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Banned Book Essay

Mrs. Frazier Period 2

The Color Purple

Books have been banned throughout history for numerous reasons. Some were banned for making people think or changes opinions in ways that could be disruptive. Things like politics, religion, and human activities could bring about a book being banned. The Bible and the Quran two holy books have been banned throughout history, even. The Color Purple is one of those books that brought up something to think about, and it was banned for good reason. The Color Purple brings up topics that most people would never wish to read about.

The Color Purple is about the life of an abused African American girl. Celie, the main character, is fourteen when the story starts. She gives birth to two children because of her stepfather. Celie ends up married to an abusive tormenting husband. Shug another African American woman who travels in a singing act helps Celie find herself. They find Celie’s sister’s letters sent to Celie that her husband hid. Celie leaves her husband and goes with Shug to Memphis and they find out Celie’s stepfather had died and left her land. She goes to the farm and lives there. Nettie, Celie’s sister comes and Celie, her children and Nettie are all reunited.

Rape is a horrible activity that could be the key reason The Color Purple was banned at one point. Not only is rape mentioned it is graphically described. The main character, Celie, describes rape vividly when she was still a minor. “First he put his thing up gainst my thigh and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he pushed his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.” page one of The Color Purple. Not only is she raped multiple times by her stepfather but multiple times by her husband as well. Some of the times Celie is raped she ends up pregnant and is blamed and called a whore. Almost every female in the story is raped at least once. Another example of a female character that is raped, is a girl named Squeak. She is raped by her white uncle who is a prison guard. Squeak originally intended to help her boyfriend’s ex-wife get out of prison for defending herself.

Another prime reason The Color Purple was once banned is that the language is course and racist at best. In most parts of the story there are racial slur words like ‘nigger’. Both white and black people used it. There are also words discriminating against women like whore, slut and tramp. Most of those words are used against rape victims and women who have children in general. Women are the ones who say these words the most. They primarily called Celie, for being impregnated by her stepfather, Shug, for being unmarried and having three children, and Mister’s first wife, for being murdered by a man she is accused of sleeping with. Examples of these discriminatory comments are on page forty-four describing Shug: “He talk about a strumpet in short skirts, smoking cigarettes, drinking gin. Singing for money and taking other women mens. Talk bout slut, hussy heifer, and streetcleaner.”

Spousal abuse is also prominent in The Color Purple. Celie’s mother is beat repeatedly by her husband, the same man that raped Celie. Celie’s husband Mister beats Celie for ‘not being Shug’ as he says. Celie was beat so bad that she could barely walk. She also was constantly berated and brought down using words. She is eventually more like an empty shell than an actual woman. Harpo, Mister’s son, tries to beat his first wife into submission but fails and she leaves him for another man until she is thrown in prison. Harpo’s second wife Squeak is beat multiple times by Harpo but she escapes with Celie and Shug towards the end of the book. There are few women in this book that have not been abused in some sort of way.

The Color Purple is a rather tragic story of a young girl growing up. This book, one may say, deserves to be still banned. This book brings to mind that America even in recent times was still incredibly racist and women were treated as objects. Most people in society would rather not think about the things pointed out in this book. Most people seem to think that this time is romantic but it is not. The Color Purple is a book that makes you think about some unpleasant things and that is why it was banned.