generation, making it impossible for women to free themselves from the web of prejudice that surrounds them. Harpo does not believe that beating Sofia is a good idea, but because the male elite wants him to flaunt his manhood, he is forced to do so. He makes the decision to beat his wife, further deteriorating their relationship. This is because Sofia eventually stands up to Harpo and wins.

Walker emphasizes throughout the story the importance of being able to communicate one's thoughts and feelings. Celie is unable to explain herself to the people who mistreated her at the beginning of the novel. She is treated as an object and remains passive because she lacks authority. Celie discovers that she has the ability to construct a new life for herself that is contrary to the ideology that has been imposed on her.

3. CONCLUSION

The Colour Purple is set in a predominantly black rural southern town that is very patriarchal. Most of the black male characters are aggressive and oppressive towards women in a variety of ways. Their behavior is not only physically aggressive, but also sexually and emotionally abusive, making the women they live with feeling unsafe, useless, and inferior. While reading, it becomes clear that the male characters' thinking of superiority is so entrenched that they are not even aware that their actions are offensive. The function of the woman in *The Color Purple* resembles that of a slave or sex object.

Celie and many other female characters in the novel are also trapped in a patriarchal society. In the 1930s, when some of the events of the novel take place, African-American women lived in black villages in the countryside of South America, and this is reflected in the book. Celie's letters to God are not only a cry for help, but also serve as a collective voice for all African-American women who have gone through similar circumstances. Walker also draws comparisons between the relationship between white masters and black slaves that existed in the United States for generations prior to Civil War (in which women have also considered property fit for sex and labour). In the male-dominated world shown in *Color Purple*, men are portrayed as oppressors of women. On the other hand, they can also be seen as victims of their own patriarchy. Walker succeeds in her story in portraying the identity of the black woman by illustrating the various forms of patriarchal oppression that she encounters. Walker succeeds in showing how patriarchy functions as a system of oppression in both America and Africa.

Celie discovers her place in this world despite all the suffering and adversity she has experienced. She gains strength and independence and begins to realize that women and men are equal, but that women must assert their rights to equality. Celie will not be happy until she is able to rely entirely on herself. Her thriving business and growing self-confidence allow her to live on her own terms.

The Color Purple conveys a message about gender equality that is still relevant today. It makes no difference if we are born black or white; in most countries, men are still born with the upper hand. Women need to fight for their right to be treated equally. Women's financial independence helps them gain their own independence as well as the right to manage their own finances and have control over their families.

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