

【原著】

A Study of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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アリス・ウォーカーの『カラーパープル』に関する一考察

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I

Alice Walker (1944–) has been regarded as one of the important international writers of the twentieth century. *The Color Purple* (1982) is her third novel, for which she won the Pulitzer Prize as well as the National Book Award in 1983.

The time and the place of the novel are the first half of the twentieth century and the rural South of America.¹ The story is about the growth and development of Celie, the protagonist of the novel, from an uneducated, abused black teenager to an accomplished black woman through encountering her sisterhood. Also, according to Mae G. Henderson, the story “deals with what it means to be poor, black, and female in the rural South during the first half of the twentieth century.”²

Walker is the youngest of eight children born to sharecropper parents in rural Georgia in 1944. She has an East Coast college education at Sarah Lawrence, in Bronxville, New York. She was married to a young Jewish civil-rights lawyer named Mel Leventhal, and they had a daughter. Later they dissolved through mutual consent. She earned her living by teaching at several universities and colleges in some states of America. As a writer, she has been awarded several prizes for her works.

Walker is not only an African-American writer but also feminism activist, a pioneer of her own feminist movement—womanist. According to *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1973), she defines the word “womanist” as follow:

Womanist 1. From *womanish*. (Opp. of “girlish,” i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color.... Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior.³

Walker's birth place is Georgia in the South. She started a hard life and her family was poor and lower class. About her father, she mentions that he was “a poor man exploited by the rural middle-class rich, like millions of peasants the world over.”⁴ She was independent and positively did housework in her childhood.

The states in the South were traditionally famous for white supremacy, and their patriarchy was deep-rooted in family life. So, the black women were physical and mental victims of a bad custom of black men's treating women like a slave. As a black woman there, Walker was made to see her

mother's and sisters' sexism and racism. She was smart enough to recognize black's social discrimination early in life and was supposed to have a volition of protesting especially black women's discrimination.

Her background above prompted her to become involved in Civil Rights movements. Even when she was a student, she was involved in Civil Rights movement. She was greatly interested in black power and the past lives in black society. She devotes her life to fight with any power that is against black women. In the same book above, she says "I would like to call myself revolutionary, for I am always changing, and growing, it is hoped for the good of more black people."⁵ Concerning the theme of black women's sexism, she produced two novels *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970) and *Everyday Use* (1973).

Barbara Christian says "Walker often gives us the story as it comes into being, rather than delivering the product, classic and clean."⁶ She shocks the readers by letting them know the condition of southern black girls and women in the early twentieth century. In the opening of *The Color Purple*, Celie writes about her stepfather's abuse as follows:

He never had a kine word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't. First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.

But I don't never git used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long. (1-2)⁷

Here the abuse Celie endures is her stepfather's incest. The readers imagine certain miserable scenes of American black women's oppression. Another oppressive scene is found in the story. Celie's husband Albert, called "Mister" by her, asks her step-father to let him marry her sister Nettie. Celie's letter says her stepfather's words as follows:

Well, He say, real slow, I can't let you have Nettie. She too young. Don't know nothing but what you tell her. Sides, I want her to git some more schooling. Make a schoolteacher out of her. But I can let you have Celie. She the oldest anyway. She ought to marry first. She ain't fresh tho, but I spect you know that. She spoiled. Twice. But you don't need a fresh woman no how. I got a fresh one in there myself and she sick all the time. He spit, over the railing. The children git on her nerve, she not much of a cook. And she big already. (8-9)

After his words to Mister, Celie is told to turn around before the men. The readers easily associate the scene with slave trade in American history. Even those introductory scenes giving the readers the impression that black women were severely oppressed by black men. Walker finds an effective way to leave an impression is by telling someone's personal history. She says Celie's model is her grandmother and studies her past history to make the novel.

The aim of this thesis is to study how Walker tries to write about Celie's spiritual growth overcoming her hardship by the support of her sisterhood: Nettie, Sofia Butler and Shug Avery

in *The Color Purple* in order to succeed in enlarging her *womanist* movements.

II

The Color Purple is an epistolary novel. The novel is composed of 92 letters—56 from Celie to God; 22 from Celie to her sister Nettie; and 14 from Nettie to Celie. The story is told primarily from the point of Celie, who addresses her letters to God, and later to Nettie. Those letters work by letting the readers know the whole story through the letter-writers' point of view respectively. It is impossible to deliver Celie's letters to God, the letters to Nettie are returned unopen, and Nettie's letters to Celie are not read until thirty years after Nettie sends them. So, according to Kyoko Nakano, "most of the letters in the novel do not function as concrete means of communication between writers and addressees."⁸ As Carolyn Williams suggests, the novel is more "an example of epistolary novel with close affinities to the journal, diary, or autobiographical confession."⁹

Historically speaking, "epistolary novel" is the oldest and most traditional novel form in English literature. Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748) and William H. Brown's *Power of Sympathy* (1789) are famous for successful epistolary novels. According to Bernard W. Bell, they tell "the sentimental, sensational tales of seduction that initiated the British and Euro-American traditions of the novel."¹⁰ Along with diaries, letters are the dominant mode of expression allowed women to write in the West. Letter and diaries are good tools for them to express their internal monologues easily and passionately.

Christian says "Feminist historians find letters to be a principal source of information and facts about the everyday lives of women and their own perceptions about their lives."¹¹ Walker studies the history of her family. She thinks of letters as the form of expressing the story of the novel. With the epistolary style, according to Christian, Walker has Celie "express the impact of oppression on her spirit as well as her growing internal strength and final victory."¹² The internal strength is Celie's self-reliance based on spiritual release from her traditional black Christian belief.

The final victory is Celie's mental and physical release from oppressing black men as a revolutionary leap forwarding into a new social order based on sexual egalitarianism.

Celie is an uneducated and illiterate girl. She would never have kept a diary or written a story. Her letter witting starts awkwardly halting as follows:

Dear God,

I am fourteen years old. ~~I am~~ I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me.

Last 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. A week go by, he pulling on her arm again. She say Naw, I ain't gonna. Can't you see I'm already half dead, an all of these children.

She went to visit her sister doctor over Macon. Left me to see after the others. He never had a kine word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't. First he

put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.

But I don't never git used to it. And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long. (1-2)

Celie entreats God to save herself by writing "I am fourteen years old. I am I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (1). She starts to record her daily life and feelings like diary. Closely reading several letters of Celie's, the readers find she is an illiterate girl and the tone of her writing is naïve. Moreover, the letter above shocks the readers by revealing that the girl is violated by her stepfather even though she is only fourteen years old. Henderson notes "Like the Pure but Betrayed Maiden of the sentimental story, Walker's heroine is a victim of sexual abuse."¹³ Walker has the courage to expose black women's situation in those days.

Also, Celie's lack of education is shown in her letters, which she writes in black folk English. Truly, her English is complexing and unfamiliar to the readers, which makes them acquainted with the speech of rural southern black people. Celie diligently records the talk between her stepfather and her husband as follows:

Mr. — say. Well Sir, I sure hope you done change your mind.

He say, Naw, Can't say I is.

Mr. — say. Well, you know, my poor little ones sure could use a mother.

Well, He say, real slow, I can't let you have Nettie. She too young. Don't know nothing but what you tell her.... He spit, over the railing. The children git on her nerve, she not much of a cook. And she big already.

Mr. — he don't say nothing. I stop crying I'm so surprise.

She ugly. He say. But she ain't no stranger to hard work. And she clean. And God done fixed her. You can do everything just like you want to and she ain't gonna make you feed it or clothe it. (8-9)

Celie using the vernacular English, her voice in her letters makes the impact of her story even greater. Exposing her black folk English helps to expose the reality of black women's lives in the South to the readers. Walker's use of the vernacular English follows Zora Neale Hurston's in her work *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). She greatly respects the writer, saying she is "one of the most significant unread authors in America."¹⁴ Maria Lauret notes "In Celie's speech, we hear an echo of Janie Crawford, Hurston's protagonist in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), a novel Walker brought back to the reading public's attention after decades of neglect."¹⁵ Christian notes "Walker explores the richness and clarity of black folk English in such a way that the reader understands that the inner core of a person cannot be truly known except through her own language."¹⁶

III

Celie lives two lives in the novel. One life is full of pain in that she is oppressed by black men and the other is comfortable and relaxed in that she is free and independent of black men. When does she have the turning point? She can change her lives after she meets her sisterhood.

Celie is married to a black husband when she is fourteen. She is too cowardly to argue with her husband as well as her stepfather. She is always kicked and splatted as well as given a lot of swearing by those dominant men. She can confess her sad and miserable situations only to God. She writes to God 56 times from the beginning of the story. She writes to God about her stepfather's cruel treatment as already seen in her first letter.

The letter below says about her patience for husband's beating as follows:

Dear God,

Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr. — say, Cause she my wife. Plus, she stubborn. All women good for —he don't finish. He just tuck his chin over the paper like he do. Remind me of Pa.

Harpo ast me, How come you stubborn? He don't ast How come you his wife? Nobody ast that.

I say, Just born that way, I reckon.

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, 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. (23)

Celie cannot even call her husband by any other name than "Mister." She cannot do but imagine herself to be a tree so that she may endure any oppression from black men though she is human but nothing other than one. She is abused by her stepfather and her husband and forced to serve and obey men, whatever demands they make upon her. Consequently, her confidence and self-respect are eroded to such an extent that she cannot allow herself to experience any emotions that take her energy away from simply surviving from one day to the next. One day Nettie encourages Celie to fight with her husband, but she talks to herself: "But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive" (18).

The readers must know Celie's case is not exceptional. Such black men's oppression as her husband's was often seen between the black men and women even in the twentieth century. Blacks are discriminated against by Whites and also a black woman is discriminated by a black man. The racial discrimination in America has a multilevel structure. Walker has been fighting for a black woman's freedom and self-reliance at the risk of her life. She determines to fight with any power for the weak and is surely a great activist. She has joined the Civil Rights movement as well as written her works through her life.

Celie loves Nettie more than anyone else in the world. Nettie is Celie's sister. She is academic and loves her very much. She writes: "Helping me with spelling and everything else she think I need to know. No matter what happen, Nettie steady try to teach me what go on in the world. And

she a good teacher too" (17). She is the only comfort and hope for Celie while she is oppressed by her black men. Nettie is forced to be away from Celie by Mister. Nettie Leaving Mister's house, Celie asks Nettie to write letters and she promises her sister by saying "Nothing but death can keep me from it" (19). However, Nettie's letters do not come to her because they are hidden by Mister every time they come.

Later, after parting with Nettie, Celie encounters two black women, Sofia and Shug. Sofia is Celie's stepson Harpo's wife and dominates him. Celie writes: "She stand up, big, strong, healthy girl" (33). She is put in a prison after swearing at the mayor's wife and is subjected to humiliation by becoming her maid.

Shug is a beautiful blues singer and Mister's mistress. She is always admired and taken care of by him. Celie's first impression of Shug is written: "Shug Avery was a woman. The most beautiful woman I ever saw. She more pretty then my mama. She bout ten thousand times more prettier then me" (7). Celie envies Shug's beauty but she also finds her notoriety in hearing the church preacher's criticism:

Even the preacher got his mouth on Shug Avery, now she down. He take her condition for his text. He don't call no name, but he don't have to. Everybody know who he mean. He talk about a strumpet in short skirts, smoking cigarettes, drinking gin. Singing for money and taking other women mens. Talk bout slut, hussy, heifer and streetcleaner. (46)

Those women suffer misfortunes if they try to live their lives in their own way in the society. The society is filled with unreasonableness and bad will for black women. Despite their unfortunate incidents in their lives, they are strong and self-reliant enough to live for themselves in the story.

Sofia's strength and aggressiveness help Celie to recognize that a woman can fight with any power and stand up for herself. Shug's philanthropy helps Celie to realize the value of her existence. Shug dedicates the song "Miss Celie's Song" to Celie. The song marks the beginning of Celie's realization of her value.

Shug always encourages Celie to do everything as she pleases. She helps Celie find Nettie's letters hidden by Mister. Shug invites her to find the letters together, saying as follows:

Now that I know Albert hiding Nettie's letters, I know exactly where they is. They in his trunk. Everything that mean something to Albert go in his trunk. He keep it locked up tight, but Shug can git the key.

One night when Mr. — and Grady gone, us open the trunk. Us find a lot of Shug's underclothes, some nasty picture postcards, and way down under his tobacco, Nettie's letters. Bunches and bunches of them. Some fat, some thin. Some open, some not.

How us gon do this? I ast Shug.

She say. Simple. We take the letters out of the envelopes, leave the envelopes just like they is. I don't think he look in this corner of the trunk much, she say. (129)

Finding Nettie's letters accomplishes Celie's reunion with her. It plays a vital role in breaking a

seal for Celie to proceed to another world. Reading them encourages her to change her lifestyle as well as her heart and mind. She finds a talent for her creative crafts such as needlework. She begins making genderless pants to make her living by herself.

Soon there occurs a special romantic relationship between Celie and Shug. The form of love, lesbianism, leads Celie to another world beyond gender. Nakano notes "Shug's sincere affection toward Celie liberates her physical and spiritual selves from the acute suffering in the tyrannical family, so that Celie's self-realization could demolish the fixed image of gender roles as well as heterosexuality."¹⁷ In order to understand the relationship between Celie and Shug, the readers should be aware of another of Walker's definition of "womanist":

Womanist 2. *Also*: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/ or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength.¹⁸

According to the definition above, Shug is a typical character as womanist in the novel.

Just before Celie leaves for Memphis with Shug, Celie attacks Mister with the words "You a lowdown dog is what's wrong, I say. It's time to leave you and enter into the Creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need" (207). To hear her complaint, "All round the table folkses mouths be dropping open" (207). That is the time when Celie becomes mentally strong enough to be, so to speak, a *womanist*. After Shug tells a laughing story about pants for her and dress for Mister, Celie becomes interested in pants for women. Then she uses needlework to make good pants for either men or women in Memphis. She makes profit by manufacturing them, which makes her economically self-reliant.

Celie lives her own life with self-reliance and without self-depreciation. Then she is able to write "Dear Nettie, I am so happy. I got love, I got work, I got money, friends and time. And you alive and be home soon. With our children" (222).

Thus, Nettie, Sofia and Shug are supporting and influential women for Celie in the story. From the beginning of the story, Celie seeks refuge from her male oppressors in the company of women. Her refuges are first staying with Nettie, then with Sofia and finally with Shug. The time when Celie shares with them is very crucial for her to become her own woman. At the end of the novel, the readers see Mister sews pants with Celie, and that Harpo stays home with the kids while Sofia works in the sisters' dry goods store. Dianne F. Sadoff says "Women gain strength by feminizing their men and creating a community of women and men who affirm female values of loving equality."¹⁹ That is the ideal goal of Walker's creating a community of human beings.

Why does Walker create those women for Celie in the story? They are "womanist" women created by Walker. They establish their lifestyles as well as her believes. They know even though they are rejected by others they respect their own lives. Their trials of life prove to be very significant later in the novel. They directly and indirectly encourage Celie to cause a miracle on her life through sisterhood. Walker knows if a woman changes herself, she needs an ideal sisterhood for herself.

IV

Especially, between Celie and Shug, the readers see very important religious topic “what is God?” Walker may challenge the readers to think of the theological question in the novel. Walker reports her cousin Faye’s speech about black people’s general idea of their church as follows:

“But Alice,” she explains, “in the black community, the church has more power than any other institution. We no longer have our schools. We never did have ‘town hall.’ All we ever really had was the black church, and thank God it hasn’t been integrated out of existence. It is my *church* that sponsors the day-care center I run. There was no other black institution that could take the responsibility.”²⁰

Hearing her cousin’s speech, she may question the value of church for her life. Can she agree everything depends on church? Can she ask “What is God?”

Celie writes to God as a form of prayer in the hope of improving her situation. She begins the practice of writing to God after her stepfather forces himself on her and warns her, “You better not never tell nobody but God” (1). She begins to write letters after his warning. The addressee of her letters is mainly the God. All she can do is to depend on God so that she may endure her painful life under her stepfather in her childhood and husband’s cruel treatment after her marriage. Her letter is written about Mister’s family as follows:

Dear God,

I spend my wedding day running from the oldest boy. He twelve. His mama died in his arms and he don’t want to hear nothing bout no new one. He pick up a rock and laid my head open. The blood run all down tween my breasts. His daddy say Don’t *do* that! But that’s all he say....So after I bandage my head best I can and cook dinner— they have a spring, not a well, and a wood stove look like a truck— I start trying to untangle hair. They only six and eight and they cry. They scream. They cuse me of murder. By ten o’clock I’m done. They cry theirselves to sleep. But I don’t cry. I lay there thinking bout Nettie while he on top of me, wonder if she safe.... (13)

After writing “Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me” (1) in her first letter, Celie continues to write a lot of letters to God. God is the existence that can relieve her from the hell someday. That is Celie’s first image of God. However, she is obliged to accept her severe environment. God has no answer to her even if she prays the God so earnestly and repeatedly.

One day, she has no more faith in the God and decides to finish writing to God. She writes to her sister by beginning with “Dear Nettie, I don’t write to God no more, I write to you” (199). In the letter, the readers see Celie tells Shug about her disappointment of God as follows:

Dear Nettie,

I don’t write to God no more. I write to you.

What happen to God? ast Shug.
Who that? I say.
She look at me serious.
Big a devil as you is, I say, you not worried bout no God, surely.
She say, Wait a minute. Hold on just a minute here. Just because I don't harass it like some peoples us know don't mean I ain't got religion.
What God do for me? I ast.
She say, Celie! Like she shock. He gave you life, good health, and a good woman that love you to death.
Yeah, I say, and he give me a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa and a sister I probably won't ever see again. Anyhow, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown.
She say. Miss Celie, You better hush. God might hear you.
Let 'im hear me, I say. If he ever listened to poor colored women the world would be a different place, I can tell you. (199–200)

Another letter includes Celie and Shug starts to discuss what God is like. Celie thinks of the image of God, "He big and old and tall and graybearded and white" (201). After Celie's image of God, Shug tells her about another image of God as follows:

She say. My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. Then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laughed and I cried and I run all around the house. I knew just what it was. In fact, when it happen, you can't miss it. It sort of like you know what, she say, grinning and rubbing high up on my thigh. (203)

Here Shug is something of a theologian for Celie. Shug's spirituality and her understanding of the nature of God enables Celie to discover that God exists in every part of the natural world and that love, both given and received, enables mankind to break free from traditional notions of what is male and what is female. Shug's doctrine about God allows Celie to free herself from the traditional concept of God as a white male.

After Shug's preaching, Celie realizes her image of God is mistaken, which makes her get another relation to God. Shug helps Celie grow up to become self-reliant enough to do everything on her own way. Nettie has another image of God while she is in Africa, writing "God is different to us now, after all these years in Africa. More spirit than ever before, and more internal" (264). Like Celie, she imagines God is neither man nor woman and loves everything. Sadoff says "this God metaphorically calls Nettie home from Africa so the reunited sisters may inherit their rightful estate and become merchants."²¹ Walker's final image of God is something genderless and has an endless love to take care of human beings.

Finally, she addresses to God by calling "Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear Everything. Dear God" (292). The change of calling God shows her victory or

enlightenment emancipation from gender, class and economy. She appreciates everything in life. God is not one that is silent to human beings but one that stays in them.

Thus, challenging the readers, Walker gives them her own image of God. Even if black women are born roughly, they have such a talent of self-developing. Their talent applies to their daily life and academic discussion. Their religious thinking “what the image of God is for them” can thus be developed.

V

The Color Purple is the story of Celie's growth from an uneducated, abused teenager to an accomplished woman who learns, with the help of her strong and supportive black women, Nettie, Sofia and Shug to stand up for herself and cope with hostile surroundings. In the end of the novel, Celie is a mature adult in charge of a business, having her own house and obtaining her own life. Why can Celie transform herself? The reason is that she is given her own essential sisterhood. Walker regards sisterhood between Celie and other three women like a strong bond among congregations.

As for the style of the novel, it is entirely written in a series of letters. Walker's use of the epistolary style is successful. She may know the style has been a traditional mode of expressing women's feelings and words effectively in the sentimental novels since the eighteenth century. In such a novel, the women frequently expire or succumb in form—if not always in spirit—to the patriarchal condition. However, the women in the novel reform the essential bases of the relationships, codes, and values of their world, and at the same time, strengthen and extend the bonds of female friendship. Henderson notes “Walker draws on certain codes and conventions of the genre, but revises them in such a way as to turn the sentimental novel on its head.”²²

Also, Walker's adoption of vernacular English is applied to Celie's language in her letters. The readers feel Celie's transformation intensely, because she tells her story in her own rural idiomatic black speech. On the other hand, Nettie's letters from Africa are written in standard English. The contrast of the sisters' different languages easily associates the readers with their different lifestyle and destiny. Christian says “To be free is the natural state of the living. And Celie's attainment of freedom affects not only her sisters, but her brothers as well.”²³

As for the content of the novel, in the story, the emphases are on the oppression black women experience in their relationships with black men — fathers, brothers and husbands, and also emphasized is the sisterhood they must share with each other so that they may liberate themselves. Especially through Celie's discussion with Shug, she learns a wider understanding of God. For Celie, God is neither white nor male, and stays as power in her. Celie's essential sisterhood is attributed to God staying in her. Walker portrays Celie's awakening her consciousness to love, independence and sisterhood more romantically than realistically.

Walker produces the novel based on the story through hearing black women in the South. However, Celie's growth is different from the growth into womanhood of an average black woman's in the South through the 1920s and 1930s. Bell says “Walker has created a contemporary paradigm of the liberated woman.”²⁴ Walker gives the importance of “sisterhood” to black women who will join *womanist* movements. Thus, *The Color Purple* exemplifies Walker's success of her

womanist movements which centers round the natural order of life, family and a complementary relationship between men and women which is all-inclusive and equal.

Notes

- 1 Catherine Broderick notes in "Reading Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: A Speculative Essay by Way of an Introduction," *Women's Studies Forum* 1 (1987), p. 22: "*The Color Purple*, Alice Walker's third novel, was published in 1982, and takes place from 1909 to 1943—the year before Alice Walker was born—or if we agree that spans 35 years—to 1944, the year of her birth."
- 2 Mae G. Henderson, "*The Color Purple*: Revisions and Redefinitions," *Modern Critical Views Alice Walker*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989), p. 67.
- 3 Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1973), p. xi.
- 4 Walker, *In Search*, p. 213.
- 5 Walker, *In Search*, p. 133.
- 6 Barbara Christian, *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), p. 92.
- 7 Walker, *The Color Purple* (New York: Pocket Books, 1982). All page references are from this edition and are given in parentheses in the main text.
- 8 Kyoko Nakano, *The Paradigm Shift in Alice Walker's The Color Purple, Meridian and The Temple of My Familiar* (Tokyo: Eihosha, 2005), p. 32.
- 9 Carolyn Williams, "'Trying To Do Without God': The Revision of Epistolary Address in *The Color Purple*," *Alice Walker's The Color Purple: Modern Critical Interpretations*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea, 2000), p. 81.
- 10 Bernard W. Bell, *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), p. 263.
- 11 Christian, p. 93.
- 12 Christian, p. 93.
- 13 Henderson, p. 68.
- 14 Walker, *In Search*, p. 93.
- 15 Maria Lauret, *Alice Walker*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 90.
- 16 Christian, p. 185.
- 17 Nakano, p. 24.
- 18 Walker, *In Search*, p. xi.
- 19 Dianne F. Sadoff, "Black Matrilineage: The Case of Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston," *Modern Critical Views Alice Walker*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989), p. 133.
- 20 Walker, *In Search*, p. 184.
- 21 Sadoff, p. 133.
- 22 Henderson, p. 68.
- 23 Christian, p. 95.
- 24 Bell, p. 263.

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