

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/irj.v4i1.79513>

Shug Avery: A Reverberating Voice against Patriarchy in *The Color Purple*

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Abstract:

The socio-cultural situation of the Negroes/African-American people, gender inequality, gender discrimination along with abuse and the themes of love and sexuality are brought about by Alice Walker in her novel The Color Purple. Shug Avery as a character and Shug Avery's life and world views defy all these assumptions made upon African- American patriarchal society. Her rebellious nature and her relationship with Celie demand close reading to discover her multiple dimensions of her personality. In this paper, an attempt has been made to divulge Shug Avery's personality, early life experiences and her actions that proves her an empowered color woman of racial oppressive patriarchal society. She has been studied especially for her rejection of male domination and empowered women to fight against male supremacy of African-American society. Shug Avery as a character and her relationship with Celie takes us closer to seeing the portrayal of color women. This paper lays especial focus on how Shug evolves herself as empowered color woman and how she makes her voice as a reverberating voice Against Patriarchy through her actions. It also studies how Shug supports color, especially the protagonist, Celie to empower herself. The paper also deals with the themes of love and sexuality, religion along with Shug Avery's personality, early life experiences and the roles she played to empower color women.

Key words: *feminine, lesbian, heterosexual, patriarchal, repression, empowerment*

Introduction:

Shug Avery looks to be an archetype of a typical blues woman. She is described to be a very attractive looking black woman. She is celebrated as a famous blues singer known for her glamorous lifestyle. Over time, she went on as prominent blues singer. She has gained wide-ranging experiences and knowledge through her passion for travelling and exploring the world. Her dynamic personality and charm also earned her the title 'Queen Honeybee'. Shug Avery often seems to be rather tough, jaded and sometimes unpleasant arrogant woman. This impression on her personality is largely shaped by her habit to speak out the truth as it is, without modifying it or being diplomatic while speaking and handling the situations. Even though, she is regarded as an arrogant color woman, she is actually a soft hearted, warm and compassionate at her heart. She extends love to those who need her love. She makes her nurturing and empowering presence in the lives of those who expect love and support from her. This is evident especially in her relationship with Celie whom she genuinely loves, cares, inspires and empowers. Besides, she also loves Albert, Celie's husband whom she knows for years for he enjoys dancing and amusing her. Her love is boundless that transcends the barriers of gender, age and color.

Shug Avery is sexually liberated woman having sexual relations with many people. So her parents particularly her mother would hate her for her carefree life, outgoing spirit and her sexual activeness. May be her sexual liberation makes her victim to a disease which is regarded to be a 'nasty women's disease'. Because of her outspoken habit and disease, nobody in her society even her parents wanted to take her in. It is only Albert who loves her. So she frequently meets him even at his home. Although she does not want to marry him, she believes in their love. She was in love with him as she frankly says she loves Albert and loves having sex with him as well. At the same time, she keeps lesbian relationship with his wife Celie, too. She helps to give Celie a sense of identity making her feel sexually, physically and emotionally at ease.

As an independent woman, Shug likes to travel at her whim and openly enjoys sexual relations with both men and women. She is really liberated and unconventional color woman in terms of her sexuality and her world views. She

doesn't feel obligated to live up to any feminine roles designed by her patriarchal society. She does not accept imposed definitions of herself, nor does she allow anyone to control her. Despite her changeable nature and shifting roles, Shug remains Celie's most constant friend and companion throughout the novel. Eventually, she establishes her voice as reverberating voice Against Patriarchy through her actions.

Shug's Experience of Early Life:

Shug's childhood was marked by hardship and disorder. She had a chaotic, challenging and unstable upbringing lacking in support and direction. Her assertive attitude and outspoken personality was greatly influenced by her turbulent early life. Yet Shug overcame the difficulties of her childhood and ultimately carved herself a life characterized by strength, independence, and individuality. She gave up her given name, "Lillie," and named herself as Shug as in short for sugar, "Lillie Shug's real name. She just so sweet they call her Shug" (110). Her parents particularly her mother, hated her for her independent, outgoing spirit and her adulterous activities. Shug states, "One thing my mama hated me for was how much I love to fuck" (110). Shug had been deprived of her mother's affection. Her father would like to kiss and hug her but her mother did not like it. She found it embarrassing and she refused to even touch her. Perhaps, she would think that her husband had a sexual motive behind touching her. Shug comments on her parents as "She never love to do nothing had anything to do with touching nobody, she say. I try to kiss her, she turn her mouth away. . . .My daddy love me to kiss and hug him, but she didn't like the looks of that" (110). Shug didn't receive any love or attention from her parents, especially because of her mother's conceit and narrow-mindedness. However, this lack of parental guidance and support had a significant effect on Shug's emotional development which ultimately helped her learn to rely entirely on herself. She may have been brave and unapologetic because of the gap created by her parents' neglect. Her drive to find acceptance and love from the people around her was also strengthened by it. Shug used her experiences to create a life of freedom and self-expression, despite these obstacles, turning her suffering into resilience.

Since Shug was devoid of love and care from her parents, she was craving for affection. She met Albert who loved her and she also loved him. She enjoyed having sex with him and mothered three children with him. But he was too weak for her to marry him and his father did not allow him to marry her as he thought her and her mother to be a trash, "But, he waek ...his daddy told him I'm trash, my mama trash before me" (110). However, Shug did not stop making love with Albert. Her mother did not like her affairs with Albert and kicked her out from home. Then she went to her mother's wild sister in Memphis who was exactly like her, "She just like me, Mama say. She drink, she fight, she love mens to death" (111). Besides, Shug was heartbroken when Albert did not stand up for their relationship in front of her father and married another girl, Annie Julia. Shug made her career as a popular blues singer and travelled a lot of world. Her stories of early life clearly show that she had gone many ups and downs in her early life.

Shug as Blues Singer:

Now Shug has been a popular blues singer and she has earned the title "Queen Honeybee"(42). She has been described as a very attractive looking black woman. When we first meet Shug, Shug is afflicted with an illness, possibly tuberculosis, when we first meet her. People regarded it as a 'nasty woman disease" (42). Nobody even her mother and daddy wanted to take her in but it is Albert who accepts her and supports her in her bad days.

Shug Avery is described to be a eye-catching black woman. She is tall and skinny, wears flashy clothes and makeup. Cellie asks her new mammy about Shug. Mammy shows her Shug's picture and tells her : " The first one of a real person I ever seen.... The most beautiful woman I ever saw. She more prettier then me" (8). As Celie sees Shug's picture, she also attracted to her physical beauty and dress up. Her first impression on Shug is as: "Her face rouge. Her hair like somethin tail. She grinning with her foot up on somebody motorcar. Her eyes serious tho. Sad some. . . . All night long I stare at it [picture]. And now when I dream, I dream of Shug Avery. She be dress to kill, whirling an laughing (8). Shug becomes centre of attraction because of her stylish dress up and make up. Celie describes Shug as:

She got on a red wool dress and chestful of black beads. A shiny black hat with what look like chickinhawk feathers curve down side one cheek, and she carrying

a little snakeskin bag, matches her shoes. She look so stylish it like all the trees around the house draw themselves up tall for a better look. (44).

Shug Avery has been epitome of beauty not only for Celie but also for her husband Mr- and her new mammy. The most dominant feature is her stylish get up and make up. She can be seen as the model of the typical blues woman.

Shug's Personality:

Shug Avery as a person, she holds multiple multiple dimensions of personality. She is unconventional. As a blues singer, she has a glamorous lifestyle. She has gained a lot of experiences and knowledge by travelling and seeing the world. She shares her experiences with Celie. She sings in appreciation of Celie nursing her back to health. It gives Celie a feeling of vitality that she has not got yet. Sometimes she seems to be unpleasant and arrogant personality. It happens so because she speaks out the truth as it is, without softening it. She neither adds any laces of diplomacy while speaking the truth. She is honest and direct. At first when Shug Avery comes to Celie's house, she seems to be mean to Celie and treats her in the same way. As she first meets Celie, she directly says, "You sure is ugly" (44). This may be her hatred to Celie because she was jealous at first of Celie being Albert's wife. But later when she reads Celie's sufferings at the hand of her husband, Albert, she becomes soft to Celie and begins to love and support her. She does not let Albert to beat his wife, Celie. Shug becomes kind and caring towards Celie. She also looks out for Albert as well and tries to be there for everyone that needs her.

At the first look, Shug is found to be arrogant and a bit thick skinned to some extent but she is actually grateful to those who help her at her needy time. In the beginning, she had a bit jealousy towards Celie but later she appreciates the way Celie takes care of her. In turn she reciprocates and starts taking care of Celie looking out for her, being there for her forming a bond of female solidarity that goes beyond jealousy. One more aspect of Shug's personality is her soft heart. She loves those who need her love and she loves those who care her. She loves Albert for years because he is the only man to take care of her when her parents and everybody hate her. He is the man who danced and amused her. "And [he] dance, she say. Nobody dance like Alber when was young. Sometimes us did the moochie for a hour . . . Albert was funny" (111). Shug loves

Celie because she is vulnerable and lonely and she is in need of someone's love. Shug makes the decision to remain by her until Albert swears not to beat her. Weakness in Shug is that she has several affairs throughout her life and sleeps with anybody she wants. Although she knows Albert and Celie are married couple, she feels comfortable having sex with both of them. While being in love with Albert and Celie, she runs off with a nineteen year young boy, Grady for a travel. Perhaps she is yearning for the love and carefree sexual relationship. Despite her frailty, she honestly loves Celie and even Albert. She loves regardless of age, gender, or race. Shug is a vibrant and unpredictable character that attends a variety of venues and late-night blues clubs due to her different duties. Despite her inconsistent behavior and shifting occupations, Shug is Celie's most reliable friend and companion throughout the book.

Shug as Celie's Mentor:

At first look, shug appears to be arrogant and somewhat thick-skinned. But she is actually a truly appreciative of people who help her. She seems to be a bit jealous of Celie at first, as Celie is Albert's wife while she is also in affairs with him. But she eventually becomes friend of Celie as she reads and values Celie's compassion and thoughtfulness. In exchange, she takes care of Celie, looks out for her, and develops a strong female friendship that goes beyond jealousy. Shug is viewed as a morally questionable woman in her community who dresses sparsely, suffer from nasty woman disease perhaps caused by her multiple sexual relationships. She is also rejected by her own parents and community has labeled her as "nasty woman"(42) due to her involvement in multiple sexual relationships. However, Celie notices something more in Shug than the community says about her. At looking first Shug's photo, instead of her glamorous appearance, Celie is reminded of her "mama" with her glitzy appearance. Celie makes comparisons between Shug and her mother throughout the book. Shug is brave enough to fight against male authority in contrast to Celie's biological mother, who was subjected to oppression by conventional gender norms. Shug refuses to allow herself to be dominated by anyone. She has shaped her identity from her several encounters and experiences instead of submitting to the wishes of others and letting them force an identity on her.

When Shug falls ill, none of the people who seem to enjoy her singing come to see her. It is evident that they enjoy her music more than they like her as they are more impressed by Shug's skill and performances than by her personality. Shug's actual ties with those around her become painfully clear. Those who seem to appreciate her singing and her music don't bother to come see her or help her when she is in need. Even her lover, Albert, Celie's husband, doesn't take care of her; he assigns Celie the responsibility of caring for Shug. Celie honestly takes care of her. Shug enjoys the care and attention she gets from Celie and returns the same care to Celie and appreciates her concern. Shug befriends Celie and eventually becomes her lover. She plays the parts of mother, sister and teacher, lover and even her mentor as her connection with Celie grows.

Shug teaches Celie about spirituality, love, and sexuality. On the other hand she continues her long-term romance with Mr., Celie's husband. When Shug had to go, Celie told her that Albert would beat her again at Shug's absence. So Shug decides to stick around until Albert promises not to do so, "I won't leave, she say, until I know Albert won't even think about beating you" (72). She makes Albert promise not to beat Celie. Shug becomes mentor for Celie when she begins to love and respond to the warmth that she sees in Celie. Shug, in fact, is probably Celie's only authentic friend and mentor.

Shug as Celie's Catalyst:

Shug Avery brings a radical change in Celie's attitude towards life and the world. She makes Celie finally realizes that she must begin to "embrace life in spite of her pain and sorrow" (Dawson 81). She cultivates a rebellious spirit in Celie and ultimately helps her to resist the repression actively so as to transform herself from object to subject. Initially rude to Celie, Shug begins to love her as she witnesses Albert's ruthless repression upon her. She asks Celie about her experience of sexual pleasure which Celie is unknown for. Despite the fact that Celie has been raped repeatedly by her father and has given birth to two children by him and she is now married to Albert who also rapes her frequently, she is, according to Shug Avery, "still virgin" (74). Celie has never realized there could be sexual pleasure for a woman. General assumption of the

racial society is that "she [black woman] is nothing more than a laborer and breeder" (Blea 108) rather than a mother. Celie describes to Shug her dreadful sexual experiences as. "He git up on you, heist your nightgown round your waist, plunge in. Most time I pretend I ain't there. He never know the difference. Never ast me how I feel, nothing. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep" (74). It shows that sex with Albert is just like legalized rape for Celie. She is expected to be just a silent observer and passive recipient of her husband's brutality because she is female. But Shug brings a radical change in Celie's attitude towards life and the world. She helps her to discover her sexuality as woman.

Shug asks Celie to know and feel the importance of her body. She keeps lesbian relationship with her. The significance of Celie and Shug's sexual relationship is that Celie learns how to be proud of her body and how to use it to enjoy sex. Shug teaches Celie about the importance of sexual organs that every female body has. She says:

Listen . . . right down there in your pussy is a little button that gits real hot when you do you know what with somebody. It git hotter and hotter and then it melt. That the good part. But other parts good too . . . Lot of fnger and tongue work. (74)

Sharing sexual knowledge to Celie, Shug advises her to be proud of her body for being woman. She also teaches her that female body has everything to have self sexual pleasure. She encourages Celie not only to explore her body but also to feel its bliss. Shug teaches her the importance of her "little button" (74), the precious sexual organ of female body. She also advises Celie to make close observation of her sexual organs and play with them with her fingers. As Celie does so, she gets new experience and says, "I look at her and touch it with my finger. A little shiver go through me. Nothing much. But just enough to tell me this the right button to mash" (75). Cele gets a new feeling of sensation.

Shug makes her know she can have self sex pleasure and develops a sense of self sufficiency and self confidence in Celie. According to guidance of Shug, Celie makes through observation of her sexual organs with the help of a

mirror. She also looks at her breast and remembers her lost children as she says, "I haul up my dress and look at my titties. Think bout my babies sucking them" (75). Celie gets a new feeling of sexual pleasure for the first time in her life.

Shug transforms sexual awakening in Celie by teaching her about the importance of her own body. Patriarchal norms expect women to have sex only with the purpose of bearing children but on the contrary to it, Shug teaches Celie to have self sexual pleasure in the absence of male. Shug and Celie ignore the patriarchal expectation of women's modesty as they start playing themselves with their sexual organs. They transgress the patriarchal norms and values in relation to sex and female body. It is a challenge to the patriarchal belief that women are inferior to male. Shug advises Celie to explore her body. Celie does so and feels her body beautiful and precious. She cultivates a desire in Celie for search of her selfhood. Celie's feels selfhood as she sees her own genitals for the first time in her life. She remarks, "I lie back on the bed and haul up my dress. Yank down my bloomers. Stick the looking glass tween my legs. Ugh. All that hair then my pussy lips be black. Then inside look like a wet rose. It a lot prettier than you thought . . . It mine" (75). Celie feels proud of her body and a desire for selfhood and identity stems out in her. Previously, she cared little about herself and her sexuality. She thought sex to be the business only of her husband but now Shug makes her recognize her genitals as important and enjoyable part of her body.

Daniel W, Ross suggests that "The repossession of her body encourages Celie to seek selfhood through spoken language" (70). Now Celie can recognize and appreciate her body as self sufficient and develops self confidence to break her silence. This knowledge of self sufficiency would be impossible in the absence of Shug Avery who, in fact, changes Celie from object to subject. With the guidance of Shug, Celie begins her journey from powerlessness to the state of full empowerment and from self- abnegation to self- recognition. Shug not only makes her know the self sufficiency of female

body but also shares bed with her and keeps lesbian relation with her. Celie writes in a letter:

She [Shug] say, I love you, Miss Celie. And then she haul off and kiss me on the mouth. *Um*, she say, like she surprise. I kiss her back, say, *Um*, too. Us kiss and kiss till us can't hardly kiss no more. Then us touch each other. . . . Then I feels something real soft and wet on my breast, feel like one of my little lost babies mouth. Way after while, I act like a little lost baby too. (103)

Celie enjoys having lesbian relationship with Shug Avery that gives her a new and exceptional experience. It also makes her know that her body has the store of pleasure and is self sufficient.

Strongly denounced by patriarchy, Walker celebrates the lesbian relationship through Shug. In relation to lesbian relationship between Shug and Celie, Barbara Christian writes, "She [Walker] approaches the forbidden subject of incest and black lesbianism as something natural and liberating" (10). The healthy lesbian relationship of Shug with Celie is a challenge to the patriarchal concept of male- female relationship based on heterosexual values. Shug is a catalyst transforming Celie's subversive force into disruptive force by breaking the patriarchal values of heterosexuality. This lesbian relationship is a revolt against the conventional marriage plot of patriarchal system of the society and stresses on the importance of female body and female creative power. Bell Hooks also says that Celie's lesbian relationship with Shug is "never a controversial issue even though it is the catalyst for her resistance to male domination" and her "sexual desire can disrupt and subvert oppressive social structure because it does not necessarily conform to social prescription" (285). It is interesting to note that Shug's free floating lust shared with many partners challenges the notion of monogamous coupling and breaks the patriarchal norms and values of heterosexuality.

Shug's lesbianism subverts masculine cultural narrative of femininity. She stresses the importance of female friendship and sisterhood in black community. Bernard Bell also remarks "rather than heterosexual love,

lesbianism is the rite of passage to selfhood, sisterhood and brotherhood for Celie" (263). Heterosexuality enforces Celie's subjugation and erases her subjectivity until she comes into touch with Shug Avery. On the other hand, Shug challenges the patriarchal concept of monogamy as she has shallow sensual relationship with a large number of other persons.

Shug's love inspires Celie to celebrate her existence and create a meaning in her life. As a transforming force, Shug provokes Celie's repressed feminine desire and backs up her in search of selfhood. She enables Celie to replace fear and hatred with love, courage and self confidence. Although, Trudier Harris comments on the lesbian relationship between Celie and Shug Avery and remarks, "She [Walker] pays homage to the lesbians by portraying a relationship between two women that reads like a school Girl fairy tale" (160), lesbian relationship provides an alternative to the hetero- sexual paradigm of the conventional marriage plot and covers the whole spectrum of women's friendship and sisterly solidarity. Walker also favors woman who "appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility and women's strength" (*In Search* xi). Celie's lesbian relation paves a way to construct her female identity and her sexual experience offers her knowledge of womanhood. Celie's sexual orientation and her sexual encounter with Shug is an attempt of searching female subjectivity and sexuality.

Shug as a Rebel against Patriarchy:

Shug Avery is an important black female character in the novel to carry the theme of women's liberation from patriarchal repression. She never remains as suspended victim of repression but works as catalyst to develop rebellious spirit in female characters. She is much more sexually liberated than other female characters of the novel. She also liberates Celie in all aspects of her life guiding her into emotional, sexual and financial independence. Through the lesbian relationship, Shug implants a realization in Celie that she is somebody with her own individuality and identity. She combines her roles of sister, friend, and lover. She enables Celie to find a career in designing trousers and pants to establish a new business in Memphis. Both compassion and passion are

combined in relationship between Shug and Celie. Despite her changeable nature and roles, Shug becomes Celie's most constant friend and companion throughout the novel.

She teaches Celie the importance of female body and sexuality. She makes her know that female body is self sufficient in itself and one should feel proud of her body. She develops self confidence in Celie. Having lesbian relation with Celie, Shug instigates her to violate the patriarchal repressive ideology in relation to sex and female body. Her love for lesbian relation is counter to patriarchal concept of heterosexuality, a big challenge to patriarchal society. Celie fulfills her desire from Shug Avery, who shares her lust to many partners and challenges the notion of monogamous coupling.

Turning a deaf ear to patriarchal ideology about marriage and sex in relation to women, Shug keeps lesbian relationship with Celie. In relation to this lesbian relationship, Christopher remarks:

Celie's Lesbianism is rooted more in the character's search for role model, a kind of alternative reality rather than any "transsexual neurosis" symptomatic of past traumas or inner imbalance.

Lesbianism in *The Color Purple* is for Celie and Shug the expression of a self directly in conflict with a man made, man dominated society. (286)

Shug and Celie make expression of their individual self through lesbian relation. They feel self sufficiency in themselves with their female body.

Shug ever disrupts the feminine norms like modesty, submissiveness, dependency, passivity and loyalty. These are male construct as Kate Millet remarks, "The image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs" (46).

Shug doesn't believe on male made stereotypes. She puts every men of her contact under her control with her masculine behavior. Albert is a giant of oppression for Celie but Shug uses him as a puppet and even enables Celie to revolt against his repression. In a sense, she is a brave warrior and her body, beauty and sexuality are weapons to defy male's masculine superiority.

Shug as Pantheist:

Shug Avery as a revolutionary character dismantles the religious belief about God. She protest patriarchal religious belief that says God lives in church and he is white and male. She says, "Aint no way to read the bible and not think God white When I found out I thought God was white, and a man, I lost interest" (175). Shug protests the racist ideology about God and rejects the idea that God is white. Whites have created white God to oppress blacks and regard God not only white in color but also male in sex. Shug protest such male made religious values and revolts against religious repression upon blacks and women. She asks Celie "tell the truth, have you ever found God in church? I never did." (174). She finds God not in church but in human body. She tells Celie, "God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only then that search for it inside find it" (176). She advises Celie to discover the God dwelling in her body. She reinforces importance of human life and body showing the close attachment between human body and God..

Patriarchal ideology places God in male category but Shug dismantles this sex category and places God across the gender limitation. She says, "God ain't a he or a she, but a It" (176). God is neither male nor female but impersonal and genderless. She teaches Celie to recreate and reauthorize God by deconstructing its body as she says "[God] don't look like nothing . . . It ain't a picture show" (176). Shug alters Celie's conception about God and make her realize the value of her body as God. She brings conversion in Celie from traditional monotheistic view of God to a more pantheistic outlook. Stacie Lynn Hankinson also says that Celie frees herself from the oppressive man, God figure and emerges into a distinctly non Christian discovery of God so as to achieve liberation from patriarchy. She remarks:

Celie's conversion from monotheistic view of God (or traditional Christianity) to a more pantheistic outlook represents and parallels her movement from feelings of oppression under the domination of patriarchy into a sense of connectedness with others

and self- acceptance at which she ultimately arrives by the novel's end. (320)

Therefore, Celie's last letter to God demonstrates the view that God is not only in church but in everywhere and inhabits in all things of universe. Then she addresses her last letter to "Dear God. Dear stars, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear Everything" (259). It shows Shug has made Celie free from the monotheistic belief of God. Celie ceases to write to God and starts addressing her letters to Nettie. She undermines the oppressive man God figure and symbolically attains liberation from patriarchy. Wendy Well adds, ". . . she is liberated only through bodily experience, through refragmenting herself in her letters and through her lesbian relationship with Shug" (268). Of course, Shug brings conversion in Celie's religious belief and presents herself as a gateway for Celie to transform her passive resistance into active resistance against repression.

Shug as Celie's Guardian:

Celie's letters sent by her sister Nettie from Africa have been hidden by Albert for many years. Shug helps Celie to get them back. Celie gets furious to Albert and decides to take revenge with him. She talks to Shug, "How I'm gon keep from killing him . . . I think I feel better if I kill him . . . I feels sickish. Numb, now" (129). Celie gets so much infuriated that she wants to kill Albert for hiding her sister's letters. Shug tactfully controls Celie's temper and asks her not to come on physical fight against Albert. Shug says, "Don't kill [Albert] . . . Nettie be coming home before long. . . . Nobody feel better for killing nothing" (129). Celie suppresses her fury according to Shug's advice. The discovery of Nettie's letters marks a radical turning point in Celie's transformation from object to subject and from writer to reader. Now she becomes courageous enough even to fight against her husband with whom she could never make any complain for his repeated sexual and physical violence upon her.

Shug enables Celie to break the long reserved silence so as to make counter verbal attack on her repressive husband. When Albert comes to know Celie's plan to leave him and live in Memphis with Shug, he gets furious. He

"start up from his seat, look at Shug, plop back down again". He glares at Celie and asks, "What wrong now?" Celie retorts him, "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" (180). Celie enters into counter verbal attacks with her husband Albert. She verbally revolts against her husband's oppression. Celie goes on voicing her desire and despair. With the help of Shug, Celie struggles towards self definition of her selfhood. Lind Abandonato remarks, "[Celie] challenges patriarchal constructions of female subjectivity and sexuality and thus makes representation itself a compelling issue for all women, regardless of their ethnicity or sexual orientation" (296). Celie, in fact, struggles to create a self through language and to break the network of class, racial, sexual and gender ideologies to which she is subjected.

Shug leads Celie to Memphis and pushes her to sew herself pants and start wearing them. She instigates Celie to set up her own pants company. Celie accepts her guardianship and follows her advice. She leaves her husband's house for Memphis with Shug. She starts a business of designing and sewing cloths in Memphis. It means that she enters into to the world of creation emancipating herself from the world of subjugation. She also becomes economically independent and makes her self-stand. She even starts wearing pants, subverting the patriarchal norms of male female dress.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Shug Avery is initially thought to be a nasty woman by her community because of her outspoken habit and her multiple sexual relationships. But eventually she emerges as rebellious figure to challenge patriarchal values and societal norms imposed by color conscious society. She is found to be empowered by her societal and personal experiences leading her to reshape her identity and take actions for change in her society. Her personality build up in patriarchal and color conscious society enables her to have a strong position and reverberating voice in her interactions with others. Her lifestyle as a financially

independent lady and blues singer is a reflection of her boldness to reject the conventional rules and values of male dominate society.

One of the most noteworthy contributions Shug makes is her support to Celie, the protagonist of *The Color Purple*. Shug becomes a mentor and a source of strength for Celie, helping her to break her silence and regain her freedom and voice. Shug inspires and encourages Celie to recognize her worth as an individual, a woman and full human being. She also empowers her to rediscover her selfhood, independence and her own voice. Celie gains the confidence from Shug to question conventional norms, challenge societal expectations, defend her rights, and transform her life . In a male dominated society, where woman are marginalized with the help of outdated religious and cultural doctrine, Shug emerges as a powerful force capable of threatening the Christian doctrine and patriarchal values of repressive social structures. She stands tall and proud, not because of external validation, but because of her inner strength and fearlessness. Despite the multiple challenges, hug's persona stands for the victory of individuality and self-expression.

It is also interesting to study Shug's emotional complexities, especially her love for Albert, a man who has been violent and rude in nature and disrespectful toward women. This aspect of her character sheds light on the complex relationships between power, love, and self-worth in violent partnerships. It also raises interesting questions about the complexities of love. A proud and strong woman like Shug would be viewed differently in the twenty-first century, particularly in light of current debates over gender, ethnicity, and identity. Finally, *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker has had a lasting impact on contemporary literature. Though Celie is regarded to be the protagonist of the novel, Shug Avery is the backbone of her. Shug's story leaves an indelible impact with her reverberating voice to spark discussion on individualism, equality and free will.

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