Foreword

The novel has become a dominant literary form all over the world. It has been utilized by the novelists to entertain and enlighten the people of all age groups by making a realistic and fictional portrayal of human life. Modern American fiction also served this purpose to the utmost satisfaction of the society. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the southern literature started making its presence felt through the writers like Edgar Allan Poe. With the passage of time, South got its most distinctive form of cultural expression when the novelist began to describe the ethos, culture and traditions of the area in their writings. ‘The Sahara of the Bozart’ (a cultural desert) flowered into the ‘Southern Renaissance’ The critics used their extraordinary breadth of knowledge, acuteness of perception and a maturity of judgment to analyse and assess the works of Southern writers.

By the beginning of 1940s women writers assumed a position of dominance in the realm of Southern fiction. Carson McCullers (1917 – 67) got recognition for her psychological and social realism that in varying degrees characterize all her works. In her best moments she presented convincing pictures of the life in South Georgia and during the war years produced studies of adolescence that are as authoritative as they are compelling. The second southern woman novelist Eudora Welty emerges as a scintillating star in the firmament of American writings by the variety of her themes and techniques.
My objective in this thesis is to analyse the themes that form an essential part of her novels. She gives utmost importance to the celebration of human spirit. In her own special style she explores what is universal in the humanity for readers’ wonder and contemplation. She tries to unravel the mysteries of the inner life which make or mar human relationships. In her projection of the constant interplay between the inner world of feelings and dreams and fantasies and the external world of events and social reality, she has employed a variety of fictional points of view. This perspective has been the unifying point in the study of all her novels and short stories.

In this thesis, I have described the theme of each of her story and novel and thereafter made a scholarly analysis of it. A number of early experiences have fashioned her outlook on life but by the alembic of her genius, she has transformed them into significant works of art. All of them have inherent moral to covertly disseminate among the multitude. Her empathy with the sufferings of the fair sex is writ large in every page of the work. This compensates for her giving special coverage to the white at the cost of the black. But this has to be understood clearly that her fiction is more like a poem or photograph than the traditional story. She understands her writing in visual terms, with narrator as ‘eye’ rather than simply a ‘teller’.

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