



DEMARCATON OF THE PATRIARCHAL STRUGGLE IN THE NOVELS OF ALICE WALKER

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Abstract:-This study's primary goal is to provide black women in contemporary American culture with a new identity, a voice, and social, emotional, and spiritual confidence. The Civil Rights Movement, slavery, gender violence, patriarchal oppression, and racial discrimination all form the central themes in Walker's writing. Walker was the first woman to invent the phrase womanize, a concept used in black feminism that emphasizes the culture, power, and adaptability of women. The author uses her heroes to illustrate her topics and provide the reader with a realistic, perceptive, and global message about the centuries-long mistreatment, marginalization, and multifaceted exploitation that the majority of Afro-American women have endured. Women from many eras and civilizations have always been portrayed in literature. They often presented themselves as less capable and stronger than they were. They believed that they would need assistance to do their work on their own. He thinks women are lovely, docile, and incapable of thinking for themselves. Because they are never let to express their feelings, most of the women in Alice Walker's book are portrayed as being inherently uninterested in romantic relationships.

Keywords: - Racial discrimination, patriarchal oppression, slavery, civil rights movement, marginalization, black feminism, gender equality.

Introduction: - African American writers throughout the second half of the 20th century focused mostly on black society and the potential for revolution, especially during the Black Nationalist movement. Alice Walker is a black feminist theorist who was the first to integrate feminist theory with racial issues, kindling the initial spark of the Black women's emancipation civil rights movement. This study draws attention to significant issues that have been talked about about black



women's existence and gender bias. This study uses a few of Walker's novels many of which might be considered very autobiographical to discuss the idea of multi-level black women's oppression in American male-dominated society. Walker's goals were to confront injustice and work to change the way society looks and perceives black women. To be honest, it's evident that white American and black American males treat black women unfairly, denying them their human rights and creating disparities in their treatment. They continued to demand that the patriarchy be destroyed. Their goal is to eradicate the violence experienced by both black and white American men. Afro-American women make an effort to downplay the influence of patriarchy. They yearn to band together to oppose men. These women make an effort to act manly and stand as a unit.

Walker's chosen books are appealing to readers everywhere since women are oppressed in all societies. It also examines the pain that patriarchy causes to African American women in a very clear manner. In her writings, Alice Walker depicts African women who fight against repressive societies a topic she regularly spoke about in public throughout her life. She expressed worry about several topics, including women's legal rights to marriage and education. She is a contemporary writer who embodies the fundamental values that African women in contemporary society carry in their hearts and souls. She respected Hurston's self-assurance in black people, her career choices, and the belief held by black people in Hurston as a multifaceted and unabashed human being.

Nonetheless, rather than cringing in acquiescence to the intimidation of those in positions of authority, some women dare to voice their ideas and then act accordingly. Black women are marginalized by their husbands, as depicted in Alice Walker's writing. The first writer of African American descent to write a novel in letter form is Alice Walker. She gives an illiterate black Southern woman the freedom to speak for herself while infusing a respectable literary genre with the voice of a struggling African-American woman.

Celie writes herself into existence and consciousness through this technique. Devoted writer Walker disagrees with the idea of Art for Art's Sake. Walker concludes by illuminating the struggles faced by black women in the South, who had to deal with sexism and racism in addition to other challenges like taking care of their families and keeping their homes tidy. Walker's novel's title, *The Colour Purple*, sums up her core beliefs. Celie's life has no color at all. She rarely



appreciates the beauty of the world since it is so hard for her and her spirit is so suppressed. Celie lacks the strength and desire to fight against the cruelty inflicted upon her as a child at the start of the book. All she can do is survive and keep going. Her first letter to God after finding out she is pregnant is, "I'm huge." I am unable to move fast enough. The water is warm when I come back from the well. The meal will be cold by the time I make the tray. It will be time for dinner by the time I get the kids ready for school (Walker, 3).

A modern Black feminist statement highlights the distinctions between Black and White feminism while defining the connection between racial struggles and feminist issues. We fight racism together with black men, and we fight sexism together with black men (Einstein, 363). Walker uses letters to tell Celie's narrative. Celie's search for herself, love, security, independence, and the bravery to stand up for and defend her is portrayed throughout the story. Celie writes the entire book in the first person, using letters to God, her sister Nettie, and Nettie writing back to Celie. We can openly and honestly comprehend their feelings, ideas, and reality perception thanks to their letters.

The Colour Purple is an epistolary book that uses the narrative style of emotional eighteenth-century epistolary books. In The Colour Purple, Walker used letters as a tool for self-disclosure and as a methodical way for Celie to understand the world and herself. The protagonist's marginalization and isolation are suggested by the simple act of teaching God: "As long as I can spell God, I'll be okay" (Walker, 26).

One of the best literary works that accurately portrays the hardships of African-American women as a result of racism, patriarchy, and intolerance is Alice Walker's epistolary novel The Colour Purple. In actuality, Alice Walker wanted to offer black women a way to freedom and independence in addition to giving them a voice through her book. Kate Millett explores the phrase in her 1970 book Sexual Politics. 'Patriarchy' subjugation of women: While gender is a psychological construct that relates to a variety of culturally acquired identities, sex is determined by biology.

Her psychological disorientation reaches a breaking point with the vision of an iguana, and she screams in panic, "It's all I can do not to cry." I create my wood. "You are a tree, Celie," I remind myself. I know that trees are afraid of people because of this (Walker, 23). She is a stray



and the fourteen-year-old mother of a son and a daughter as a result of her stepfather raping her repeatedly. She is sold to a widower who needs a wife to take care of his two children and house because she is the less attractive of the two sisters. Celie's kids are soon given to foster parents, a couple who later go on to serve as missionaries in Africa.

The plot takes a romantic turn when the reader finds out that the missionary couple is also taking Celie's sister Nettie to Africa as a household member. She seems more like a helpless victim of her surroundings: "But I'm powerless to resist. "The only thing I know is how to survive" (Walker, 26), "I keep quiet. I stay where I've been told. However, I'm still here (Walker, 29). Celie's violent nature suggests that depriving her body of its natural sexual cravings could have disastrous consequences. A rich sexual and emotional life would have given her a sense of stability and kept her mental health from collapsing. Freud's observation lends credence to this viewpoint: Experience shows that women, who are the real objects of human sexual desire, are only partially capable of controlling their instincts and that, when faced with the disappointments of matrimony; they suffer from severe neuroses that permanently impair their lives.

The topic of a wife's adjustment to her husband's house is one that Alice Walker discusses. Her works represent the belief that staying positive instead of always criticizing the husband's actions is the best way to resolve issues. She tackles the problem that is producing family strife since in every one of them, the wife feels depressed about her spouse. Daniel Ross explains in the following ways the importance of taking back control of one's body for self-affirmation: Restoring women's bodies has been one of modern feminism's main goals. Women have learned to fear or even loathe their bodies because they are the major target of male hostility directed toward the female body. As Celie illustrates, women therefore often perceive their bodies as ripped or broken. To address the body is to confront not only the abuse that an individual has experienced but also the historical abuse of women's bodies as an outward sign of their servitude; this abuse serves as a reminder to women of their debasement and reduction to a subordinate position (Ross, 70).

Crucially, the female characters in the fiction Mary Agnes, Celie, Nettie, Shug, and Sofia became close sisters. Three of the primary characters in *The Colour Purple* Nettie, Sofia, and Shug go beyond the rigidly traditional conceptions of Black womanhood in the South. Walker seems to have captured the black rural South quite effectively in *The Colour Purple*. The land and labor



involved in cultivating crops, as described by each character, demonstrate the strong work ethic that black Southerners were imbued with following the Civil War. She uses poor grammar and spelling to illustrate the illiterate state of black people's discourse throughout the entire novel. Walker concludes by illuminating the struggles faced by black women in the South, who had to deal with sexism and racism in addition to other challenges like taking care of their families and keeping their homes tidy. Walker's ability to depict the dark side of a vibrant culture thus enables the reader, whether or not they have been to the South, to conjure up a nearly precise mental image of the place.

The author is also among the first black women writers to draw attention to the issues black women in America face, particularly sexism at a time when most other black people thought racism alone was to blame for all of the suffering experienced by Black Americans. Regarding the white men's dominance over the black women in Hurston's Janie story, the author alludes to the common objectification, stereotyped oversimplification, and outright denial of black women's rights. The white man sees the black woman as nothing more than an item to satiate his erotic craving. She finds it difficult to put Janie in a position where she can avoid going through what she has gone through in the past (Farda & Zarrinjooee, 2014).

Hurston alludes to the common oversimplification and stereotyping when discussing the white men's dominance over the black women in Janie's story. The practice of raping Black women becomes commonplace whenever there are White men around. For white men, these ladies represent objects of sexual fantasy. The overall theme of Alice Walker's writings is how verbal and physical abuse, both in the home and public spheres, disproportionately affects women. From a sociological perspective, it would be inaccurate to ignore the reality that black women bear and tolerate the criminal label of imprisonment, given the diverse American demographic landscape.

Moreover, the racial disparity in incarcerated individuals is acknowledged as a result of the presumption of criminality of Black people rather than as evidence of structural racism. It is important to remember that black women experience racial inequality and the criminal label (Mhandu, 2012). The researcher hopes to share Sharma and Dwivedi's viewpoint in this work. Through their writings, they advocated for black women to speak up and take pride in their culture. They also chronicled and portrayed the tragedy, hardship, and predicament faced by



African-American immigrants in the United States. After Mr. suggests that Sofia's resistance damaged him, Alphonso's son hits his wife.

A nice, loud beating, according to Walker, is the only thing that might improve it. He treated his family and everyone in his immediate vicinity the same way his authoritarian father had. Racism is typically represented in novels as a cage where white people criticize black people. The symbolic confinement of Sofia alludes to the way that racism imprisoned Black people and forced them into domesticity and servitude within their own houses (Abdulimam & Yasir, 2015). Through an emphasis on negative stereotyping and ethnic discrimination, this study seeks to address Meridian's segregation. Walker depicts the bias black ladies have against white people who enslaved and mistreated them in Meridian. This was done to demonstrate how hatred based on race can incite additional hatred.

The health of a girl newborn is insignificant in dark cultures, just as females are unimportant. When a little girl becomes ill, a carer named Kutlu says that she wasn't sent to the doctor. They declare, "She's a girl." If God so chooses, he will shield her. She was a deaf and dumb child growing up (Kutlu, 222). Even if black women are considered as equals in the eyes of the patriarchal order, they nevertheless experience oppression, which is a consequence of the lower status that this order places on women. The writings of Kutlu and Walker are important to American literature since they cover every aspect of women's oppression. To stop these crimes against humanity, they raised public awareness (Kutlu & Walker, 2003).

Women who gave birth to male children were highly esteemed, but moms who gave birth to daughters were occasionally ignored or even physically assaulted. Kutlu describes how Nadya Hamm gives birth to her fifth daughter, and how Nadya and all her daughters were beaten violently by her husband" in her short novel *The Unfinished Novel of Mademoiselle Dimitra* (Kutlu, 51). Prenatal sex selection is uncommon in Western cultures, including the United States, thus Alice Walker leaves this out of *The CP*. From the early 1960s to her most current work, critics have thoroughly demonstrated how Alice Walker has handled this rhetorical complexity in her depictions of sexuality in several short stories and novels. Celie endured multiple forms of sexual assault and incest perpetrated by her stepfather and her husband, as well as ongoing harassment. In certain instances, critics have considered not just these particular instances of



offense but also other ensuing elements, such as forbidden love, taboo love, eroticism, and sexuality, and how these traits evolved in another character either directly or indirectly as a result of these violent acts. One example of this is Truman's substitute relationships with his wife Lynne, whom he loves platonically by the conclusion of the book, and his buddy Meridian, with whom he develops an emotional bond by the end of the story (Sussman, 2010).

According to the researcher's analysis and summary of the study's history, attitudes and behaviors that keep African American women in their proper place are a fundamental part of the societal structures that support dual oppression. Because bigotry is ingrained, it is difficult to treat, difficult to overcome, and almost impossible to place the blame on specific people. Her black Afro-American heroines, Celie, Margret, Sofia, and Nitte, who experience a great deal of oppression and offense, serve as particular examples of this in some of her works. Celie made an effort to put up with the worst situations, including the severe sexual abuse she received from her husband, whom she refers to as Mister, and her stepfather Fonso.

In addition, she was overly forgiving of her sister Nettie's passing, her babies' deaths, Albert's callousness, and most importantly, her poverty (Guillaumin, 2015). Regarding the racial and gender inequality that white people inflict on poor black women, see *The Colour Purple*. The interaction between Sofia and the white upper-class cop brings racial and socioeconomic issues to light. Sofia finds herself in danger after turning down the mayor's offer to watch his kids as a nanny and then taking revenge on him. She spends a total of twelve years behind bars. She is brutally assaulted and humiliated in the jail as they crack her skull and ribs. On one side, they rend her nose loose. One of her eyes is blinded by them (Walker, 1985).

Walker's blind eye is evocative of Sofia's. Due to an incident sustained as a child, Alice Walker lost her sight. She believes that this tragedy was not accidental and that one of her brothers was to blame for it. This blind eye is a common theme that appears in numerous pieces (Walker, 2010). Though it is frequently disregarded, Sofia's relationship with Miss Eleanor Jane and other mayor's family members provides a more nuanced and thorough critique of racial integration. Sofia was moved from prison to the mayor's home and hired as a maid for his kids thanks to Squeaks and Celie's efforts. The mayor's daughter, Miss Eleanor Jane, is the only person who



shows Sofia any compassion. Sofia and Miss Eleanor Jane seem to be attracted to one another. But Sofia has conflicting feelings for Eleanor Jane.

According to Shahida, Sofia's incarceration serves as a metaphor for all the black women who were imprisoned due to gender inequality. Nadu uses references to Meridian, the protagonist of Walker's novel, as well as other practices like divorce, abortions, enslavement, and failed marriages to illustrate the degree of women's tyranny. Meridian set up camp with the underprivileged black woman. As he had done for the previous ten years, Truman came looking for her. Even after segregation was officially outlawed, she continues to fight against racial prejudice. From what is shown in this initial interview, Meridian is socially committed to the black community, believes in peaceful resistance, and has a strong bond with children. She also finds that black people's deterioration is a sickness that they must be helped to overcome. As a result, optimism allowed her characters to come back to life, and those characters went on to serve as role models for everyone in the universe. Concerning the aforementioned, it is clear that public awareness of gender equity issues grew both during and after the 18th century. This raises the question of why, in an era with greater educational opportunities, increased living standards, and technical developments than ever before, knowledge of the status of women has not seen an improvement (Srisermbhok, 2016).

Conclusion: - Walker is also the first writer who, in her capacity as a radical feminist, tackles taboo subjects like incest because she wishes to expose the realities of black women's lives. In this study, Walker a black feminist writer traced and addressed the predicament of black women in her unique way while adhering to black feminist ideals to denounce injustice and to present black culture as a new genre in the patriarchal American society, particularly in the rural south. Walker's chosen works also allowed communities to reject some of the assumptions and customs that patriarchy had forced upon them for generations.

Through several of her characters, such as the relationships between Albert and his wife, his son Alphanso and his wife Celie, Grange and his wife Margret, and Truman Hill and Meridian, Walker examines the patriarchal mindset and abuse of black women. The author was incredibly successful and skilled in capturing black culture and black female characters in her autobiographical works. These characters are independent and have an increasing capacity to



move from oppression and slavery to resistance and empowerment. Black women have learned to resist male dominance, even at great personal cost. She also convincingly demonstrated how persecution of African American women is sparked by both race and gender.

This article seeks to provide a critical critique of black feminism and the oppression of women. The patriarchal society has had a detrimental impact on the author's female characters in several ways. To survive male oppression and treachery, a woman descends into poverty and hypocrisy, as this article describes, bringing Alice Walker's stories to a close. Infidelity is a topic of discussion in both households and society at large. Through her writings, poet, and activist Alice Walker is attempting to increase awareness within the organization. In the hopes that others would learn from her mistakes and cooperate to establish equality, she tries to preserve the memories of the past. To claim that middle-class black women have an equal position in today's world is unfair. She wants to get across that memory should not be forced to be suppressed or eliminated, but rather integrated and purposefully given a creative spark. The memories of Miss Lisse's past selves offer useful, if fictional, means of illustrating the historical background of dark women in a century characterized by lone figures. She knows full well that she will come back a couple more times till she is satisfied.

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