

## The Same River Twice : Honoring the Difficult

Alice. WALKER

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**Alice. WALKER : The Same River Twice : Honoring the Difficult** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Same River Twice : Honoring the Difficult:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Mixed FeelingsBy Edward AycockReading Walker's prose can be like talking with a live person face to face. There is no aloof distance between Walker and the reader, one feels that she is addressing them personally; the drawback to this is that when she says something you may not agree with, you can feel a little hurt or even betrayed. The Color Purple is a story that so many people lay "claim" to, and is one of the most important books of the twentieth century. Readership of the novel has only grown since its initial publication in 1982, and it's no wonder that Walker feels such a bond to this story of hers. The problem is that the rights were sold to make a movie version and Walker wasn't entirely pleased with the results.While I am sure any writer would feel very ambivalent about a film version of their novel (as Ken Kesey did for "Cuckoo's Nest"), when one signs the film rights away, they should brace themselves for the disappointment. Walker takes us step-by-step through the disappointment but the final conclusion is a feeling of ingratitude. What is important to me is that because of the movie I became aware of the book and thus began my love for Alice Walker. As a teen I loved the movie, but being older now I do see many moments in the film as rather embarrassing. But again, had it not been for the film I would not have read the book.But why did Walker choose to write this book? Parts of it are very interesting, but much of the book is just a bunch of journal entries and news clippings. Walker does submit her entire screenplay that she proposed; Her screenplay is actually less streamlined than the script that made it to the screen and has too many moments involving the patterns in a quilt that stop the story dead in its tracks. For all the flaws of the screenplay that was adapted, (and

there are many), it's a much less rambling script than Walkers. Despite Walker's intentions, the book comes off as ungrateful. After all, she was able to make a nice home for herself. But this book is interesting to see the author's point of view. Had Purple been made in the 50's, it would have been damaged beyond repair and probably taken the point of view of one of the minor white characters ... if it would have been made at all. We've all seen movies that ruined a book, Walker is one of the only ones who has been vocal about it. But Walker should also take heart, at least she didn't write "Beloved" and watch that transition to the screen.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Affirmation of Walker's role as "author and medium". By A Customer  
Extracted from Bracket vol.2 no.1, 1996 The book emerges as a quilt, not unlike Celie's in *The Color Purple* that has evidence of both happier times with Celie and Shug and the pain of abuse. This format allows for the co-presentation of both the joyous and painful events which characterised *The Color Purple*. Photographs, letters, newspapers reviews and three new essays are threaded together by Walker's journal entries. The book is a detailed exploration of the unfolding of the production of the film. In it she judges too the impact of the film on her person as a writer and on her audience. It successfully blends the public and the private consequences of the novel. Walker explains her initial and subsequent responses to the film directed by Stephen Spielberg. The roles of both Spielberg and Quincy Jones as artists are centred as Walker conceded that the film and novel could not have been the same. The screenplay that was never used resides side by side with the responses Walker has encountered since the release of the film. Juxtaposed with the laudatory letters of support for the novel and film, are antagonistic articles on both versions of *The Color Purple*. The hostility generated from certain quarters of the Black community is explored in detail. Manifestations of this enmity range from a dismissive article written by a reporter who had not seen the film, to accusations that Walker hated Black men. The film facilitates a process of personal growth for Walker and she is ultimately able to say, "Now I see its flaws, but love it for its own sake, and love the people, too, who made it and made it from where they are." (214) The book then is remarkable and accessible to Walker devotees both inside and outside academic research fields. It is a combined presentation of several areas that Walker is renowned for - her creative writing, intellectual and spiritual sensitivity and her ability to combine the "high and low culture" of art in academia. Honoring the Difficult is once again an affirmation of herself as "author and medium".

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Book in My Opinion  
By A. Harper This book is not for everyone. I found this book extremely intimate and amazing. Why? I enjoy "getting to know" my favorite authors in a way that depicts them as "human just like you and me." Alice Walker let's us into her mind and emotions. She shows us that behind her great literary talent, she too goes through self-doubt, worry about what "other people think", etc. I remember when *The Color Purple* movie was released and the backlash it got from black men in my community who perceived it as "male hating." I always wondered what it was like to put your heart and soul into a literary piece, have hollywood create a visual experience out of it in a way that you didn't expect, then sit through people "attacking" you as a "black male hater." Well, this book reveals what Alice went through, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically. We get to read excerpts from her journal. Furthermore, I felt more connected to this book than perhaps other readers because I myself am a novelist writer trying to publish my first book. Alice Walker brought up "controversial issues" in the book, *The Color Purple* (the most controversial being the "lesbian" relationship between Celie and Shug). My own work brings up "taboo" subjects within the black community. Reading Walker's intimate experiences with the public's (and her family and friends') reactions to her work and her bravery to "keep on keepin' on", inspired me to continue writing about subjects that have often been "silenced" within my own black community. *The Same River Twice* is an excellent book for someone such as myself who is often intimidated and worried about how their community may respond to their literary pieces.