

Regionalism in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

Ala Eddin Sadeq^{[a],*}

^[a]Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

This study explores Alice Walker's presentation of the double victimization of black women in the culture of African-American people in her novel *The Color Purple* (1985). It emphasizes the significance of Walker's portrayal of this dilemma, since living in South America has a profound impact on black people in general, and on women in particular. Women in that society suffer from double-otherness, being subjugated not only by white people, but also by black men. Walker has both positive and negative feelings about the South, which greatly influences the accuracy of the events presented in the novel. Walker has an amalgamation of negative and positive feelings towards the South; which justifies her temptation to romanticize the literature about the region, and promotes her ability to present an authentic account. In *The Color Purple*, Walker gives an account of the experiences of African-Americans women in a society dominated by male and white people. Through sketching the characters, Walker presents various themes including black feminism, selfhood and discrimination.

Key words: Alice Walker; African-American; *The Color Purple*; Feminism and discrimination

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important novels in African-American literature that discusses the situation of black women in America is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1985). The novel has been studied from different perspectives. For example, some scholars investigated the novel as a feminist point of view, such as Om P. Juneja, who explains in her article *The Purple Colour of Walker Women: Their Journey from Slavery to Liberation* (2008) that women have been on the receiving end of the high injustices in the society, including oppression and suppression. In the first chapter, Walker describes the plight of a young girl who is raped by her step-father, who threatens to kill her mother if she discloses the inhumane act to anybody saying that, "You better not never to tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (Walker, 1985, p.39). In the fear of the blackmail, the girl finds consolation in writing letters to God to express her hopelessness. The abuse of women by men in the society is a norm; the sexual and physical abuse that women, such as Celie, is a result of a social behavior that portrays men as superior to women. When Albert's son asks his father why he abuses Celie, he replies that it is because she is a wife, implying that the society justifies physical abuse of women by men. Women have no defense against the social injustices that they experience because their main interest is to survive (Walker, 1985). The development of the woman from a young girl who is abused to a triumphant woman who walks out of an abusive marriage is an indication that the social construction of women as a lesser gender can be changed.

Other scholars, on the other hand, explore the novel from racial and postcolonial perspectives. In his article, "Deconstruction of Power: The Search of Voice and Identity in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*," for instance, Abdus Sattar reveals that Walker links oppression against women to racism. The cruelty of black men presented in

the story results from their frustration on being male in a white-dominated region (Sattar, 2014). Regarding the plight of black women in the society, Walker explains that they have the lowest position in the social hierarchy. She argues that the black women are at the receiving end of racism in the white-dominated society, and that they are regarded as slaves. Black women are also regarded as lesser human beings as indicated by Walker. This is crystalized in the character of the protagonist, Celie, who is forced to marry an older man in the neighborhood.

The significance of this study is that it combines the feminist and the postcolonial perspectives through connecting them to the geographical site. It aims at exploring Alice Walker's presentation of South America as a literary site where black people are presented authentically by being granted voices to speak for themselves.

1. BLACK FEMINIST THEORY

The Color Purple by Alice Walker describes the cruel and unjust treatment that women face in the society. Walker explains the struggles that colored women faced in the nineteenth century to be accepted in the white-dominated society, which also discriminates against women. The issue of gender bias favors men to women, but the plight of these women worsens if they are colored (Sveinsdóttir, 2012). In a society where the racist ideology of white supremacy dominates, black oppression limits the ability of the colored women to develop. Through the character of Celie, an uneducated African-American woman, Walker explains the extent of racial and gender bias in the United States. Celie strives hard to escape the brutality she faces from men in the society, including her father, who one might expect would protect her. She complains of the physical and sexual abuse, including raping her, inflicted upon her by her step-father. Rape against Celie by her step-father is a clear indication of the unfair treatment that women receive from men. The rape scene is not related to racial bias because Celie is raped by a man from her race, it is rather related to the andocentric attitude in her society. This scene also aggravates the oppression of the black women in the society.

Black women are in the lowest position of humanity. As Celie's life progresses, she is forced to marry an older man in the neighborhood. Being a widower, one would expect that he needs a wife to be his companion and to look after his four children. However, this is not the case with the widower, who rejects marrying Celie at first until he is offered cattle; an indication of the worthlessness of black women (Walker, 1985). Walker links black oppression against women to racism. The cruelty of black men presented in the story results from their frustration on being male in a white-dominated region (Sattar, 2014). The African-American men struggle to be accepted in

the society due to racial bias, and hence release their frustration on the colored female (Jinke, 2006). Explaining the predicament the double victimization of black women in the society, Walker explains that they have no place in such a society. She describes how the black women are regarded as slaves although the country is said to be free. Furthermore, the black women experience gender bias in a male-dominated world. Therefore, women have to fight all the time, as Sophia in the novel complains:

All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my uncles. I had to fight my brothers. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men, but I ain't never thought I'd have to fight in my own house. (Walker, 1985, p.31)

The theme of black oppression in the novel is indicted by the fact that the black women find it hard to fight for equality in the country. Apart from the oppression and cruelty shown by the black men, the women are also mistreated by the white women. The colored women are expected by the society to be submissive as they are still slaves, while their white counterparts are allowed to be passive due to gender bias. The only struggle that the white women deal with, on the other hand, is gender bias.

The issue of black oppression does not only affect the colored women, but also the welfare of the whole society. Walker expresses her concern about the acknowledgment of racism in the society, by explaining that the social amenities, such as schools attended by the African-American communities are poorly maintained (Sedehi et al., 2014). The white rulers do not care much about the education of the blacks; thus, they refuse to fund school projects. Additionally, there are poor housing conditions in areas where the blacks reside. Racial bias is also indicated at the market place where the blacks have to wait for the whites to be served before them.

2. DISCUSSION

Since the last decades of the twentieth century, the concept of black feminism in the society has been on the rise with an aim of promoting political, and social equality. Black feminism political theory aims at conceptualizing the social relations that exist in the society between people of different demographic backgrounds (Jinke, 2006). It is concerned with forces that enhance or limit the potential of different groups of people. Feminism is a concept that supports women have equal rights with men in the society on the grounds of social, economic and political aspects. It is the basis of movements that advocate for equality in the society. Feminism is founded on the ground that women have always been at the receiving end for the oppressions shown in the society due to attributes such as gender and race. Black feminism focuses on the issue of inequality of women based on gender, social class, race, sexual orientation, gender and disability. It advocates for equality of men and women regardless of the variables.

Through Walker's *The Color Purple*, one understands the concept of feminism clearly as indicated by the suffering experienced by Celie and how she overcomes it (Walker, 1985).

The black feminist political theory, therefore, can be employed in the novel, as Walker highlighting the aspects that affect the black women in the society. She enhances knowledge about how black oppression may affect the economic and social development of black women in the society.

The popularity of Black feminism in the Western countries became common in the 1960s and 1970s, where it was motivated by the need to fight for equality between men and women (Darmawanti, 2012). In the United States, the most popular black feminist movement was abolitionist movement. The primary aim of the movement was to end slavery in the country and ensure the equality of all citizens regardless of their social status, race and gender. Black feminism does not only aim at dismantling the social constructions of the dominant communities, but also promote the economic and social development of black women. The concept of black feminism is evident in Walker's novel through the dilemma of the black women characters. In *The Color Purple*, Walker shows the adverse impacts that oppression of black women has on their development. Black women suffer from discrimination and oppression from black men and the white men and women.

2.1 Walker as a Black Southern Writer

The Color Purple is a reflection of the personal background of Walker, growing up as a black woman in a patriarchal and white dominated society. Walker's motivation to write about the oppression of black women in the United States is also motivated by her mentors, who include her mother (Walker, 1985). Walker is surrounded by strong women who beat the odds in the society in a bid to be equal to men. Walker's mother works hard to ensure that she is educated, in a society where education is viewed as a reserve for men. In the novel, Walker explains that illiteracy is among the factors that affect the empowerment of black women in the society (Maoui, 2012).

Walker introduces Celie in the first chapter of the novel and describes the oppression she suffers from at the hands of her step-father. The fact that Celie is abused by her own father indicates the worthlessness and disrespect that the black women face. She experiences the same suffering later when she is married to a widower who abuses her. Her helplessness is indicated by the fact that she does not have anybody to share her traumatic experiences with. Her step-father threatens to kill her mother if she tells anybody but God, and thus, she resorts to writing letters to God. He says, "You'd better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy." The helplessness that is faced by Celie is a reflection of the experience faced by colored women in male dominated societies. The efforts

by the women to fight for equality are often frustrated by the persons who are in authority and they are mostly men. Celie is presented as an uneducated woman, who is oppressed by her step-father but is helpless about it. Illiteracy is among the factors that limit the Celie's ability to fight for her freedom. Although Walker is unaffected by illiteracy directly, she understands the link between education and women empowerment (Walker, 1985). It is through education that she raises awareness about the oppression of African-American women.

The political and social events that occurred in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s played a significant role in influencing the ideas developed by Walker. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States is among the factors that greatly influenced Walker's writings about the plight of black women in the society (Ampadu, 2015). The organization advocated for equality of all in the society in terms of education and access to social amenities. In 1954, the court ruled in favor of the Civil Rights Movement and declared that having separate social amenities such as school for the whites and colored people. The ruling gave Walker confidence that it is possible for black women from the Southern region to gain equality in the society.

As a black woman, Walker is able to identify with black women in the United States and to fully understand their oppression. Having been brought up in rural Georgia, Walker understands the harsh treatment that the black women receive at the hands of the white political leaders (Jinke, 2006). Walker believes that Southern writers have rich knowledge about racial and gender equality issues in the society. Although Walker cites that she is not nostalgic for the poverty that she experienced when growing up, she, nonetheless, praises the region for its aesthetic value. It is clear that Walker believes that the Southern people are as important as the rest of the Americans. She is convinced that the poor economic status in the South is among the factors that restrict the economic and social development of the people. Women are the most affected people in the society as they face gender and racial bias in.

Walker's ability to tell the story of the Southern region is enhanced by the fact that she has mixed feelings about the South. She loathes the greedy nature of the white man who ruled the region as they mistreated the people of color in the region. Additionally, some members of Walker's family including her grandmother were victims of the racial and gender bias in the region. Due to the negative perception that Walker holds against the South, she is able to bring out the issues of gender and racial bias through the characters. However, Walker has some positive perceptions about the South including the serene environment (Zhu, 2008). She describes the earth as beautiful, indicating that one feels like tasting it all the time. Walker dislikes the religious beliefs held by the people in the South because they reflect the beliefs and aspirations of the whites, but she comes to appreciate them later in life. The positive perception about religion

is influenced by the fact that religion acts as a consolation for the blacks. The religious beliefs that the blacks hold help them to get through the hardships in life, especially in relation to racial and gender prejudice. The mixed feeling about the South enables Walker to provide a clear account of the dilemma of women in the region, without romanticizing it naively (Ottoh-Agede, 2013).

2.2 The Oppressive Social Machinery in *The Color Purple*

Walker describes a community that is characterized by social organizations that are oppressive. Social organizations refer to relations that guide interactions of people in the social setting. They are formed through the interaction of people in the community. Among the aspects that describe social organizations in a given society is gender, because people of the same gender interact differently. The other aspect that influences social organization of the society is the structure of division of labor, as indicated by discrimination in the recruitment agencies. Sexual orientation is the other aspect that determines the social organization of the community. In the novel, it is clear that social organizations in the society promote the oppression of black women.

One of the oppressive machineries in the society is marriage. The primary aim of marriage in the community is companionship and recreation, but Walker presents it as an oppressive institution. The marriage between Celie's mother and her step-father is oppressive, as her mother is heard mourning in her deathbed. Further, the brutality of Celie's step-father indicates that he is an abusive husband (Ya-mei, 2008). The man indicates his dissatisfaction with marriage when he tells Celie that he wants her to do what her mother is unable to do. The marriage between Albert and Celie is also oppressive as he beats her up even for reasons that she cannot understand. Celie explains the oppression in her marriage by citing that, "He beat me like he beat the children. ... It all I can do not to cry." (Walker, 1985, p.22).

2.3 Black Woman as a "Whole" Character or "Self"

A character is said to be whole if they show the ability to overcome the limitations that life exposes them to. Such individuals show resilience regardless of the circumstances in their lives. In *The Color Purple*, Walker gives a story of Celie, a woman who is oppressed and treated harshly by everyone in the community including fellow women who are not colored. Walker describes Celie as a whole character by the way she is able to overcome the brutality she experiences due to gender and racial bias in the society. In the beginning of the story, Celie is presented as a black woman who is oppressed by her husband and raped by her step-father, but later she overcomes the challenges and becomes empowered. She develops from a silent and powerless woman in the

society to a powerful individual who does not give in to oppression. In the beginning, Celie has no one to help her overcome the brutality that she receives from her step-father but instead resolves to write letters to God (Qin, 2012). The act of writing letters to God indicates that Celie does not make independent decisions because the idea is proposed by her step-father.

Through Celie, Walker presents black women as powerless as they cannot fight for their rights. Their lives are dictated by the men, who threaten them to keep quiet and suffer in silence. After a series of rape ordeals by her stepfather, Celie expresses her discomfort with the brutality but she is told to keep it to herself. Celie cannot tell anyone about the rape or else her mother would be killed. In a bid to protect her mother, she is forced to do as advised; write letters to God (Walker, 1985). The other oppressive action that portrays black women as vulnerable in the novel is the fact that they cannot make important decisions in life. Walker explains how Celie is forced to marry a widower who she does not love. Further, her children are taken away from her unknowingly. She spends most of her life tolerating the oppressive treatment in the society, but she later realizes a brighter side of life.

Celie portrays a whole character by rising above the challenges that life involves her in. After enduring suffering for a long time, she meets other women who face the same kind of oppression but she prefers to be passive and submissive instead of fighting for equality. Walker implies that black women get so used to oppression that they fear challenging the authorities who also oppress them. This is probably one of the reasons why black women were oppressed for a long time. For the sake of protecting the people she loves, Celie decides to embrace the idea of the other black women to fight for gender, class and racial equality. To protect Nettie, Celie offers herself to her father even after the sexual abuse she encounters at a young age from her stepfather. Her love for Shug leads her to spit on water that offered to the man who criticizes Shug unfairly. The act of spitting on the water by Celie shows her extent of hatred towards people who treat black women unfairly. It symbolizes the demand for respect by black women. Celie's realization that she was separated from her children for years triggers her to be more aggressive in the fight against gender and racial bias in the society. Her decision to walk away from marriage is among the bold decisions that Celie makes in her life. The decision becomes her breakthrough in life as she changes from a submissive and vulnerable woman to an independent one.

In the beginning of the novel, Walker indicates that Celie lacks self-worth due to the challenges she faces in life, but she later realizes that she is a worthy being (Zhu, 2008). The love that develops between her and Shug is among the factors that make Celie realize that she is worthy and motivates her to take an active role in

defending her position that of black women in the society. Her bitterness is transformed into love and she becomes more forgiving. Through love, the women are able to rise beyond their limitations (Shukla & Banerji, 2012). At the end of the narrative, the character becomes economically empowered and she is even able to employ other women including Sofia. She partners with other women and establishes a successful business. Her social life is enhanced and she reunites with her children and long-lost sister. Through the success of Celie, Walker indicates that black women can only succeed through unity.

2.4 Epiphany and Courage as a Threshold to Emancipation

In the novel, black feminism is unsuccessful at first because women are unaware of the existence of their problems. They suffer in silence as each one of them feels that the problems are unique to their lives. For example, Celie is reluctant to report Pa, even as he rapes her repeatedly for the fear of losing her mother (Harris, 1986). Instead of confiding in another person in the society, she prefers to suffer in silence and written her letters to God. As time passes, Celie gets used to the brutality and chooses to remain passive instead of acting on it. By refusing to share her experience with other women, Celia lives a miserable life. However, her ability to open up the issue leads to her realization that her problems are not unique and she makes a conscious decision to end the oppression. She shares her experience with Shug after realizing that black women do not have to tolerate oppression in the society. In the conversation below, Celie expresses her realization that there is a better life, indicating success of black feminism.

"Oh, Celie, there are colored people in the world who want us to know! Want us to grow and see the light! They are not all mean like Pa and Albert, or beaten down like ma was." (Walker, 1985 p.74)

She spits on water offered to the man who abuses Shug and decides to leave the abusive marriage. Her recognition that gender and racial bias in the society affects other black women leads to her decision to protect her loved ones. Black feminism leads to the formation of business partnership among the women, leading to their economic freedom. The black women are also socially empowered, as indicated by the decision by Celie to walk out of an abusive marriage as well as claim back her children.

Black feminism is also promoted by courage; fear is among the factors that promote racial and gender bias in the society. In the novel, Celie fears to break out of the shell of oppression which she faces. Her fear of confronting the issues affecting her leads to misery and suffering, which end the moment she realizes that black women deserve better treatment from the community. Celie is denied happiness, not only because she is oppressed by Pa and her husband, but also because her children are taken away from her. The lack of courage

to confront Pa for the children denies her happiness as she believes that her children are nonexistent (Walker, 1985). Living in a patriarchic and white-dominated society, the black women need to have the courage to change the social attitudes in the society for successful black feminism. *The Color Purple* is about the plight of colored women in the nineteenth century. During the time, women were treated as unequal to men and in some cases considered as sexual objects. The male-dominated society expected women to be submissive and passive, making it hard for the women to raise issues about gender equality. The other factor that limited black feminism in the society was the fact that the women were black. The white-dominated society would not listen to the pleas of women of color. The gender and racial inferiority among the black women in the novel led them to lead a life of misery, until they gathered the courage to rise against oppression in the society. There is no single woman in the novel that has the courage to challenge the current social environment. The courage to promote black feminism is gained through unity by the women.

Black feminism is promoted by the unity among the women of color. In the novel, the women realize the need to take action against their oppression by men through unity. The impact of an individual in fighting for equality is more effective when they join hands with the other people with the same needs. This type of union is witnessed by employees when they fight for a rise in payment or better working conditions. To have their pleas communicated effectively, the numbers count. The concept of collective bargaining used by labor unions applies greatly in black feminism. In the novel, each of the black women suffers brutality and oppression from their husbands and other members of the society to the extent that they take the suffering as normal. Black feminism is achieved when the women join hands to fight against a common cause. Through unity, women achieve freedom and become socially and economically empowered. Black women succeed in changing the attitudes of the people about gender equality, which is among the primary aims of black feminism. It is only after Celie leaves that her husband realizes the ill treatment he made her go through. Albert is influenced by the women to change his attitude towards women in the society.

2.5 Inner World of Blacks

The inner world of a given community reflects its thoughts, desires, memories and ideas. For the women of color, their inner world is characterized by painful memories of suffering and the desire to be treated equally to men through the idea of black feminism. Black women struggle with acceptance the society for being colored as well as their gender, which is regarded as inferior to men. Their past comprises of bruised memories about their position in the society. Black women have endured many years of slavery and forced labor fueled by racism.

Residing in a nation where the majority of the people, including the leaders, are white, women of color have no place in the society. Black women also have painful memories about the brutality and oppression perpetrated by black men. The issue of gender bias makes the lives of black women in the society unbearable. Helplessness is also a feature that characterizes the inner world of the blacks. Due to their low literacy level and the belief in the social construction that embraces male chauvinism, the black women are unable to fight for equality and freedom. In the novel, Walker describes Celie as an uneducated woman, indicating the low literacy level among the black women (Ibid.). The low level of literacy is among the factors that limit the ability of the black women to fight for gender and racial equality.

The other feature that characterizes the inner world of the black women is the desire to be treated equally. The challenges faced by black women as a result of gender and class bias makes them yearn for freedom and economic empowerment. In *The Color Purple*, Walker explains that the black women in the story desire a nation where the whites and the blacks are treated equally. The cruel experience undergone by Sofia indicates the desire by the black women to be free of racial bias (Ibid.). After a misfortune, Sofia goes blind and suffers broken ribs. Instead of getting support she needs to survive, she is treated more harshly and at one point she lays on the floor without lights. Black women also desire to be treated fairly by men in the society. In the novel, Celie tells Pa about her emotional pain of the rape ordeals indicating that she wanted him to stop abusing her. The actions taken by the black women indicate their desire to be treated by the other citizens as equals. They uplift each other to achieve a common goal, which is to gain acceptance and freedom. Celie's miserable life ends the moment she meets other women that encourage her to fight for equality.

2.6 The Development of Selfhood

Selfhood is defined by an individual's ability to proclaim their identity or a sense of existence. It is the distinct identity that individuals have about themselves, which go beyond the social constructs about them. In the novel, the identity of the black women is distinct, as indicated by Celie. After decades of suffering, Celie defines her selfhood indicating, "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly, and can't cook.... But I'm here" (Ibid., p.102). In the phrase, Celie indicates that she is aware of the social constructs in the society but they do not define her being. Celie explains to Albert that she may be poor, ugly and colored but this she is more than just the societal definitions of self. Her selfhood defines her as a determined and strong woman who refuses to give in to oppression anymore. Based on the suffering that Celie experiences from Pa and Albert, her proclamation of selfhood is quite surprising. Her expression of selfhood indicates her development from a naïve and timid young

lady to a confident and strong woman. In the beginning of the novel, Walker explains that Celie's identity is not yet developed, due to her inability to express herself effectively. As a way of letting out her anger, Celie writes letters to God but she does not indicate her name. This is an indication that she is yet to develop her identity a black woman. She passively accepts the brutality and oppression from Pa and her husband and considers the suffering as a normal part of life. Her identity is defined by the social standards that describe her as poor and colored.

One of the aspects that define selfhood in the novel is the ability of black women to get the courage to speak. In the beginning, Celie suffers silently and she develops her selfhood quietly. Her selfhood is obtained through the distress she has and aspirations about the person she wants to become. The sexual abuse that she experienced from her stepfather and husband made her dislike her body and she felt empty. She almost agreed with the racist description of her body as ugly, but she met Shug, a woman who appreciated her and loved her right. The love she experienced from Shug made her define her selfhood as a person who is not defined by the assumption of racists that she was ugly. In the beginning of the story, it is clear that Celie is unaware of her identity as she says, "A girl at church say you git big if you bleed every month. I don't bleed no more" (Ibid., p.12). She does not understand that her periods miss due to the pregnancy because she is too young to understand her own body. Her selfhood is defined later along the story when realizes that her children are alive as opposed to her earlier belief that they may be dead.

The development of selfhood by Celie is influenced by her expansion of knowledge about spirituality. When she meets Shug, Celie learns a lot about God and the importance of experiencing love and sexual feelings without guilt. Before meeting Shug, Celie does not believe in love as she has never experienced it. The people around her only treat her brutally and she longs for love. Her sexual selfhood develops as she continues to interact with Shug where she learns about the love. Through Shug, Celie learns that she can have sexual pleasure guiltlessly. Her experience of sexual pleasure indicates her new attitude towards love in the selfhood.

In the novel, Walker explains the importance of equality in the United States regardless of an individual's sexuality, economic status, race and gender. She indicates that communities are nearly always black, indicating that everyone in the society is equal. The social constructions that limit peoples' ability to perceive their selfhood positively should not be accepted in the society (Fiske, 2008). The problems that Celie faces in the society due to her gender are criticized by Walker as inhumane and intolerable in the society. She also brings about the issue of education, where Celie's ability to communicate is limited by her low literacy level. Through the plight of Sofia, Walker communicates about the importance of

rising against racial bias. The justification of lesbianism by Shug indicates that everyone in the society is important regardless of their sexual orientation.

CONCLUSION

Walker demonstrates the notion of regionalism effectively to the audience through the characters. The identities in the novel are based on demographic features of the characters defined by their gender, sexual orientation, race and economic status. The most common form of regionalism as described by Walker is gender, where black women strive to make a solidarity to promote their social and economic empowerment. Women unite against the oppressive behavior in the society, and they succeed in enhancing the concept of black feminism. The request by Albert for Celie to remarry him is a clear indication that women succeed in breaking the social restrictions about the inferiority of women. Other form of regionalism indicated in the novel is sexual orientation. The relationship between Celie and Shug is mainly grounded on the love they feel for each other even though they have the same gender.

Walker succeeds in bringing out the important themes in the story including black feminism. The women in the story are presented as vulnerable and have no voice to air their grievances at the beginning of the story. However, they become strong and economically empowered after sharing their experiences. The harsh treatment that the black women receive from the black men and the white community does not get into their way of success. United, they gather the courage needed to confront social injustices in the community, and they realize self-fulfillment. Walker implies that unity is among the most crucial aspects that promote social justice in the society. Therefore, the minority groups in the society should join hands and fight for equity. Walker highlights the evils of racial and gender bias in a white dominated society that embraces patriarchy and chauvinism, but also explains that everyone has a place in the society, where egalitarianism should prevail.

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