

EPIDERMALIZATION OF INFERIORITY: A TOOL FOR OF OPPRESSION IN WALKER'S *THE COLOR PURPLE*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the concept of Epidermalization of Inferiority in Walker's novel, The Color Purple (1982). The theoretical framework is based on Fanon's (1952), Black Skin, White Masks, while Enberg's work, The Epidermalization of Inferiority and the Lactification of Consciousness, provides the foundation for the theoretical framework. The study aims to identify the elements of chromatism, essentialism, and self-objectification in the novel and how these contribute to the Epidermalization of Inferiority among the characters. The research objectives include analyzing the various forms of Epidermalization of Inferiority portrayed in the novel. The study employs qualitative research methodology and discourse analysis to analyze the text. Relevant examples from the novel are cited to support the theoretical claims and to provide insight into the characters' experiences. The findings reveal that Epidermalization of Inferiority is a pervasive theme in the novel and that the characters' experiences are shaped by it. The study concludes that the novel is an important work of literature that highlights the struggles of African American women and their efforts to overcome societal barriers. Further research is recommended to explore the novel from different theoretical perspectives, including positive discourse analysis and stylistics.

Key words: Epidermalization of Inferiority, chromatism, essentialism, self-objectification, *The Color Purple*, Walker.

Introduction

The legacy of colonialism and racism has resulted in a continued devaluation and marginalization of people of color, and these processes have been internalized by individuals from these communities. Epidermalization of Inferiority is a concept introduced by Frantz Fanon in his seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. According to Fanon, Epidermalization of Inferiority refers to the process by which people of color are reduced to nothing more than their skin color, and their entire being is defined by their racial identity. This process creates a hierarchy in which white people are considered superior and people of color are considered inferior (Fanon, 1952).

Fanon argued that Epidermalization of Inferiority results from the internalization of racist ideology by people of color, which leads to the perpetuation of their own subjugation. He believed that colonized people are not only oppressed externally, but also internally and that they must liberate themselves from this oppression by rejecting the racist ideologies that have been imposed upon them (Fanon, 1952).

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon wrote: "The Negro is a toy in the white man's hands... Negroes will be no more than undertakers of the white man's humanity" (Fanon, 1952, p. 5). He also argued that the black person's body is reduced to an object of fascination and disgust, which

perpetuates the myth of black inferiority: "The black man is a toy in the white man's hands, and so black is beautiful for the same reason that a clown's nose is red. It is a natural sign of buffoonery, of a sense of inferiority" (Fanon, 1952, p. 110).

The Color Purple is a novel written by Walker published in 1982. The novel is set in rural Georgia in the early 20th century and follows the life of Celie, an African American woman who faces a series of challenges and struggles, including poverty, racism, sexism, and domestic violence. The novel explores themes of identity, oppression, empowerment, and resistance, and is widely regarded as a seminal work of African American women's literature.

The plot of *The Color Purple* revolves around the life of a young African American girl named Celie who lives in rural Georgia in the early 1900s. Celie has faced immense hardships from a young age, including sexual abuse by her stepfather and forced marriage to a man she calls only "Mr.".

Throughout the novel, Celie writes letters to God and eventually to her sister, Nettie, who has left to become a missionary in Africa. Through these letters, Celie recounts her struggles with abuse, poverty, and racism, and also the relationships she forms with other women in her community.

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is:

1. To explore the relationship between the Epidermalization of Inferiority and the themes of oppression and power in *The Color Purple*

Research Questions

The study attempts to address the following research question:

1. What is the relationship between the Epidermalization of Inferiority and the themes of oppression and power in *The Color Purple*?

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is humanly impossible to review all the literature, therefore; a selected data is reviewed from general to specific keeping in mind the tenets of the study. Novels offer a window into the society that produced them and the language used within them is indicative of the social structures and power dynamics that inform the context of the novel, by scrutinizing the language and discourse employed in *The Color Purple*, this study hopes to shed light on the social and cultural context that shaped the novel's creation.

Abbandonato (1991) in "A View from 'Elsewhere': Subversive Sexuality and the Rewriting of the Heroine's Story in *The Color Purple*", also highlights the importance of recognizing the intersectionality of oppression in analyzing Walker's novel. She argues that Celie's experiences are shaped not only by her gender, but also by her race and class, and that these intersecting systems of oppression are inextricably linked to her journey towards selfhood and agency.

Berlant's (1988) analysis which focuses on Race, Gender, and Nation emphasizes the novel's engagement with complex and intersecting systems of oppression, and its critique of dominant structures of power. By examining the novel's representation of race, gender, and nation, Berlant offers valuable insights into the significance and impact of this important work of literature.

Allan (2004) explores the relationship between language, power, and colonialism in the work of Frantz Fanon. Allan argues that Fanon's writings offer a powerful critique of the ways in which language is used to construct and maintain colonial hierarchies. One of the key arguments

of the study is that Fanon's work challenges traditional notions of language as a neutral tool for communication. Allan states that Fanon portrays language as a deeply politicized and contested terrain, where power relations are constantly being negotiated and contested. Allan also argues that Fanon's critique of colonialism extends to the ways in which language is used to construct racial and cultural hierarchies. He proclaims that Fanon's writings offer a powerful critique of the ways in which colonial languages are used to marginalize and subjugate colonized peoples.

In an anthological Study of Epidermalization of Inferiority, Kumar examines that "*The Color Purple*" is a powerful critique of the intersectionality of oppression faced by marginalized groups, particularly women of color. The novel offers a vision for resistance and empowerment, encouraging readers to challenge the dominant power structures that perpetuate inequality and to work towards a more just and equitable society.

Methodology and Framework

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to conduct research (Creswell, 2014). It involves the techniques, procedures, and tools employed to collect and analyze data to answer research questions. The research methodology is a crucial aspect of research since it determines the quality of research outcomes. There are various research methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research

Qualitative research methodology involves collecting data through observations, and analysis of literatures. This method aims to describe and interpret complex phenomena in a subjective manner. On the other hand, quantitative research methodology uses statistical and numerical data to test hypotheses and generalize findings. Mixed-methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of a research problem.

The current research utilizes a qualitative approach. The purpose of this research is to explore the ideology of Epidermalization of Inferiority in the novel *The Color Purple* (1982) by Walker. The analysis of the selected novel was conducted using the method of close reading. Close reading is a method of literary analysis that involves a careful and thorough examination of a text, paying attention to details, patterns, and literary devices to uncover meaning and deepen understanding (Barthes, 1975). The process involves reading the text multiple times and closely analyzing its language, structure, themes, and other literary elements to uncover the author's intentions and the text's underlying messages. The study draws on a range of sources, such as articles, books, reviews, and online content relevant to the topic. A close examination of the selected novel was undertaken, and textual excerpts were used to bolster the argument. The analysis of characters was conducted using the chosen theoretical framework.

Apart from the tool, Fanon's (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks*; has been used as a theoretical framework to answer the fundamental research questions of this study. The analytical tool employed is Discourse analysis (Gee, 2004), which is then narrowed down to focus only on two specific aspects. From *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Enberg (2011) derives the concept of Epidermalization of Inferiority in *The Epidermalization of Inferiority and the Lactification of Consciousness*. Frantz Fanon uses the term "Epidermalization" in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* to describe the process by which racial categories are imposed on individuals from outside, and come to shape the individual's sense of self and identity (Fanon, 1952/1967, p. 110). Fanon argues that this process involves a kind of "masking" of the individual's true identity and a suppression of their individuality. He writes:

Analysis and Discussion

During a time when the African-American community was producing significant amounts of literature, Walker authored *The Color Purple*. Toni Morrison, whose books, like Walker's, intimately deal with themes of racism, gender, and self-identity among black people in the United States, is the author who is arguably most frequently mentioned when discussing Walker's work. Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry from the second half of the 20th century and Alex Haley's novel *Roots*, which was later adapted into a lauded television miniseries in the 1970s, both address women, sexuality, and the power relations between whites and blacks, themes that are also present in *The Color Purple*.

The Colour Purple, written by Walker, was published in 1982. It was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1983. The richness of its female characters and its expert usage of Black English Vernacular have been praised in *The Colour Purple*, a feminist classic about the struggle for the liberation of an oppressed and uneducated African American woman. *The Colour Purple* follows Celie as she learns to reject the debilitating self-concept that was imposed on her by others. It also details her final successes. Celie is a teenager of African American descent who was raised in Georgia's isolated countryside.

We witness discrimination in money, power, and prestige everywhere we turn. Some groups are more privileged and have higher status than others. We refer to this systemic disparity as social stratification.. It is the discrimination or classification of individuals into groups be it on any basis like color or gender or race or wealth. the essentialist division of individuals based on color is called Chromatism. In domain of research and literary analysis it is deployed occasionally by postcolonial critics to denote the power of color as a form of differentiation. The OED defines chromatics as the "science of color." It is the notion that the lighter the shade of skin color among peoples of color, the better it is assumed to be. This concept can be applied to what can be called a 'politics of color' in postcolonial countries.

In order to highlight the absurdity of drawing crude and stereotyped differences between races, chromatism is used to imply that it is a question of portrayal and discursive construction. Fanon's concept of Epidermalization of Inferiority also uses this conceptual framework as basis to describe the nature of distinctions prevailing within the colonist societies leading to discrimination on the basis of shades of the black color for the sake of social ranking. Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) brings the attention of readers towards the matter of social segregation within black society, that how black people feel disgusted of being black and are using white masks for living the approved standard of life. He also highlights the fact that how this color politics is leading to the shift in the essence of 'essential' in society of color.

In *The Color Purple* Walker introduces a number of characters to the readers, all of which belong to a black society. Celie is the protagonist of this novel and the representation of chromatic prevalence in the black society. The story is set in two contrasting locations, the countryside of Georgia and a distant African community, both of which are rife with racial and racist issues. Due in part to her extremely dark complexion, Celie feels she is unattractive. After fending off the city mayor and his wife's polite prejudice, Sofia ends up working as their maid and acting as Eleanor's surrogate mother. Eleanor first fails to understand the compromises Sofia has been compelled to make.

"*She ugly. Don't even look like she kin to Nettie*" (p.14)

The statement mentioned above is an extract taken from *The Color Purple* by Walker. This

line is uttered by Alphonso, step-father of Celie. He makes this statement while telling Mr.---- about Celie at the time Mr.---- proposes marriage with Nettie. Celie is described as a poor uneducated, black woman that survives an abusive stepfather who rapes her, she gave birth to two of her father's children that were snatched away from her at the time of birth. The above mentioned statement shows the color politics in action. Although all the characters belong to black society and are themselves black, they are shown disregarding other black people.

There are two sentences in the statement. Alphonso states Celie as ugly which shows that the colonialist parameter of being white to be beautiful has been ingrained in the black people and they have started disapproving being black. The character of any individual is assessed not by the deeds rather it is evaluated through the color of the skin. Moreover, we see that she is being called ugly due to being black although she lives in a black society. It shows how lactification of consciousness is in action that it is not the colonizers who are forcing the colonized to follow the 'white' way of life, rather it is the people who are forcing themselves to change their way of thinking and speaking in order to aspire to whiteness. It is the self-deprivation of Africans.

The second part of the statement shows the imposed irrelevance of kin. The color politics to enslave the colonized mentally can be seen working as a poison that has led to blacks discriminating themselves. Being a black in a black society has become a sin and only those with lighter shades are given the privileges, considered beautiful and given respect in society. These people are like the Whites of black people. This comparison to Nettie and imposing that she doesn't seem kin to Celie shows us that men manipulate women to fulfill their sexual desires. Celie has been a toy to Alphonso for quite some time which he has used to please himself sexually. She has already given birth to two of his babies and is now old as compared to Nettie. So Alphonso is getting Celie married off to replace her with Nettie to fulfill his desires.

The description of Celie while Mr. comes with a proposal of marriage for Nettie is very significant as it shows that there is no place for an ugly woman in society. This ugliness is defined by the imperiled society under the influence of the colonizers to which beauty is defined by color. In presenting Celie to Mr., instead of Nettie and letting him take a complete look over her reflects that she is perceived only as an object

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... I got to git rid of her...Pa call me....Turn round, Pa say. (pp.14,15)

The statement mentioned above is an extract taken from *The Color Purple* by Walker. Sofia marches towards Celie to return back all the things she granted then because Celie had promoted Harpo to hit Sofia. Sofia is Harpo's wife and Harpo is son of MR-----. Sofia is shown different from Celie as a woman. She knows how to fight for herself and defend her integrity and beliefs. She is strong willed and independent woman. Celie acknowledges her mistake and asks Sofia to forgive her. This statement is uttered by Sofia when Celie confronts her fear of punishment by God.

“The Lord don't like ugly, she say” (p. 31).

Through this quote, Walker is highlighting the way in which race and skin color are used to create a hierarchy of beauty and worth in society. The idea of "ugliness" is not only applied to physical appearance but also to one's social status, economic situation, and race. This quote also suggests that those who are deemed "ugly" by society are not favored by God or the divine,

perpetuating the idea that those who are deemed inferior are less deserving of basic human rights and dignity.

The critical appreciation of this statement lies in the context in which the statement is produced. *The Color Purple* is an epistolary novel; Celie's story is communicated in the form of letters. Celie wrote these letters to God so that she can survive all that she has been going through. The novel begins with, "You better not never tell nobody but God..."(p.8)

When Sofia says that God does not like ugly, it implies that God has also set some parameter for liking human. This shows the bent in beliefs of black people that even God likes people with white skin. This leads towards strengthening the belief that being white is the ultimate beauty and nothing stands against this. In a deeper context we see that Sofia says this to Celie when she notices that Celie cannot stand against the odds and hardships inflicted upon her by her husband. Here the word 'ugly' implies weak. Ugly means one who is incapable of standing on one's own and stand up to others for one's own rights.

This reciprocity of weak to ugly can be reversed and analyzed other way around. It can be seen that equating weak to ugly also implies that someone who is ugly is ultimately weak in a 'white-washed' society where the ideals of beauty stand with color white which consequentially render black people or any person with color weak and feeble. This can be referred to as Lactification of consciousness as above mentioned, that black people cannot achieve the power and status ascribed to white color in the society.

The literature reflects that these standards set by the white society and accepted by the black people are inherent not only in a simple way. It is rather a complex phenomenon to trace and analyze backed up by a multitude of factors. Walker has also discussed about these factors in *The Color Purple* and one of these factors is that these standards were internalized and practiced by not only the males but also the black women alike.

"She look me over from head to foot. Then she cackle. Sound like a death rattle.
You sure is ugly, she say, like she ain't believed it" (p. 34)

The statement mentioned above is an extract taken from *The Color Purple* by Walker. It is said by Shug Avery. Shug makes friends (and subsequently lovers) with Celie, educating her about sexual orientation, love, and divinity in the process. Shug is a singer who is seen as a "nasty woman" by others in the community because she has connections with many men. Additionally, she has a protracted connection with Mr. _____, who has been Celie's husband for a significant portion of that period. Shug moves back in with Celie in Georgia after leaving Celie, where she was sharing a house in Memphis, to "one last fling" with Germaine.

The statement under analysis is uttered by Shug Avery about Celie upon their first interaction when Mr. --- brings her home to take care of her while she is sick. The statement is clearly made before Celie and Shug became friends, but this is all about first impressions. The statement shows that the first impression that Shug reflects of Celie is that of being ugly. The impression is made not on the basis of any prior information or acquaintance with Celie or Shug had no experience with Celie prior to this interaction. The verdict is given by having a look on a black woman standing in front of her. She barely knew her but she said it without any hesitation as if it doesn't matter what Celie felt of this. This reflects that the chromatism has led to this level of inferiority in the black society that a black woman cannot stand another black woman.

The disgust for fellow black woman is seen as a result of constant pressure from the male chauvinistic colonized black society. All these factors influence and affect the women to live up

to the standards of beauty. This is also seen in the relation to the life of Shug herself. She is a singer which means she has more exposure to the male part of the society than a house-wife like Celie. In order to make a successful career and survive she had to meet the expectations other society and fulfill the demand of beauty as set. So thriving in such a society facing these situations every moment of life has made it a part of Shug's personality to judge people by their color. It is this instinct out of which she is making a comment on Celie.

It is a harsh but common practice in societies all around the world to judge a woman by her color. A woman, out of many ways of suppression, is made to feel inferior through ridiculing the way she looks. It has become a sin to be black or of any color that is not white. Moreover, it is not only through her own self, but also through comparing with others that a woman feels inferior. This comparison is used as a tool to make women psychologically internalize that they are ugly anyway. Walker uses this prospect in the novel *The Color Purple* and tells the readers how this is used for manipulation of black women by their own men so that they can be molded according to their own will.

Shug got talent, he say. She can sing. She got spunk, he say. She can talk to anybody. Shug got looks, he say. She can stand up and be notice. But what you got? You ugly. You skinny. You shape funny. You too scared to open your mouth to people. All you fit to do in Memphis is be Shug's maid. Take out her slop-jar and maybe cook her food. You not that good a cook either. Hire yourself out to farm? He laugh. Maybe somebody let you work on they railroad.p. 102

In this excerpt taken from *The Color Purple*, Walker reflects how blackness is used as a tool against black women to suppress them and make inferior. Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* says that there is no time for a black man to make 'racial drama' unconscious. In Fanon's words black people are depersonalized, dislocated subjects of colonization. This dislocation is seen in this extract reflected through the comments of Mr.==== about Celie. He states that Celie is ugly which is in direct proportion to her being black. The color of skin is used as a parameter to measure the beauty of a person. This standard of beauty has led to a sharp distinction of beautiful and ugly. Although other people of the society are also black it includes Mr.--- himself but it is being 'more' black. Celie is more black than rest of the people in her surroundings so she is ugly.

In mentioning how ugly Celie is, Mr.---- is also comparing her to Shug. Shug is also a black woman but she has learnt how to use 'white mask' to her advantage. This can be seen not as her fault, rather a skill she has acquired to survive in a society craving for white color. In *The Color Purple* Celie can be seen as very shy girl who can barely speak to anyone without being afraid or thinking about the consequences if things took a turn for worst. A deep analysis of her character shows that this lack of confidence is a result of her inferiority inflicted upon her due to her black color. Celie is treated badly from her childhood by her stepfather and always reminded how ugly she is. This constant reminder of her blackness which is directly a reference to her ugliness has resulted in her lack of confidence. It is seen in her dependence on others for the sake of survival.

The comparison that Mr. makes of Shug and Celie shows that there is no place in society for a person who is black. It is due to the white mask used by Shug to conceal her blackness that she has got a status in the society, although she is not considered a good of a woman. It is important to notice that despite of being not in any good names in the society, which we see when Shug is not taken in by anyone when she is ill Shug is still able to make herself noticeable and seen by the people of society and has got a voice that is heard by even the deaf people of society. It is because of the mask that she has learnt to use that she has got this confidence. Celie is unable to have this

confidence because she is not up to the standards of beauty set by society.

The whole beautiful and ugly distinction is not safe from the gender discrimination. This distinction is also infected with gender stereotypes and upgraded to a gender based distinction. The impositions that come from being white and black puts pressure on women a lot more than it does on men in any society. It is seen worldwide that women have to prove themselves to survive in a society and go through a series of harsh societal trials as compared to men. Walker also discusses this aspect in her works. In *The Color Purple*, Celie and other female characters showcases the efforts, the trials and tribulations a woman has to face so that she can adjust in the society.

“He laugh. Who you think you is? he say. You can’t curse nobody. Look at you.

You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman” (p.102)

In this extract taken from *The Color Purple*, Walker is employing chromatism in conjunction to femininity to describe the social pressure on a woman of color. The fact that Mr. laughs in the beginning of the statement reflects that the very existence of a woman is fun and joke to men. Mr. questions the existence and identity of Celie. It is throughout the history that women are seen struggling to make their identity in a male dominated society which has come to a point where the entire world has become male-dominated because the characters in any work of literature reflect the entire society and work as spokesman of entire class they represent. Jacqueline Bobo(1989) argues that the discourse of black women is treated as leftwing discourse and muddled by the male point of view. The female discourse is not included in the mainstream discourse and compromised as a result.

The quote reveals the way in which race, gender, and class intersect to create a hierarchy of power and privilege in society. Celie, who is black, poor, and a woman, is seen as inferior and powerless by the male character who is speaking to her. The use of the terms "black," "pore," and "ugly" demonstrate the way in which skin color and physical appearance are used to construct hierarchies of worth and value in society. These characteristics are seen as inferior and undesirable, perpetuating the idea of the Epidermalization of Inferiority.

Moreover, the male character's statement, "You can't curse nobody," reveals the way in which language and communication are used to exert power and control over others. In the context of postcolonialism, language is seen as a tool of the colonizer to exert dominance over the colonized, and this quote highlights the way in which language is used to reinforce the hierarchies of power and privilege in society.

The statement also reveals the way in which Celie's identity is shaped by the intersecting oppressions she faces. As a black woman from a poor background, she is doubly marginalized in society, and her identity is shaped by these intersecting factors. This highlights the way in which individuals' identities are constructed in relation to the power structures in society, and how these structures shape their experiences and opportunities.

The question of existence that is raised by Mr--- communicates the theme of identity that reflects twofold meaning. The first noticeable aspect is that the question of existence and identity that is raised on an individual is primarily a female in a society that has been polluted with multiple negative energies. Celie is a woman in a male dominated society which carries the characteristic features of questioning identity of a female because they take women of secondary importance. In addition to this she is also a black woman, the word itself carries connotations of inferiority and

ugliness. So this interrogation of identity is a result of a male chauvinistic black society which also desperate in search of whiteness.

The constant pressure and restrictions when imposed tend to pull out an effect on surface of the individuals who are subjected to these circumstances. The effect results in people questioning themselves and believing in the ideals that have been imposed on them. They start to look down upon themselves and doubting their own self and importance of their existence. It leads to the synchronization of the individuals' beliefs with the societal ideals thus tending to a more suppressed and dislocated individual. Walker in *The Color Purple* communicates this effect on the readers through the character of Celie who goes through all the societal and domestic pressures and starts to belief in the forced and imposed ideals.

“I’m pore, I’m black, I may be ugly and can’t cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I’m here” (p. 102)

In this extract Celie is talking about her existence in a society where she is not respected. She is trying to be in peace with all the ‘facts’ about her she has been receiving so far. Celie is described ugly time to time in the novel, not only by her stepfather alphonso but also her husband ,Mr.... and the woman she soon becomes friend with, Shug Avery. The constant repetition of the word ‘ugly’ is so intensified in her surrounding that she is not internalizing the fact and submitting to the higher pseudo-ideals of a mundane hypocrite society. She is going through, what Fanon states as ‘Epidermalization of Inferiority’.

The Epidermalization of Inferiority is internalization of the belief of what the colonizer has espoused for centuries: that the African is inferior to the European and the Westerner, precisely because of her darker skin color. It is noteworthy that his internalization of a belief is imposed not by the white people rather the black people of the society. It is due to the ‘White masks’ in terms of Fanon that these black people have put to acquire a respectable and somewhat superior status in a society corrupted by the white ideals.

This Epidermalization of Inferiority leads not only to the self loathe but also viewing others with an altered lens of vision. This is a psychological manipulation of an individual that results in the vision of the world as everything else superior from self. It makes people idealize the notion of superiority and everything associated with the notion. In this process of internalization people view other individuals as superior and idealize them. Cile form Walker’s *The Color Purple* aslo exhibits these features where she idealizes other peple due to being subjected to inferiority.

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. I see her there in furs. Her face rouge. Her hair like somethin tail (p. 13)

The excerpt has been taken from *The Color Purple*. In the analysis of this segment we analyse the essence of idealization of superior in the charc ter of Celie. Celei has taken the photograph of Shug Avey that has slipped through the wallet of Mr---- while he is talking to Alphonso. Celie watches that photograph whole night and praises the beauty of Shug Avey. The praise of beauty of Shug Avery comes out not of the beauty of Shug, she is also a black woman in the same society as of Celie. The praise is a result of Celie’s own inferiority. The belief that she is ugly and weak, as told by his step-father is all she believes because she is reminded of her ugliness time to time.

The effects of colonization are highly marked with self-subjugation. The people living in the colonies are unable to get this idealized version of slavery out of their minds and as a result

have stared haring themselves and their own people. This self-hatred is also imbued in Celie, not to an extreme level, but to a level where she sees her blackness as ugly and of any other black woman as beauty. This double consciousness has led to her idealization of Shug as a beautiful woman. This feeling of inferiority is a major factor in the leading force of lives of many people of color living in colonized societies

Conclusion

To conduct this study, Enburg's (2011) concept of The Epidermalization of Inferiority and the Lactification of Consciousness was utilized as a theoretical framework. This theory sheds light on the internalization of inferiority that is assimilated within society. By applying Enburg's (2011) theory, the researcher was able to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Epidermalization of Inferiority as portrayed in the text. The study focused on exploring various instances of internalized inferiority, as depicted through the characters' experiences with chromatism, In order to achieve the research objectives, the chosen novel was analyzed using a selected theoretical framework. Furthermore, Discourse Analysis was employed as a tool for analyzing the text. According to Gee (2004), Discourse Analysis can facilitate a deeper understanding of the text by examining the ways in which language is used to construct meaning. Hence, this study incorporated Discourse Analysis as a method for analyzing the text and uncovering the underlying themes and messages conveyed by the author. By employing both a theoretical framework and Discourse Analysis, the study was able to provide a comprehensive analysis of the novel and its portrayal of societal issues.

In *The Color Purple*, Walker has portrayed how race has been the cause of inferiority complex among the Black community. Chromatism, a subcategory of racism, is explicitly evident through the characters of the novel. Walker has highlighted how dark-skinned African Americans have been made to feel inferior to those with lighter skin tone. The color of skin is deemed as a measure of beauty and social status. The idea of beauty has been commoditized to fit in the racist societal norms where white skin is considered the epitome of beauty. This has led to internalized feelings of inferiority among the black community, making them feel less than human.

The protagonist Celie in *The Color Purple* has been a victim of colorism. She has been ridiculed for her dark skin tone and has been made to feel inferior by her own family. Celie has internalized these feelings of inferiority and has come to accept her position in the society. This acceptance can be seen in her letters to God where she refers to herself as poor, ugly, and black. The character of Shug Avery, on the other hand, is an epitome of beauty with light skin and has been perceived as a symbol of power and wealth. Shug Avery uses her position to bring awareness to the Black community about the unjust treatment they receive based on their skin color. Walker has used the characters in the novel to convey the message of the dangers of colorism and the importance of self-love and acceptance.

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