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DOMESTIC ABUSE AND TRANSFORMATION IN ALICE WALKER'S NOVEL "THE COLOR PURPLE"

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Abstract

Background: Alice Walker African American womanist who won the Pulitzer Prize awarded for her fiction in 1983 for epistolary novel *The Color Purple* (1982), she gives her voice to those who had no voice. *The color purple* is a masterpiece of Alice walker focuses on the struggle and discriminations of African American women on the hand of black and white men together .On the other hand, the novel shed the light on Celie, protagonist of the novel lost her mom and her innocence to the man she call him Pa. She raped many times and conceived two children; hyper efficient house women who is highly abused in a very violent domestic disturbance environment. The impact of her beloved sister Nettie, she was Celie refuge as the novel goes as series of letters. **Methods:** The researchers focus on the role of the family, society and how the male characters oppress and discriminate the women through the novel. **Results:** However the researchers conclude how those women stand against the difficulties and found their identity through unity and women- bonding and women should join together and support each other to reject male dominance and self-recognition. **Conclusion:** Thus, Shug tries and support Celie to identify herself as a creature, as a human being and as a black woman.

Key Words: Celie, family abuse, women- bonding and

ABUSO NACIONAL Y TRANSFORMACIÓN EN LA NOVELA DE ALICE WALKER "EL COLOR PÚRPURA"

Resumen

Antecedentes: Alice Walker, mujer afroamericana que ganó el Premio Pulitzer otorgado por su ficción en 1983 por la novela epistolar *The Color Purple* (1982), da su voz a quienes no tenían voz. El color morado es una obra maestra de Alice Walker que se centra en la lucha y las discriminaciones de las mujeres afroamericanas de la mano de hombres blancos y negros juntas. Por otro lado, la novela arrojó luz sobre Celie, protagonista de la novela que perdió a su madre y su inocencia hacia el hombre que lo llama Pa. Violó muchas veces y concibió dos hijos; Mujeres de la casa hiper eficientes que son altamente maltratadas en un ambiente de disturbios domésticos muy violento. El impacto de su amada hermana Netti, fue refugio de Celie como la novela va como una serie de cartas. **Métodos:** los investigadores se centran en el papel de la familia, la sociedad y cómo los personajes masculinos oprimen y discriminan a las mujeres a través de la novela. **Resultados:** Sin embargo, los investigadores concluyen cómo esas mujeres se enfrentan a las dificultades y encuentran su identidad a través de la unidad y la vinculación de las mujeres, y las mujeres deben unirse y apoyarse mutuamente para rechazar el dominio y el auto reconocimiento de los hombres. **Conclusión:** Así, Shug intenta y apoya a Celie para que se identifique como una criatura, como un ser humano y como una mujer negra.

Palabras clave: Celie, abuso familiar, unión de mujeres y transformación, identidad

1. INTRODUCTION

Alice Walker is an American novelist, short story writer, poet and activist. One of the greatest American writers of the twentieth century. She was contemporary writer and is very close to the “Spirit of the Age”. During the civil right movement in 1960, Walker became famous and a leading figure of the black women movement and she gave a voice to those who had no voice. Walker’s writing deals with issues which depict the effect of tyrannical thought upon innocent victims, identity and the possibility of a significant, productive resistance.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysts center on the job of the family, society and how the male characters abuse and segregate the ladies through the novel.

3. DATA COLLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Alfonso assaults Celie when her mother goes to check her health by her doctor. When her mother is gone, Celie stays alone and no one just her stepfather, Alfonso. However, after her mother decease Alfonso continues with his sexual abuse towards Celie, repeating "You're gonna do what your mammy wouldn't"² Celie becomes a mother of two kids from Alfonso, he takes them away from their mother. Celie believes that Alfonso takes her babies and killed them in the forest. In fact, her

stepfather sold them to the strange man. Then, Celie starts speak with God through series of letters to show the degeneration and loss the father image in her family.

Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I-aa I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening toLast spring after little Lucious come I heard them fussing. He was pulling on her arm. She say it too soon, Fonso, I ain't well. Finally he leave her alone. Me. (CP, 4)

The Color Purple is starting with signs of male's domination, Alphonso begins threaten Celie and she should be silent "You better never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mommy."(CP, 4). Celie begins to address series letters to God because she don't have anyone else to address her letters expect God. In short, through the novel, Celie's language exists without a body or audience, just as she exists without a self or identity. Nevertheless the major theme of the novel is being able to speak and Walker sees that the speaking cannot come from the empty shell of individuality that Celie presents early on. Thus, she tries to prove herself through speech and a desire for individual identity in the society as well as significant place in the universe .Phonso dominates on wife and her daughters by making all kinds of savagery against them specially Celie. phonso continues beating Celie and her brother from time to time. However, He does not end his physical and sexual abuse of his family. The lust of Phonso turned to other femal character Nettie because she was very beautiful .3

Through the novel, Celie explains in her words in the fifth letter hating

and rejecting all the kind of male therefore she shifted from looking at men to women .Celie in her mind imagine that man is represents evil and the role of father is absent in her life .Thus she said. “I don't even look at men. That’s the truth.I look at women .tho,cause I'm not scared of them”. (CP, 6)

In *The Color purple*, Phonso is a nasty character; he decided to sell Celie, with the name of marriage, to a divorce man with four children who wants a woman to serve them, and doing housework, this man, who is named Albert, wants to engage Nettie not Celie, but Phonso do not accepts and he try to dispose of Celie “he say, I got to git rid of her. She too old to be living here at home. And She a bad influence on my other girls. She'dcome with her own linen” (CP, 7). Albert, is the most important character in the novel, he practices long years of rigidity and oppression against Celie and other people before changing into a kind person. Albert like Phonso in many of his act. Celie married to a man that she is described as Mr.___. Her life with Albert is not better than life back with dad. Albert think that the only way to keep a woman in her place is to beat her, and he beats Celie. Albert didn’t love her. He’s in relationship with another woman, Shug Avery his mistress who refused to marry him.⁵ Celie says, " Pa call". Celie, he says."Like it was nothing. Albert wants another look at you." ⁵ (CP, 11).

Nettie , Celie sister is very attractive woman , she ignore Albert who was admire of her ,she run away from home and decided to write for Celie .over time Nettie writes many letters for her sister but Albert don’t tell Celie about them . Celie thinks that her sister is dead. Shung and Celie become very close friend "It's time to leave you and enter into the Creation. And you’re dead body is just the welcome mat I need" (CP,

227) by the end of this sentences, Albert leaves Celie alone. With Shug supports, the girl becomes very effective and independent woman, she learn how to love and hate. She starts to find a job as dressmaker in Memphis .6

No one can deny that men abuse Celie during her life, and only women supports her thus she is feel in love towards women and hates male in general. Celie gets her power from Shug that she does not feel as strongly about Celie as hers. Celie moves to stepfather's house after he is dead and continues her dressmaker work in her city. After Celie left him Albert at the end of the novel states that, he learned about the main aspect of love and life and how he and Celie become as friends.7

I start to wonder why we need love. Why us suffer. Why us black. Why us men and women. Where do children really come from? It didn't take long to realize I hardly knew anything. The more I wonder, he say, the more I love. (CP, 346)

Celie is developing a friendship with Albert, but she can never love a man again and believes that love will never be back in her life. Then, Nettie returns from Africa with her two children. The family is reunited, and Celie gets to experience the type of happiness that she could never have experienced before. Celie's final letter to God states that, despite her old age, "I think this the youngest us ever felt." (CP, 354)

The journey of Celie's transformation begins when she finds a support community. So, in her first letter, Celie speaks just with God. And in her last she talks to God, to people and to everything. Thus we see her in this quotation says "Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear Everything. Dear God "8 (CP, 292). The turning point of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* occurs when Celie, forces her freedom from

having a man controlling her and declare her individuality and her privilege to exist, she protest and says “I’m poor, I’m black, I may be ugly, and can’t cook. . . . But I’m here” (CP, 20). She unexpected to say one word because celie during her own life undertogo a ruthless form of male dominance. From Adrienne Rich point of v in general views, women have to prevail over these negative positions if they are to produce intellectual progress: 9

But fear and hatred of our bodies had often crippled our brains. Some of the most brilliant women of our time are still trying to think from somewhere outside their female bodies hence they are still merely reproducing old form of intellection. (Daniel, 69)

Discovering of desire starts, when Celie, restore of her body, which was attack by men, at the beginning her stepfather when he rape and beat her then husband. The restoration of her body gave Celie’s motivation to find individualism and she translates it to spoken language. Indeed, this incident learns Celie to love herself and others thus we see her in the novel address her letters to her body, her sister Nettie, instead of the God. Celie tries to ignore and forget the suffering that face it in her body, thus she defenses against her husband’s brutality: 10

“He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He says, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man”. (CP, 23)

In fact, Celie couldn’t have a desire to get appreciate her body until the arrival of her husband’s lover, Shug Avery. Celie nurses her like her mother “I wash her body; it feels like I’m praying” (CP, 80). Thus, we

notices that the effect of shung led Celie to discover herself under Shug's guidance. With the passing of time Shug helps Celie to discover her mysteries body and emotional experience. But the introduction requires that Celie sees physical body and emotion all of her parts first. For this, they needed mirror, one that Celie hold with her hand, with Shug's encouragement that there is something spectacular in our bodies to see. Shug stimulates her to look at herself, Celie follow her like an infant who fears and obey her on the other hand prepares Celie for this experiment "it's like we're been doing something wrong" (CP.83).¹⁰

"Listen, she say, right down there in your pussy is a little button that gits real hot when you do you know what with somebody. It git boner and hotter and then it melt. That the good part. But other parts good too, she says. Lot of sucking go on, here and there, she say. Lot of finger and tongue work". (CP.81)

Indeed, Shug attempts to speak simple language for someone that's as virgin in spirit as Celie, but she is uncommon to use like this words "when you do 'you know what 'with somebody" (CP, 40). Celie looks to her body in the mirror while Shug watch her from the door; she guides Celie to know when it is clear to do whatever. Celie is shocked when she sees her body in the mirror. "Ugh. All that hair. Then my pussy lips be black. Then inside look like a wet rose".¹¹ (CP, 83).

Proudly, Celie discovered her own identity and individualism. Thus she begins to find herself through female relationships with Shug, Nettie and others recently found identity, Celie can get rid of man's restrictions and join a community of women, However, Celie within herself sees the rose, hidden and shadowed. The beauty that isn't only as deep as skin, which allows her to see the world differently, love creation and accept

God again. Shug teaches Celie to find God in herself, in nature, and in her own feelings, including erotic ones and Shug tells her. In between are the lips, representing Celie's present state.¹³

"Oh, she say. God love all those feelings. That's some of the best stuff God did. And when you know God loves 'em you enjoys 'em a lot more. You can just relax, go with everything that's going, and praise God by liking what you like. God don't think it dirty? I ast." (CP, 204).

Although the protagonist of the novel is gradually learning, under Shug's guidance, to discover her body, her lips are for the time being dried, indicative of her spiritual virginity and her silence. Celie and Shug make oral love for the first time. "Us kiss and kiss till us can't hardly kiss no more". (CP, 118). This emotion led Celie to feel maternal and soulful "Then I feel something real soft and wet on my breast; feel like one of my little lost babies' mouth. Way after a while, I act like a lost baby" The sound she made while giving her last breath to orgasm screams that she is here again, in this world, willingly and passionately.¹⁴

In general views, the child who can be subjected for fear and psychological disorder in early stage of his development, he may be under autistic and such a feeling sign of disturbances' in an individual's sense of identity. So the mirror stage for Celie open the door for her mind and imagination , the mirror helping her to be as part for this world .¹⁵

Another sign of her captured unfinished development and autism is inability to find audience for her voice. Only Shug was able to take Celie out of her autism, only Shug was able to release Celie. Celie therefore was, in Shug's embrace, as free as the world could allow her to

be; Celie needs sympathetic person man or women to learn her how to speak and behave also how she fellow the word thus the first attempt to let Celie speak about her personality was by Sofia because Celie in general cannot accept and develop the concept of otherness knows the words but too afraid and unsure of how to develop an action to follow those words..16

The huge influence of Shug on personality of Celie is very obvious. Like a mother that teach her kid to say a word. Shug paved the way for Celie to discover the world and herself and her effect on Celie's personality is very great. She becomes as kind mother when teaches her innocent children and prepares them how to say and doing the things, Shug help Celie to know the things about her world as well as about herself. The support system supplied by Shug allows Celie to recover and saved her from her own traumatic history. Moreover, Shug help Celie to regain letters that were written to her sister. When the novel start Shug treating Celie like a servant. With event of the novel the relation between Shug and Celie begin to shin and Celie gradually restore her ability to consolidation and gathering her soul and life. It also infuses her with a new zeal for life. The worst things of this long-term degeneration of people was education.17

The eagerness for education and go to school is a repeated theme in the novel. Like Celie, Alice Walker during her educated in school, she attended segregated school so this low-quality of facilities made the education very difficult even for students this circumstances make them disappointed

"The first time I got big Pa took me out of school. He never care that I love it. Nettie stood there at the gate holding tight to my hand. I was all dress for first day. You too dumb to keep going to school, Pa say. Nettie the clever one in this bunch. But Pa, Nettie say, crying, Celie smart too. Even Miss Beasley say so. Nettie dote on Miss Beasley. Think nobody like her in the world. Say, whoever listen to anything Addie Beasley have to say. 18(CP .1)

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper has found out that the transformation and search about identity themes are very common in Walkers works. Celie the protagonist of *The Color Purple* suffers from her stepfather (Pa) and her husband Albert which she referred at the beginning of the novel as Mr__, from other side. At the end of this work, Celie becomes very strong and independent woman. Celie and Albert become as friends, he deals with her as human being and all the men that face in her life understanding that Celie becomes very stronger than they thought. Celie grows to value her ownself and discovered her own identity and individualism especially when she leaves her husband and turns to making and stitches pants. During the novel she begins to find herself through female relationships with Shug, Nettie and others .Celie through her new life, she can break free from the masculine limitations against words. Indeed Celie is not only person prove her identity. Nettie was also suffered by her stepfather and at the end she got married, came back to her sister and built her own identity. Sophia suffers too much

from her father in law and white male as well, but after her detention, she come back to her husband and her family and become independent.

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