The Color Purple - Important Quotations

***LEARNING OUTCOME:*** Read complex texts actively: recognize key passages; raise questions; appreciate complexity and ambiguity; comprehend the literal and figurative uses of language.

All of the important quotes from The Color Purple listed here correspond, at least in some way, to themes, symbols, imagery, and motifs. With a partner, analyze each quote (do not paraphrase), then identify and interpret how the literary elements (listed above) are used. Also, you and your partner **must find two additional quotes** to add to this list and follow the same instructions above. All quotes from The Color Purple contain page numbers as well.

“I don’t even look at mens. That’s the truth. I look at women, tho, cause I’m not scared of them." (6)

“I take out the picture of Shug Avery. I look into her eyes. Her eyes say Yeah, it bees that way sometime." (9)

“I don’t say nothing. I think bout Nettie, dead. She fight, she run away. What good it do? I don’t fight, I stay where I’m told. But I’m alive." (22)

“Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr. \_\_\_\_ say, Cause she my wife. Plus, she stubborn. All women good for—he don’t finish. He just tuck his chin over the paper like he do. Remind me of Pa." (23)

“Shug Avery standing upside a piano, elbow crook, hand on her hip….Her mouth open showing all her teef and don’t nothing seem to be troubling her mind…. Lord, I wants to go so bad. Not to dance. Not to drink. Not to play card. Not even to hear Shug Avery sing. I just be thankful to lay eyes on her." (26)

“What you do when you git mad? She ast. I think. I can’t even remember the last time I felt mad, I say. I used to git mad at my mammy….Then I see how sick she is. Couldn’t stay mad at her. Couldn’t be mad at my daddy….Bible say, Honor father and mother no matter what." (43-44)

“Listen, God love everything you love—and a mess of stuff you don’t. But more than anything else, God love admiration….Not vain, just wanting to share a good thing. I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don’t notice it." (203)

“Who you think you is? he say. You can’t curse nobody. Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. Goddam, he say, you nothing at all." (213)

“You ast yourself one question, it lead to fifteen. I start to wonder why us need love. Why us suffer. Why us black. Why us men and women. Where do children really come from. It didn’t take long to realize I didn’t hardly know nothing. And that if you ast yourself why you black or a man or a woman or a bush it don’t mean nothing if you don’t ast why you here, period." (289-290)

“I think us here to wonder, myself. To wonder. To ast. And that in wondering bout the big things and asting bout the big things, you learn about the little ones, almost by accident." (290)

Reference: Walker, Alice. The Color Purple. New York: Pocket Books, 1982.