PREFACE

Alice Walker is one of those Afro-American writers who have stitched the pain, suffering and tears of black people and their racial and sexual exploitation in their novels. Alice Walker's work speaks to such universal themes as spiritual survival; the achievement of individual identity, freedom, and power; and the interconnectedness of self and community. Her concern with these issues is effectively cast within the framework of black female experience. She explores the damage to the individual self-wrought by racism and sexism, which she sees as related consequences of patriarchal cultures. However in her novels she goes much deeper in to the very roots of racism, sexism and classicism, and in a subtle way exposes the ideological basis of these pernicious social evils. And, to bring them out effectively she digs out the legends, myths, folk stories and folk songs of African-Americans.

Walker observes to highlight the sustaining power of the blacks, to recognize and rescue these qualities of resistance, excellence and integrity. Her novels continuously stitch a fabric of the everyday violence that is committed against her characters and they commit against one-another in their search for regeneration, and regeneration is what, they as black people desire. Her total focus is towards the freedom of black woman, to bring her out from the fear and disgust into the new dawn of hope and powerfulness. Love is the supreme healing and regenerating power in her novels. Here Walker depicts black women developing a consciousness, an awareness that allows them to grow stronger by speaking from and for their self. Thus Walker makes them capable enough to take control of their own destiny. After suffering a lot they became aware about self and involve them in quest for identity. Every woman of Walker struggles to affirm the ‘self’ whom she knows exists beneath the false image imposed upon her because she is black and female.
Her treatment of racial and sexual issues is unique in the sense that she not only depicts the suffering and problems of black people but also provides a solution in her novels. She not only touches the wounds of these ‘long time sufferers but also provides a remedy, a healing balm with her magical words. Walker does not leave the problems of racism and sexism unsolved. She goes in the deep hidden layers of these afflictions to bring out their solution. She has shaped her novels according to pattern of her generations and established a concrete means of coloring her people exactly as they are. Main objective of her fiction is to transform an individual into an elevated soul and thus by transforming the individual to transform the whole society into a beautiful and worth living society where all can live without any malice, humiliation and degradation with free mind, body and soul, as at one place Walker herself remarked about her wish to bring transformation: “I believe in, change, change personal, and changes in society” (ISMG 252).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge explained that the primary imagination is “the living Power and prime agent of all human perceptions.” It is “a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.” There are a number of people who helped inspire my “I AM” and this thesis. So this is the time to pay my obligations to all these people who helped me in some or other way to fulfill my dream. First of all, I solicit my warm gratitude and sincere indebtedness to my supervisor Dr. Abha Shukla Kaushik, Reader, Department of English, A.K.P.G. College Hapur, for her precious advice, intellectual support and interminable serenity she has taken throughout the course of this work. In spite of her hectic schedule throughout the period of my research, she guided me honestly and sincerely and has been a constant source of inspiration and encouragement. I will always remember and be grateful for her thoughtful and thought provoking comments as well as her encouragement and optimistic approach. She not only took interest in my work but also challenged me to look up from Walker’s texts long enough to investigate the racial and sexual perceptions in these texts.
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(POONAM SHARMA)