Ntozake Shange: FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE/ WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF

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BIOGRAPHY (1948- )

Her original name is Paullette L. Williams. She Changed her name in 1971 to an African name Ntozake means “She who comes with her own things. Shange means “Who walks like a lion” She was a part of a upper middle class family in Trenton, New Jersey. She completed high school and during that time she became increasingly aware of the injustice of the American society on black females. Attended Barnard College at the age of 18. One year later she attempted suicide multiple times. Her series of suicide attempts include: sticking head in the oven, drinking chemicals, driving car in the pacific, slashing her wrist, overdose on valium. Her cause for suicide was due to the separation from her husband who was in law school. Become consumed with bitterness and deep alienation. She graduated from Barnard College 1970 with a Bachelor’s Degree with honors in American studies. Three years later she earned her Masters from University of Southern California, Los Angeles. From 1972-1975 she taught humanities and women studies. She also wrote a number of successful plays such as Mother Courage and Her children (1980 ), which won an Obie Award in 2003. She now prefers to be associated to with current non commercial work, including with the Latin American people’s theater.

COLORED GIRLS

Ntozake Shange's choreopoem combines music, poetry, and improvisational dance into a story of strength, elasticity, and celebration. Performed entirely by women, the play offers a narrative of self-discovery, coming-of-age stories, self-love, and familial bond between Black women who share both joyous and painful experiences. The play provides moving insights into the beautiful and layered complexities of Black girlhood and womanhood. Shange’s particular storytelling style centers the lived experiences of Black women while contributing their diverse ways of loving and living in their truth.

Summary of Lady In Red Excerpt

Themes
Black womanhood and Black women’s self-realization (Racism, Identity, Alienation, and Sexism)

Symbols
The Rainbow: Shange explains that the rainbow is “the possibility to start all over again. If you see only one color, it’s not beautiful. If you see them all, it is. A colored girl, by my definition, is a girl of many colors. But she can only see her overall beauty if she can see all the colors of herself. To do that, she has to look deep inside her. And when she looks inside herself, she will find . . . love and beauty.”

For Colored Girls The Movie

• The Film is a rendition of Shange Play directed by Tyler Perry
• Released in 2010
• The movie focused on the struggles of being a woman of color
• The leading cast members consist of about 10 African-American woman, seven of whom were based off of Shange's original characters

I'm only human, and inadequacy is what makes us human, and if we were perfect we wouldn't have nothin to strive for.

-Ntozake Shange

For Colored Girls The Movie

Citations


