

EVALUATION OF LACK AND DESIRE IN COLOR PURPLE

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Abstract

This paper explores the dimensions of lack and desire in the characters of the Color Purple. The dimensions are individual or psychological and historical lack. The result mentions that there are multiple reasons for the Lack that one can see in the characters of the novel. In the context of structuralism, Lacan made some significant contributions to defining the unconscious and formulating the concept of desire. Lacan describes desire as a state of loss when discussing the complexity of desire. The research findings that how the idea of lack is linked to the idea of desire and the idea of desire is related to lack. Firstly, individual or psychological lack could be seen through the actions and behavior of the characters. Celie, the protagonist in the novel, went through physical or psychological violence firstly by her father and then by her husband. Her lack can be seen when she internalizes everything that happened to her and thinks she is worthless. >>>>>>>>Acts in a way that betrays a lack of understanding, kindness, and respect for other people, especially the ladies in his life. He is shown as being bossy and manipulative towards his wife and as being physically and sexually abusive towards his daughter Celie throughout the entire novel. Secondly, historical lack led to the character in the novel. This research has discovered Walker's novel from the Lacan point of view. It starts with the fall of the characters and then their growth. In this research, all the dimensions and reasons have been discussed clearly. This research has discovered Walker's novel from the Lacan point of view. It starts with the fall of the characters and then their growth. In this research, all the dimensions and reasons have been discussed clearly.

Key words: African American history, rape, racial discrimination, Lacan, lack, incest and desire, and subject, self-realization.

Introduction

Lack is a prominent psychoanalytic concept in Lacan's work. The term psychoanalysis is used for a range of psychological theories and a range of therapeutic methods, all of which emphasize the unconscious as an important factor in human development and behavior. In general, this sense of lack is experienced as a persistent feeling of emptiness or dissatisfaction, which drives us to seek out objects of desire to fill the void. Lacanian psychoanalysis relates the cause of lack to social and biological factors when examining the formation of lack. His works frequently reference his most well-known axiom, Desire is Lack. He characterizes desire as being related to lack. The inability to speak is this deficiency. He also made some significant contributions to the structure's definition of the unconscious and the formulation of the concept of desire. Lack, according to Lacan, is the absence or space that comes before an instinct or a desire that is expressed through a signifier (Copjec, 2015). As a result, the idea of lack coincides with the creation of the subject in Lacan's interpretation of desire. The system of language, or system of signification as Lacan refers to it, is how the subject, being incomplete, must continue to exist. A sense of loss that results in a desire for

restitution is engraved in the unconscious by the subject's inclusion within the signing system and the estrangement that follows. In the subject's desire, the loss represents the moment of birth. He asserts that the desire of the mother is the fundamental desire of the entire structure and that in the psychotic subject, it is outside the symbolization introduced by the paternal metaphor. As a result, the knotting of the records does not take place in an Oedipal manner. Without the reference that introduces the phallus as a signifier of the lack, this argument is insufficient to say that there is no desire in the psychotic, but rather that it is a desire that is not symbolized (1986). For Lacan, language is not simply a tool for communication but is rather the very structure that shapes our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Language is a system of signifiers that operate through difference and negation, rather than positive presence. It is this system of signifiers that provides the meanings and associations that are attached to the objects of our desire (Kelly, 2014). As we know the idea of lack is always related to desire.

In the *Color Purple*, Alice Walker describes the story of the characters within the framework of parental injunction and their desires that define the whole story. The desires or lack of a father force him to make a relationship with his daughter when he is not satisfied by his wife. Father's lack becomes his desire and he use his daughter as a sexual object. The story of Celie is about recovering desire and breaking the silence. Thus, we can say Celie's self-realization occurs due to her lack. Walker describes the story of Celie in terms of seduction, demand, desire, and self-realization. The characters, notably the primary female characters Celie, Shug Avery, Sofia, and Squeak, don't have fixed identities; instead, they vary and depend on their own words and desires as well as those of other characters and the expressions of other characters. They are influenced by their thoughts and feelings. In addition, they are influenced by the desires of others. "The text undergoes the concept of subjectivity: there are no stable individuals but rather permeable beings easily infected by the subjectivity of others and unsatisfactorily substitutable" (Talif, 2014). The following discussion will focus on the applicability of Lacan's theory of Lack to Alice Walker's the *Color Purple*.

Theoretical Framework

In literature, the term psychoanalytic designates a critical method or viewpoint that employs ideas and principles from psychoanalysis to evaluate and understand literary works. The psychological theory and treatment method known as psychoanalysis was created by Sigmund Freud and later developed by other psychoanalysts. It investigates the dynamics of the human psyche, the function of sexuality, the unconscious mind, and how suppressed ideas and desires can affect behavior. By reformulating Freudian theory, Lacan aims to free psychoanalysis from the essentialism of biological and anatomical explanations. Lacan's contributions in this area are covered in two sections of the discussion. Several concepts are fundamental to Lacanian psychoanalysis, including the notions of the Imaginary and Symbolic orders, and are drawn from the study of structural linguistics, most notably the idea of the 'signifier' and 'signified'. In all of these, language is essential, and this needs to be stressed. Under the light of structuralism, Lacan made a significant contribution to developing the meaning of unconscious and desire. By analyzing the complexity of desire, Lacan characterizes it as a state of loss. The feature of desire is that it is structural. Language never represents the subject identity causes the division inside the subject: a split between the conscious and unconscious. The initial lack produced by this rupture is an absolute condition that one cannot fulfill.

In 1958 Ecrit's "The Signification of the Phallus," Lacan offers a brief formula for defining "desire" as both need

and demand. He specifies that desire is what remains after the need is taken away from demand. Lacan, therefore, asserts that every demand is, at the bottom, a demand for love. Returning to the equation "demand – need = desire," what is desired when demand is addressed to another is not so much the meeting of the thus-expressed need, but, in addition to this, the very love of another. Since Freud, the fundamental concept of "desire" has been a part of psychoanalysis. Based on Freud, Lacan has developed a new theory of desire. He makes use of three levels: demands, desires, and needs. As a result, desire has a more definite form, replacing Freud's instinct theory. According to Lacan, "Needs pertain to the needs of the human body and are a part of physiology.

In the subject's desire, the loss represents the moment of birth. He asserts that the desire of the mother is the fundamental desire of the entire structure and that in the psychotic subject, it is outside the symbolization introduced by the paternal metaphor. As a result, the knotting of the records does not take place in an Oedipal manner. Without the reference that introduces the phallus as a signifier of the lack, this argument is insufficient to say that there is no desire in the psychotic, but rather that it is a desire that is not symbolized (1986). Lacan claims that object petit is an object of desire that we seek in the Other (Evans, 2006). It is not coincident with any particular object at all, but only with the desire for desire (Ross, 2002). It is the cause of desire. Desire is not a relation to an object, but a relation to lack. Moreover, according to Lacan desire is a metonymy and a social product. It is always constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects (Evans, 2006). In conceiving the Other as a place, Lacan alludes to Freud's concepts of psychical locality, in which the unconscious is described as "the Other scene". It is the mother who first occupies the position of the big other for the child. The castration complex is formed when the child discovers that this Other is not complete, that there is a "lack" in the "Other". In other words, there is always a signifier missing from the treasury of signifiers constituted by the Other. The mythical complete Other does not exist (Evans, 2006).

It is important to note that Lacan's notion of the phallus is not restricted to the anatomical organ; instead, it refers to the symbolic representation of power and authority in the patriarchal society. Lacan posits that the phallus is not a biological reality but a symbolic signifier representing power, authority, and masculinity in our culture. In Lacan's theory, the phallus is the object of desire that the male child strives to attain, but it is also the object that the female child is excluded from, leading to her feeling a sense of lack and inferiority (Waugh, 2012). The idea of the phallus is argued to be somewhat overused in this argument because it serves as the first physical indicator of sexual difference as well as an imaginary object of desire. It appears to be an over-determined idea, but perhaps this is the whole point of a concept that Lacan refers to as "a signifier without a signified" (Weber, 2016).

It is difficult to argue against the fact that the discourse of psychoanalysis offers us a variety of potential critical tools as a set of conceptual resources, regardless of how we may feel about Lacan's theoretical framework and the discourse of psychoanalysis in general or wherever we take a position regarding the debate over whether psychoanalysis merely institutionalizes patriarchy or whether it diagnoses and explains it.

Lacanian Lack and Desire

As discussed previously, Jacques Lacan is one of the most influential psychoanalytic theorists of the 20th century. His

work has had a profound impact on the fields of psychology, philosophy, and literary theory. Lacan's concept of the "lack" is one of his most significant contributions to psychoanalytic theory and has been the subject of extensive research and analysis. At its core, the concept of lack in Lacan's theory refers to a fundamental incompleteness or sense of absence that is present in human subjectivity. According to Lacan, the human subject is always lacking something, whether it be a sense of wholeness, completeness, or satisfaction. This sense of lack is what drives human desire and is central to the workings of the unconscious. Numerous scholars have explored the concept of lack in Lacan's theory in depth.

An important contribution to the study of lack in Lacan's theory is the work of Slavoj Žižek. In his book, "The Sublime Object of Ideology," Žižek explores the concept of lack of the dynamics of ideology and desire. According to Žižek, the subject's experience of lack is what drives them to desire objects that are fundamentally impossible to obtain. This impossibility is what creates the fantasy of fulfillment and is central to the workings of ideology. The concept of lack in Lacan's theory has also been the subject of extensive analysis in the field of literary theory. In her book, "Desire in Language," Julia Kristeva explores the relationship between Lacan's concept of lack and the experience of reading and writing. Kristeva argues that literature is a space in which the subject can confront and explore their sense of lack and that this process is essential to the development of subjectivity.

Contrarily, Lacanian desire describes an ongoing search for something that is thought to be lacking or absent. Desire is not a good or rewarding energy; rather, it is a void or a lack that compels us to look for satisfaction and fulfillment. Because of this, Lacan is credited with saying that "desire is the desire of the Other." In other words, our desires are always socially constructed since they are molded and mediated by those of others.

Historical Lack

Lack emphasizes the absence of potency/power, deprivation, desire, and identity from a historical perspective. The factors are easily visible in racial discrimination, so the characters display a systematic Lack that ultimately determines their status in terms of power, social mobility, authority, and desire for power. When we see the history of African Americans we realize how power works. Blacks have a long history of being exploited by the powerful people of white societies. The infrastructure and resources of the African Americans are destroyed by the forces of established society, much like in total war. They have suffered due to a potent prison industrial complex that makes money off their demonization, incarceration, and racial discrimination. White people used them as their burden and made them slaves. Slavery is the practice of treating other people as property, especially for the sake of forced labor and racial discrimination or prejudicial opinion. Many problems, including gender inequality, women's rights, sex, and others, have slavery and racism as their primary causes.

This historical lack is passed down from generation to generation and it remains even for centuries (Hobsbawm, 1972). Though lack is a psychological problem as has been examined previously, it could be individual but sometimes it generates due to oppression, violence, and unequal treatment, which has happened in the history of blacks. Lack of resources and unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities can contribute to racial disparities and lead to racial

differences. Similarly, historical lack leads them toward Lacanian lack which is always related to desire (Braunstein, 2003). Whereas this historical lack of African Americans leads them to psychological lack and reflection on the history of suppression, discrimination could be seen in the behavior of black people (Williams, D. R., et al. 2009). Their distorted identities and the ruthless attitude of whites towards them make them brutal and harsh on themselves and sometimes on their same community and families. African Americans deal with discrimination daily, and it is well-known that this harms their health in both the mind and body. People of color experience widespread and frequent stress due to racial discrimination. Encounters of racial discrimination might include overt behaviors, like direct physical contact, or hidden behaviors, such as being treated with less respect (Sue, Torino, G. et al 2007).

The impact of extensive evidence indicates how violence creates violence just as love begets love. Studies focused on the behavior of blacks and the impacts of historical violence on them psychologically. Black males subjugated by white society became enraged, leading to domestic violence and gender discrimination. Their ruthless behavior with their race shows how much they suffered due to the whites, and they have internalized their history. Black women were doubly oppressed first by whites and then by their males. Women's behavior and morals can be controlled by male dominance. "Black women are thereby naturally stigmatized and excluded so as not to undermine male dominance, which may restrict women's movement" (Crawley, 2006). It is said that women should stay at home and take care of the family, that their progress has been denied, and that their rights are limited (McClintock, 1993). Several African-American writers describe the history of blacks and the influence of whites on their lives. Modern authors Alice Walker and Toni Morrison seek to reflect the realities of black women in their novels considering these truths. Walker and Morrison "...deepen our understanding of the constraints and opportunities of black Americans' lives." (Bell, 1987: 269). They are authors of African descent.

Not only Walker's novels *Meridian* and *The Color Purple* show how Black women may endure difficult circumstances, but also Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. The lives of African American women were powerfully depicted by both authors and the black characters in both novels show the history and their ruthless behavior towards other blacks. *Bluest Eye* (1970) is an immigrant history of what it was like to be a black woman growing up in the 1940s and 1970s (Matus, 1998: 2). Pecola's desire, which started when she was a youngster, leads to hardships as she grows. Her anger expresses itself in abuses against black people and the beauty, racism, aggression, and rape. The historical lack of Pecola's father is also seen when he beats her daughter. Despite beating her daughter, he also rapes her, which is an indication of incest in a black family. Incest is described as a sexual relationship between people who are connected genetically. According to Kellogg, it is any sexual interaction between close blood relations who are not allowed to get married (Kellogg, 2005). Similarly, the historical lack can be seen in another novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. This novel is based on the true story of Mary Garner, "a slave who murdered her infant and tried on her own life to prevent returning to slavery" (Peach, 1995: 93). Historical lack in Sethe memories haunts her, and she is sent back to the cruel white master which impacts her both psychologically and physically. "Sethe is cruelly sexually abused by a schoolteacher's nephews and beat her back until it was bloodied" (Kubitschek, 1998: 116).

Alice Walker also describes her personal experiences as a civil rights and sexual politics activist in *Meridian*. She also highlights black women's experiences with prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. Walker describes the "...inner

struggle..." (Cooke, 1984: 158) of a black woman in particular, Meridian Hill, in Meridian. In the novel, she experiences discrimination, rape, and suffering. In this novel, the historical lack could be seen when the colored man rapes just to take revenge on white women. The novel describes aggression as including acts of rape, harassment, reproductive control, and forced childbirth (Lauret, 2000: 66). In this novel, Tommy Odds, a black man, exhibits one of these aggressive behaviors. The rape of Lynne by this colored man was "...justified..., by the desire of the black man to liberate himself from white oppression by taking revenge upon white women" (66). This aggressive behavior is a result of Tommy Odds' hate towards white people.

Desire and Lack in the Color Purple

The Color Purple (1982) as the study explores is a novel that represents desire and lack, particularly in the context of the experiences of African American women. It also examines the devastating effects of masculine dominance, racism, potency, and historical Lack in the characters of blacks. Novel centers on a female protagonist, who struggles with racial and gender oppression and uses language as a means of self-expression. The novel highlights how this historical lack is passed down from generation to generation, as Celie's father passed down his trauma and mistreatment to her, which further perpetuated the cycle of oppression. The historical lack could be seen when Walker describes the scene of her great-grandmother's rape. So, in The Color Purple, it is not only due to gender or race, but it also happens due to the history of African Americans. According to Winchell, the assault scenario in the novel "... is based on Walker's great-great-grandmother, who had been assaulted and became pregnant at the age of 11 by her master Walker (Winchell, 1992: 85).

This incident demonstrates "...the portrayal of the black family." (86) According to the author, child rape and incest are unavoidable aspects of most black people's life (Birch, 1994: 222). The novel exposes the abundance of violence that black people experience in the form of a severe economic, social, and emotional crisis. History haunts them and, in the novel, Mother shows the impacts of violence and racial discrimination. In the first few pages, Walker exposes the brutal behavior of men towards women, whether they are members of their own families or not. Women are merely disposable objects for father, who solely uses them to gratify their lack and desires. Mother is a historical representation of African-American women who show a lack of self-reliance and power. Her lack and psychology can be seen when her husband tries to kiss her, but she rejects him angrily, saying, Last spring after little Lucious come, "I heard them fussing. He was pulling on her arm. She says It's too soon, Fonso, I ain't well. Finally, he leaves her alone. A week ago, he pulled on her arm again. "Can't you see I am already half dead" (Walker, 15). Mother has left her severely traumatized. Her psychological separation and alienation increase as a result of this trauma, making it impossible for her to provide an emotional connection with her kids and her husband.

Furthermore, the themes of desire and lack are explored in the novel through the character of Celie herself. Celie experiences a profound sense of lack throughout her life, particularly in terms of her relationships with men. She is abused by her stepfather and then married off to a man who treats her poorly and is only interested in her as a caretaker for his children. Celie desires love and connection but is unable to find it in the men she encounters. Throughout the novel, desire and lack are presented as deeply intertwined concepts, with desire often emerging as a

response to a sense of lack. Celie's desire for love and connection is a response to the lack of love and care she experiences from the men in her life. Similarly, Shug's desire for independence and autonomy is a response to the lack of agency and power that is available to women in their society. Overall, "The Color Purple" presents a complex exploration of desire and lack, particularly in the context of the experiences of African American women. The novel highlights the profound effects of oppression and violence on the psyche and shows how these experiences can create a sense of lack that drives desire and shapes relationships between individuals.

Through Celie and her parents, we can understand the concept of Lacanian lack. The novel can be analyzed through the key concept of lack which refers to the inherent absence or unfulfilled desires that shape human experience. In the novel, we can see how lack and desire lead the character. Pa is a complex and multi-faceted character who is deeply affected by the historical injustice done by whites to blacks or African Americans. Through him, one can analyze how historical context influences someone's behavior, even when that activity is destructive to others. It also demonstrates the repeated nature of abuse and oppression, with those who have been harmed feeding the cycle of violence against others. He is black and he grew up in a deplorable and violent home; therefore, he is a consequence of his surroundings. The stepfather of Celie, Pa, demonstrates several psychological flaws that have a big impact on his behavior and social interactions. We can see due to a psychological lack; Pa has become mad. He can't feel or comprehend the pain that he gives other people, particularly Celie. From a young age, he abuses Celie physically and sexually, and because of his lack of empathy, he is unable to recognize the harm he commits. He has a revengeful mindset rather than feel sorry for her daughter and wife he teases her daughter while satisfying himself "You going to do what your mama wouldn't," (Walker, 1983, p. 3). As we know he doesn't like her daughter and treats her less than a human being but for the fulfillment of his desires he prefers her.

His wife's health was insufficient to meet Pa's needs. Due to his wife's behavior, he starts to hurt her daughter. He just wants to take revenge and has a revengeful mindset and asks her. "You going to do what your mama wouldn't," (Walker, 1983, p. 3). The other example of psychological lack that could be seen in the novel is when he asks her if she talks about it with anyone. "You better never tell anyone but God, he says to her before raping her. It'll kill your mother". (Walker 1) When he satisfies his desires, he acts like a good father in front of his wife. "My mama, she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long" (Walker, 1983, p. 5). Celie was left at home without the affection and support of both of her parents. Walker shows the attitude of blacks toward other blacks. In the novel, women are oppressed more than black men. It shows how physical, and sexual exploitation, oppression, and repeated acts of violence against black women oppress and exploit them. The way that Pa treats other women in the novel, including his wife and mistresses, as simple objects for his pleasure and satisfaction, demonstrates his lack of psychological growth.

Similarly, his psychological lack could be seen in another scene when he decides to sell her. He is a violent man; he decided to sell her stepdaughter in the name of marriage to a divorced father of four who wanted a woman to serve them and help with housework. As we can see when Celie's mother died and Pa married Celie to Mr., he wanted another younger woman and sought her sister Nettie for a sexual encounter. This father, Albert, wanted to marry Nettie rather than Celie, but Pa did not accept, so he tried to get rid of Celie. "I say, I got to get rid of her," he said. "She is too

old to stay at home with us. And she's a horrible influence on my other girls. She'd bring her own linen" (CP, 7). He even arranges for her to be married to an older Albert who had originally intended to wed Nettie, whom Pa obviously wanted to preserve for himself because she was still too young and untouched for another to look for. Celie is therefore readily given away to this new man despite no longer being a virgin. Cellie was once raped and is now considered "used goods," someone who deserves no respect in this world. Pa's behavior was heavily influenced by the societal norms of the time, which allowed men to exert a great deal of control over the lives of women and children, particularly in the African-American community.

Although the desire is a psychological need Pa fulfills it in a cruel way. He abuses and beats his wife and her girls in many vicious ways to dominate them. The novel starts with the speech of Celie when her stepfather immediately starts to rape her when her mother isn't home. Then he says, "You better shut up and get used to it" (Walker, 1985: 3). This statement shows he was never satisfied after a single assault, and he wanted to do it again and again. The other side of the statement is lack and desires are never fulfilled, or it may arouse more strongly. Pa demonstrates individual or psychological lack through his behavior. He is driven by sexual desires as a basic need. According to Maslow who wrote about it in "Motivation and Personality" (1954), Sexual desires can be examined as a simple physiological need (Maslow, 1954, p. 44). The ultimate source of power and authority in this situation is the male phallus, which is positioned in a patriarchal stance that degrades women and demands that they be envied and desired by men (Roshnavand, 26). In two cases, it is clear. First, when Celie's father tells her to be quiet or it "would kill your mammy," and then when Albert beats Celie and defends it by claiming that "wives should periodically be hit" (Walker 1).

Jacques Lacan's idea of Phallus could be seen in the character of Pa, in *The Color Purple*. It structures the desire of Pa in the novel as Lacan says. In the novel, Pa is walking phallus and trying to use Celie as a stand-in since Celie's mother doesn't satisfy his sexual desires. Lack of self-control is another psychological flaw that Pa displays. He is portrayed as a figure who is unreliable, temperamental, and often exhibits violent outbursts. Pa's lack of self-control is evident in his relationship with Celie because he frequently shouts at her without cause. Throughout the story, he asks her about it again and again which sometimes shows fear of the revelation of Pa's act. He asks her to remain quiet about what has happened between us. When his wife dies, he rapes her daughter more and more. He impregnates her twice. "I'm large. I can't go quickly enough. The water will be warm when I return from the well. The meal will be cold by the time I get the bowl ready" (Walker, 1983, p. 6). He asks her to remain quiet about what has happened between us. When his wife dies, he rapes her daughter more and more.

Overall, Pa's individual or psychological lacks play a major role in shaping his character and significantly add to the novel's ongoing themes of abuse and trauma. His actions towards Celie and other women demonstrate the harmful impacts of toxic masculinity and the significance of understanding self-control, and self-awareness in creating good relationships.

Celie's Self-realization

This part examines the protagonist's emancipation process, not just in terms of aging but also in terms of her change from a helpless oppressed girl to a strong and independent woman. The novel is thought of as an identity quest that explores a woman's journey of independence and self-discovery. As we know Alice Walker tells Celie's story within the framework of a parental edict of silence that serves as the story's overarching directive: "You better not never tell anybody but God." (pg. 1). Due to this, even though there is a sensation of hearing unmediated "voices," the story of Celie is a text about recovering desire and breaking silences. Celie fights to regain her position within the enterprise of desire that had been suppressed for so long while being imprisoned in a turmoil of racial and (hetero) sexist oppressions and distorted indications. Here the Lacanian idea could be seen in how repressed desires become dominant and how an individual fills his/her lack. According to Castle Celie is incarcerated, kept apart, subjected to sexual assault, and made to crumble semiotically. (pg. 182).

The novel focuses on Celie's healing process as she engages in the discourse of her own desire. In the novel, language and desire combine to (re)construct the individuality of the protagonist. Nevertheless, in Celie's story, language is presented as coming before desire. Celie, the subject, her spirit, the darkness in which this spirit manifests itself, alienation, silence, and finally, the body and touch that abrogates, are all presented as appearing prior to language. The novel also explores the value of language, the quest for language, a sense of self as well as the insatiability and intensity of desires. According to psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, desire is the gap between the needs of the body and the demands expressed in conversation. Because the needs of the body are unarticulated because they depend on the limitations of the Other, it can be stated that they come before language (Grosz, 2002). Thus, the novel can be analyzed as an analytical investigation into the unconsciousness and individuality of Cellie in terms of suppressed but endless female desires.

The first few lines of *The Color Purple* make it evident that Celie is going through Lacan's Mirror Stage, in which she thinks of herself as a shattered bodily wholeness. Celie "cries out My body [...] my heart is broken" (CP 256). As she did in the prior scenes, she makes sense of her surroundings by identifying with individuals from the Imaginary order such as God, her sister, and nature. The pre-Oedipal stage of bodily pleasures and feelings in the form of images and preverbal communication is represented by the imaginary order (Gross, 2012). When Shug claims that "my first step from the old white man was trees," Celie accepts a reinterpretation of God's power. Air follows. Then birds. Next came other people. The experience of being a part of everything and not at all separate, however, "came to me one day as I sat quietly" (CP 205). Finally, at the end of the novel, Celie goes through a reconstruction of her identity as she comes to terms with the reality of the Law of the Father in the Oedipal stage (Ross, 1988). She recognizes her gender by realizing that the paternal signifier, the Phallus, only exists in the Other and that she herself finally comes under her father's power as a being of Law (Mellard, 71).

These several instances of identity make up how the Lacanian subject is formed. In fact, Celie experiences herself through the Mirror Stage images, the identification judgments she makes as she forms her subjectivity, and eventually, the impressions of the impositions of the Other made at the level of the Name-of-the-Father; psychoanalytical ideas are then fully described. According to the Lacanian theory of the subject, the infant begins to create his or her own identity during the imaginary stage based on the context of the Other, which shapes the unconscious. When comparing herself

to the lack of the separated other, Celie reflects her own identity in the symbolic mirrors of other women. "We sleep together like sisters, Shug and I. As much as I still desire to be with her and as much as I like looking" (CP 154). As a result, Celie starts constructing an identity for herself that is founded on a "mecon- naissance," or an incorrect acceptance of who she is as a result of internalizing what others depict as representations of herself.

Celie begins her journey of identification precisely because her mother is absent and then dies. She has passed away from the world of language, where she was present as her daughter's mother, and she also no longer pursues her desire or realizes herself. Celie has come to the realization that she does not possess the position of knowledge. This information is situated in the realm of the Other (the Father). The desire of the subject develops, and according to Lacan, the point of lack is where his want is beyond or falls lacking what she (the mother) suggests, of what she draws out as meaning, or where his desire is unknown (Ecrits, 218). Shug Avery represents the spirit of the missing, deceased mother: "Shug Avery was a woman. I have never seen a woman so lovely. She is more beautiful than my mother (CP 7). Additionally, Celie states, "I work on her like she a doll or like she Olivia--or like she mama" (CP 57). Shug's breasts represent the first item, the (m)other herself, symbolically. Shug Avery is the subject of Celie's fantasies because she (Shug) represents her mother's missing breast, which is the source of Celie's desire.

To be sure, as Lacan may note, the object of fantasy and desire (Shug) results in ambiguity. The unconscious motivations behind the desire for the object could never be fully satisfied. With Shug's encouragement that there is a wonderful thing in our bodies to see, Celie held a mirror in her palm as they sought this. Shug encourages Celie to examine herself, while Celie treats Shug as a baby who must be frightened and obeyed, preparing Celie for this experiment by saying, "It seems like we've been doing something wrong" (CP.83). Shug tries to express herself in simple terms to Celie, who is a virgin in spirit, but she rarely uses phrases like "when you do 'you know what's with somebody" (CP, 40). Shug observes Celie from the door and directs her to look at her body in the mirror to determine when it is appropriate to perform any action. When Celie first sees her figure in the mirror, she is horrified. "Ugh. That much hair. My..... The interior will then appear damp" (CP, 83).

In fact, Celie's sense of self-worth is based on how she feels about her physical appearance. Celie's independence and self-appropriation are thus provided by the experience of a scope self-discovery raised by Shug, one of the most important moments in Celie's individuation phase. Through Lacanian analysis, we can see that Celie's transformation starts when she receives support from the community after realizing her body. The turning moment in Alice Walker's the Color Purple occurs when Celie attempts to break away from a man's control over her and asserts her uniqueness and right to exist. She protests and declares, "I'm poor, I'm black, I may be ugly, and I can't cook... but I'm here" (CP, 20). Celie discovers her individuality as a woman who must stand on her own two feet. Making her own pants is a significant representation of Celie's independence. Celie transforms from a victim of violence into a self-reliant, innovative businesswoman. She eventually comes to understand the strength and joy of her own spirit, which liberates her from her past and brings her back together with the people she loves. By speaking out against patriarchal rule, she achieves an autonomous state.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis demonstrates that themes of lack and desire are central to the character development and plot of *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. Celie's experiences of violence, oppression, and exclusion can be seen as manifestations of lack, as she is denied agency, power, and a sense of self. The novel can also be read through a Lacanian psychoanalytic lens, particularly in terms of Celie's victimization by the phallus and the larger system of patriarchal power that it represents. Overall, the implications of using Lacanian concepts in modern fiction are wide-ranging and complex but can provide a valuable means of exploring and challenging dominant narratives and power structures, as well as delving deeper into the human psyche.

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