

Tracing Speculative Echoes: Afrofuturist Underpinnings in the Womanist Vision of Alice Walker

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Abstract

This presentation examines the speculative resonance embedded within Alice Walker's womanist vision, contending that while her work may not be categorized as speculative fiction per se, it embodies a distinct Afrofuturist sensibility grounded in spiritual realism, ancestral memory, and ecological kinship. Whereas conventional Afrofuturism often utilizes genres like magic realism, fantasy, or alternate history to reimagine Black futures, Walker's speculative mode operates through deeply spiritual, ancestral, and naturalistic channels.

Walker's concept of womanism, which she famously described as "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender," establishes a holistic, Black feminist consciousness that embraces spiritual interconnectedness and cultural legacy. In *The Colour Purple*, Walker traces Celie's journey toward self-recognition and spiritual awakening through mystical experiences, vibrant kinship with Black women, and communion with the natural world—such as the transformative moment of "noticing the colour purple."

This presentation argues that Walker's spiritual realism—manifested through visionary motifs, ancestral retrieval, and environmental empathy—parallels core Afrofuturist objectives of reconstituting identity and envisioning liberated futures. By examining connections between texts and themes, I show how Walker's womanist story hints at future possibilities, providing a deep womanist vision that connects feminist ideas with speculative literature and changes how we view Black feminist creative spaces.

Keywords

Womanism, Speculative realism, Afrofuturism, Ancestral memory, Eco-spirituality.