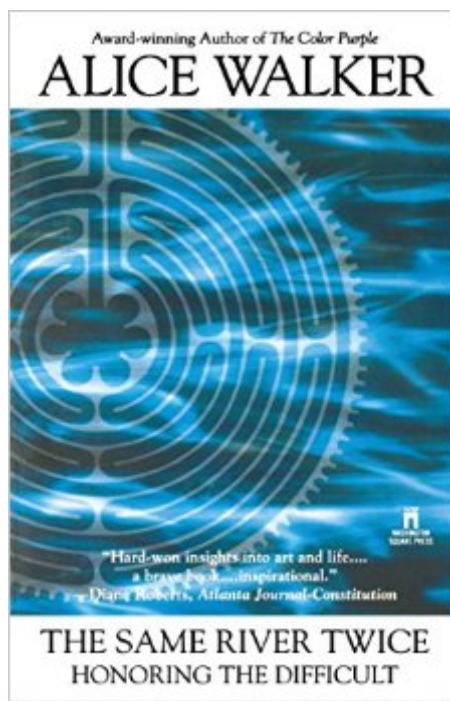


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The Same River Twice



Synopsis

Chronicles the experiences of Alice Walker in the aftermath of the publication of *The Color Purple* and its winning of the Pulitzer Prize, as illustrated by essays, journal entries, and the author's never-used screenplay. Reprint.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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.

Reading 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.

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