

A Study of Gender, Trauma, and Narrative Form IN

THE COLOR PURPLE

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Area of Research & Domain of Research

African American Literature, Trauma Theory, Gender Studies, Literary Analysis

Abstract

This research explores how Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* presents the intertwined themes of gender, trauma, and narrative structure. Set in the early 20th-century American South, the novel uses the epistolary form to depict the lived experiences of African American women, focusing particularly on psychological trauma, systemic oppression, and the journey toward empowerment.

The study stands out for its interdisciplinary approach, merging trauma theory and womanist literary criticism. While previous research often isolates feminist or postcolonial readings, this work integrates them to examine how race, gender, and historical context shape the characters' emotional and cultural struggles. It provides fresh insights into how trauma is narrated and how literature can act as a space for healing.

The methodology involves close textual analysis supported by critical and theoretical frameworks from trauma studies, gender theory, and African American history. The research includes contextual exploration to better understand the socio-cultural forces influencing the characters' experiences.

Findings suggest that *The Color Purple* not only portrays deep personal and collective trauma but also uses letter-writing as a powerful means of self-expression, healing, and transformation. The narrative turns silence into voice, showcasing the resilience and strength of marginalized women.

This study contributes to broader discussions on trauma and gender in literature and highlights the therapeutic role of storytelling. Future research could expand on the use of narrative as a form of resistance and emotional recovery in oppressed communities.