

CONCEPT OF WOMANISM IN ALICE WALKER'S 'THE COLOR PURPLE': AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract: American women began their study of the stereotyped characterization of women in men's writing in 1960s. Mary Elman, in *Thinking about Women* (1968) discusses stereotypes of women in literature written by men and alternative and subversive points of view in some writings by women. But the more fierce attack on the male literary tradition was made by Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970). She explores how women are dehumanized in the novels of male writers like Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, Jean Genet and D. H. Lawrence. According to her, patriarchy is the sole cause of women's oppression where women are subordinated by the male, and they are assigned an inferior position. She argues that 'sex' is biologically determined but 'gender' is a psychological concept which is cultural identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1978) talks about the commitments of female authors in scholarly history. As pointed out in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Showalter distinguishes four models of distinction which are as follows: The natural model is the most amazing; if the content in some way or another mirrors the body, this can decrease ladies simply to bodies. . . . Showalter's phonetic model of contrast places ladies talking men's dialect as an outside tongue; cleansing dialect of "sexism" is not going sufficiently far. . . . Showalter's mental model distinguishes sexual orientation contrast as the premise of the mind, concentrating on the connection of sex to the imaginative procedure. It stresses ladylike distinction as the free play of importance outside the requirement for conclusion. Showalter's most imperative commitment has been to depict the social model that spots women's activist worries in social settings, recognizing class, racial, national, and verifiable contrasts and determinants among ladies, however offering an aggregate affair that joins ladies after some time and space__ a "coupling power". (199-200) Showalter utilizes the term gynocritics for women's activist feedback which contemplates ladies as authors. The other women's activist works which speak to gynocriticism are Patricia Spack's *The Female Imagination* (1975), Ellen Moers' *Literary Women* (1976), Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Ladies in America, 1820-1870* (1978), and Barbara Christian's *Black Women Novelists* (1980).

Ellen Moers breaks down the "female" representations in the nineteenth century fiction in her works. She discovers ladies journalists very intriguing as she understands them as a lady. Patricia Meyer Specks focuses on sexuality in individual life. She addresses issues like juvenile improvement, self-discernment, aloofness and autonomy in her exchanges. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Guar in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Ladies Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* (1979) concentrates on the presence of a female style. In any case, they likewise draw on the Beauvoir-Millett vein of women's activist feedback in focusing on the proof in Austen, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Emily Dickinson, and others of the agony and exertion created by the battle against customs that viewed ladies as second rate and aloof and in the meantime as heavenly attendants, creatures, or both (Harris 92).

Another remarkable commitments to the American women's activist feedback are Anis Pratt's Archetypal Designs in Women's Fiction (1981), Elizabeth Meese's Crossing the Double-Cross: The Practice of Women's activist Criticism (1986) and (Ex)Tensions: Re-figuring Feminist (1990). Pratt talks about prime examples and likenesses of books including political philosophies and lesbian experience. She is delicate to issues of class and race. Meese restricts and cautions against the perils of groups inside women's activist feedback.

The progressive expounding on woman's rights and religious philosophy was finished by Mary Daly in her Gyn/Ecology: the Metaethics of Radical Feminism (1979), Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy (1984), and Beyond God the Father (1986). Daly overwhelmingly uncovered what she sees as 'the misogyny that lies at the center of Judaea-Christian custom, and in her later work reasons that it is impractical to change patriarchal society, and contends rather for a different ladies' culture'(Qtd. Alexander 3). Along these lines American women's activists are essentially worried about pictures of ladies. They see perusing of a women's activist as a correspondence between the life of the essayist and the life of the peruser.

2. BLACK FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS

It is vital to comprehend what is implied by the term 'dark women's activist awareness' unmistakably before dissecting Walker's concept of womanism. "Black" signifies the race and women's activist means a individual who realizes that the abuse is brought on by patriarchal administration and that one is prepared to end that administration to remake the lives of ladies and to manufacture a general public in view of nondiscrimination. Thus, one is additionally arranged to battle to review the circumstance in order to bring racial, social, sexual and financial balance for the dark ladies. Since a large portion of the dark male journalists have fizzled in delineating dark ladies' honest to goodness what's more, bona fide life, numerous dark ladies scholars go to the bleeding edge to delineate their own, genuine, real and genuine selves. Their composition is an upheaval of the voices since quite a while ago smothered and suspended by the scammers. The awareness of exploitation is quick and impactful, "it permits ladies to find what social reality truly is" (Bartky 254).

A women's activist is one who is stirred and cognizant about lady's life and issues and women's activist awareness is the involvement unquestionably of certain particular inconsistencies in the social request. Women's activists put stock in change of the general public for better future and abhorrence painful things. "It is on the day that we can consider an alternate situation that another light falls on our inconveniences and we choose that these are unendurable" (Sartre 531). To change this, force ought to assume its part.

Women's activists, who esteem ladies' experience and potential, have re-read 'ladies' books' with new viewpoints and have found an abundance of mental, social and political knowledge. Women's activist cognizance is the involvement unquestionably of certain particular inconsistencies in the social request. Women's activist cognizance turns a "certainty" into an "inconsistency", and regularly, highlights social reality. In this way, ladies comprehend what they are and where they are in the light of what they are not yet. In this manner, they grasp their reality furthermore what it is not and the world that could be if changed. Women's activist cognizance is a blissful awareness of one's own energy, shortcoming and quality. In this association Simon de Beauvoir appropriately says, 'the mankind is male' yet for the dark ladies the 'humankind is white and male.' As they experience the ill effects of racial and sexual orientation abuse, they contrast from both the white ladies and the dark men. The dark lady needs to battle for balance both as a lady and as an African American. In this manner their encounters picked up from the living as African American ladies stipulate their sensibility called dark women's activist sensibility.

The general economic wellbeing of the dark is lower than whatever other social gathering; henceforth they are assumed to endure the assaults of sexist, bigot and classist mistreatment. As a gathering they have not been associated to accept the part of oppressor. White ladies and dark men can go about as oppressor or be abused. Dark men might be deceived by prejudice, yet sexism permits them to go about as oppressor or exploiter of ladies. Dark ladies without organized "other" that they may victimize, misuse or abuse frequently have lived diverse experience straightforwardly difficult the overarching classist, sexist, supremacist social structure and its attending belief system. This lived experience molded their awareness and changed their state of mind not quite the same as their oppressors. Ringer Hooks has properly brought up it is vital for proceeded with women's activist battle that dark ladies perceive the vantage purpose of their negligibility that gives them and "make use of this point of view to condemn the prevailing bigot, classist, sexist administration and additionally to imagine and make a counter hegemony"(58).

As per Sandra Bartky, women's activist awareness is a cognizance of exploitation. To capture oneself as a casualty is to know about an outsider and unfriendly constrain which is in charge of the unmitigatedly out of line treatment of ladies and for a smothering and abusive treatment of sex-parts; it is to know as well, that this exploitation not the slightest bit earned or merited, is an offense (254).

Women's activist cognizance is an understanding that one is defrauded as a ladies as one among numerous, and in the acknowledgment that others are made to endure similarly that one is made to endure lies the starting or a feeling of solidarity with different casualties. It is one's very own glad awareness force of the probability of phenomenal self-awareness and of the arrival of vitality since quite a while ago stifled. In this way, it is an awareness both of one's shortcoming and quality. All African American ladies offer normal experience of being dark ladies in a general public that maligns ladies of African drop. They needed to battle on numerous fronts—against white patriarchy, against white ladies' bigotry and against sexism of dark men. This shared trait of experience proposes that certain attributes and subjects will be unmistakable in dark ladies' point of view. The interrelationship of white matchless quality and male predominance has along these lines portrayed the dark ladies' world as a circumstance of battle a battle to make due in two opposing universes all the while, one white, favored, and onerous and the other dark, misused, and persecuted (Canon 30). Dark women's activist feedback is setting up standards to look at the unmistakable social estimations of dark ladies essayists to keep their being subsumed into "all inclusive" abstract studies commanded by male or white essayists. Dark ladies journalists, for example, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Buchi Emecheta, Gloria Naylor and numerous more keep in touch with shape their encounters and to recover both their history and mental self portrait battered by their three adversaries: bigotry, classism, and sexism. Dark ladies essayists generally offer a more extensive scrutinize of patriarchy in their battle to get themselves and approve their dialect. The dark ladies' capacity to manufacture the individual unstated, yet possibly capable articulations of ordinary cognizance into an enunciated, self-characterized, aggregate outlook, is a key to dark ladies' survival. It is an endeavor towards self-definition to show who one is, the thing that one is and what one might want to be? The dark women's activist cognizance shows the dark lady's self definition. In this way, for the dark lady, battle includes in grasping a cognizance that is at the same time Afro-driven that uncovers the dark point of view and in the meantime women's activist.

By being responsible to others, African American ladies grow all the more completely human, less typified selves. Sonia Sanchez focuses this form of self by expressing "we should move past continually centering on the "individual self" in light of the fact that there is an extensive self. There is a "self" of dark individuals" (Qtd. Tate 134). Or maybe than characterizing self contrary to others, the connectedness among people gives dark ladies a more profound, more important self-definition. Dark women's activist cognizance is mindfulness with respect to the dark ladies about their abuse, predicaments, position and positive and negative parts of life to change the patriarchal, bigot and sexist social request to reestablish the uniformity of individuals independent of sex, race or class.

In this way the two terms, dark women's liberation and womanist cognizance are worried with the battle of the dark ladies against bigotry and sexism who are themselves part of the dark group's endeavors to accomplish fairness and freedom. She is, Walker says, purple - purple with fierceness, purple as reestablished eminence, purple blooming wild in an open field. In this manner, as per Walker, womanism is an engaged type of woman's rights pretty much as purple is a striking and enabled adaptation of lavender. Purple as a shading is viewed as a image of the unstoppable female soul and an encoding of the upbeat imperativeness of the female soul. To put it plainly, Walker is one who is focused on the survival entire of the dark ladies in the exceedingly charged, sexist, classist and supremacist society of America.

3. THE COLOR PURPLE

Like Mem and Meridian, Celie in *The Color Purple* (1982), Alice Walker's most praised novel which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for Fiction, battles in life for survival. The novel delineates the life of a dark young lady, Celie who in spite of destitution, lack of education, physical and mental misuse rises above her predicament through mindfulness to increase respectable spot in the American culture.

Celie first composes letters to God to help her to survive the otherworldly, enthusiastic and physical misuse she endures on account of her progression father, Alphonso and later on her significant other, Mr. _____. *The Color Purple* delineates in an epistolary way thirty years of a battle in the life of Celie, a poor Southern dark lady who is exploited physically and candidly both by her stepfather and her spouse, Albert. While in her youngsters, Celie is more than once assaulted by her

stepfather, who offers her two kids she bore of him. Celie is in the end put into a cold marriage with Albert, a widower who for the following three decades subjects her to beatings and mental torment. Celie composes letters portraying her trial to God and to her sister, Nettie, who gets away from a comparable destiny by serving as a minister in Africa. Be that as it may, in the organization of Albert's courtesan Shug Avery, a charming vocalist, she increases self-regard and the boldness to abandon her marriage. Shug is even in charge of Celie's gathering with her kids sold by her stepfather, Alphonso and with Nettie toward the end of the novel. She starts her excursion from frailty to the condition of are the casualties of very charged attacker, sexist and male-ruled society of America. They battled valiantly to increase respectable position and place in the public arena. Every one of the ladies people in the novel need to endure at the hands of their men people. It depicts the evil treatment given to the dark ladies by their men. At the same time the novel hello there.

4. COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The investigation of the primary stage books in the light of the topical proclamation uncovers Walker's womanist philosophy that is focused on the survival of the dark ladies all over the place on the planet. Ladies characters in these books battle hard to mission their personality and request opportunity and sense of pride. Womanist cognizance is reflected in the man-lady relationship where man dependably tries to underestimate their partners. In the depiction of spouse wife relationship, husbands are appeared as frightful people.

Walker delineates dark men who are poor, ignorant, onerous and doing customary work of sharecropping on the other hand taking a shot at the fields of white men. Grange in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* exploits his better half Margaret by beating and mishandling her for reasons unknown. He even needs to offer her keeping in mind the end goal to free himself from the obligation of a white man named Shipley. His child, Brownfield likewise takes after the strides of his dad and beats his informed spouse Mem as and when he prefers without knowing about what she accomplishes for him and their family. Albert, Celie's significant other in *The Color Purple*, beats her like he beats his kids and doesn't regard her as a person. He even doesn't look her in the face: "He takes a gander at me. It like he taking a gander at the earth"(TCP21). Men portrayed by Walker are alcoholic and indecent having extramarital relationship and no sensitivity to their anguish spouses.

5. CONCLUSION

In any case, inversion of sex parts is found in the couple Sofia and Harpo, a child of Albert whose face it would appear that a lady's face. He genuinely makes the most of lady's works like cooking and washing dishes, while Sofia does a field work and customary man's work. They battle continually "like two men" getting Harpo the most exceedingly awful of beating. Maybe Walker demonstrates this sort of incongruity with a specific end goal to anticipate the inversion of parts that is liable to happen sooner rather than later.

Some of these harsh dark men experience a transformation when they understood their indiscretions in the course of time. Grange Copeland apologizes for what he has done to Margaret and decides to give most extreme offices and security to his granddaughter Ruth, the offspring without bounds. He even murders his child Brownfield and likes to go in prison trusting that she will be free and upbeat in his nonappearance. Brownfield mixes one of the best sins in Walker's fiction that is the refusal or powerlessness to change. Humorously, his passing rolls out conceivable the fruition of improvement in the life of Ruth, his little girl. Albert too changes in the end and gives most extreme adoration to all. Albert finds reflection which makes him a characterized individual who can acknowledge the obligation regarding his oversights and the affliction he has brought about to his better half. His evident mental come back to roots, however insufficiently persuaded, is basically a sign of a recuperating procedure. Truman, Meridian's significant other in the novel *Meridian*, changes when he understands his mix-up of wedding a white marcher lady Robinowitz taking a gander at her shading. Being womanist Meridian wholeheartedly excuses him and permits him to stay with her.

As a piece of womanist methodology, Walker demonstrates sexual and passionate holding between dark ladies against patriarchal oppressive regimes. It can be found in the extreme enthusiastic aching and preparation to penance for each other between two sisters, Celie and Nettie. Celie's putting forth herself sexually to her stepfather to spare her sister from being assaulted by him is one of the touching case of womanism. Ladies demonstrate a tenacious inclination of falling into an obligation of shared sensitivity and deference. They are depicted as ladies helping persecuted dark ladies to leave their

sorrow. Shug gives financial participation by showing Celie the craft of sewing. In this manner she helps her to be autonomous and confident. Josie guarantees Grange to give most extreme security and affection to Ruth after his detainment for executing his child, Brownfield. Josie is sufficiently liberal to offer her Dew Drop Inn keeping in mind the end goal to spare Grange from his obligation. In spite of the shabbiness, ruthlessness and mortification, the ladies decline to be tame and compliant and question for their rights.

Ladies characters portrayed in these books are exceedingly impacted by the myths before. Meridian is very motivated by the narrative of the Sojourner Truth that remembers the outrages perpetrated on the dark ladies amid the season of bondage. Her story urges her to toss herself effectively in the Social equality Movement that intended to convey approach rights and chances to the dark ladies in all strolls of life amid her school days. Meridian strips herself of prompt blood relations-her kid and guardians in request to adjust herself totally to the bigger racial and social eras of blacks. She has made combination with her era of extremist and more established era of abused dark. Her own personality has turned into an aggregate personality. Nettie's discourse through her letters from Africa on the Olinka individuals' victimization their men recommend the way that sex abuse infests the whole universe of dark men and ladies. Afro-Americans and also Africans limit ladies to the consideration of kids, and among the Olinka, the spouse has passing control over the wife. In the event that he blames his significant other for witchcraft or betrayal, she can be executed" (TCP172). The epistolary structure utilized as a part of *The Color Purple* is suggestive of lesbian sexuality inside the system of lesbian woman's rights where the letter implies the female body, and correspondence between two ladies is suggestive of lesbianism. With reference to Nettie's letters, Wendy Wall watches that Albert captures them since he neglects to allure her, and that he assaults her dialect since he neglects to assault her body (264). As indicated by Terry Eagleton "the letters come to mean female sexuality that collapsed mystery place which is constantly open to vicious intrusion"(54). Linda Abbandonato portrays the novel as a womanist content and states: "By receiving the insane blanket, the art of her progenitors, as the organizing rule of her fiction, Alice Walker places herself inside a custom of a dark imagination" (300). Therefore these books are choice case of her womanist cognizance that empowered her to account dark ladies' excursion to self-acknowledgment.

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