

**INHIBITED, INTEGRATED AND EVOLVING WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF ALICE WALKER****H. SESHAGIRI**

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[ravichandenglish@gmail.com](mailto:ravichandenglish@gmail.com)**Abstract**

*This article intends to show that Inhibited, Integrated and Evolving women in Alice Walker's novels The Color Purple, Meridian and The Third Life of Grange Copeland. The black women in the Walker's novels are sufferers of sexual and public abuse and sometimes they are victims of their own minds. The important element of women is the suspended state and its impersonality which is not concerned with individual opponents, but with the unwilling system itself. Consequently each woman character assimilates one thing or other. The tradition and custom of the black people continues in spite of the destruction by the white. Some of these women characters try to liberate themselves through open movement. Though the individual sees the organized nature of her oppression, she has no systematic counter and withdraws into a hovering state of thought. The women here hatred any form of possession and any form of privilege. They feel themselves to be free persons and free moods. They do not believe in marriage for they feel the deposit of bondage so clear on it. They know the importance of education, the love of beauty, the respect for hard work and the freedom. Instead of becoming submissive to their fate, they always pursued creative solutions to their problems. These characters have a Universal attitude. This unconstrained awakening empowers these characters to emerge from the context of oppression and at least begin to proclaim to achieve their inherent latent to resolve their problems. Her works reflect her anxiety with racial and political issues, particularly with the struggle of black woman for transcendent and political stamina. Her writings reveal her anguish for black women and their families.*

**Key Words:** Sexism – Racism – Culture – Oppression – Political – Problems– Struggle

**Introduction:**

Alice Walker is one of the strongly expressive fiction writers of Afro-American literature. Her work unflinchingly reveals her concern with racial, and political issues, particularly with the black woman's struggle for divine and political survival. Much of her writing discloses her concern for black women and their families. The predicament of black women and their struggle to voice their anguishes drew me to Alice Walker's other works. Her protagonists try to seek self - identity and they emerge from the context of oppression to declaring their rights. A clear picture of the plight and growth of the Afro-American women emerge from her writings. Few early Afro-American women's novels focused on the black woman's role as mother, because of the negative categorize of the black woman as mammy that sped through American society but Alice walker portrays as positive as that position of women to the groups attempt to empower itself, one side effect was the tendency to idealize the relationship between black men and women, to blame sexism in the black community solely on racism or to justify a position that black men were superior to women.

**Inhibited Women:**

The women characters in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, *Meridian*, *The Color Purple* are discussed here. All these characters are in dark enclosures and narrow spaces. Some of them manage to move further awakened by a powerful political force. In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* walker point out black women characters are frame-up in a racist society. Racism impacts the male characters both physically and psychologically, and as a result of racial pressure, the male characters' relationships with their wives and children fail. As these black men are downgraded in society and are supposed to obey their white masters, they in turn impose these pressures on their family members; therefore, family relationships become distorted. In this novel, "Brownfield is a terrifying example of how the south can physically enslave and spiritually cripple black people". Furthermore, this novel describes how in those moments when "the black man is injured as well as brutalized by the dominant and social structure, he, in turn, harms and beats his wife, who is faithful and obedient, and maltreats his children". Moreover, this novel is also an escapist novel, as men seek relief from their dependence on white landlords and women want to escape from rude husbands and fathers. To exhibit his power, Brownfield, the black male character, starts to question the female characters' capabilities and, stage by stage, begins to rubbish his wife. Although this novel centers on Grange and his son, Alice Walker believes that women are ill-treated by men. This novel indicates women's struggle for "self-determination economically, intellectually and artistically among the African-American women characters and their control over the male that actually dominates the novel" (Hall, 1990, p. 14). The following discussion is focused on Men, one of the suppressed female characters in the novel, who is tortured, both physically and psychologically, by her husband, Brownfield. As a result of this physical and mental pressure, Men, an educated, pretty and confident woman, turns into an ordinary person reduced to skin and bones, disposed to question herself. From their troubles, we understand that they are caught in a social web without an exit. Kin killing is a common occurrence in their lives. These women grieve because of the insight of women's roles considered by society. They become products of dehumanizing culture. Though they vary greatly in the background, they are bound together.

**In The Color Purple:**

In her third novel, Alice Walker again focused on the forbidding supremacy of black men over black women, this time using the time-honored epistolary technique. *The Color Purple* period is about thirty years in Celie's life, a Southern black woman. When she was a teenager her step-father beat her and raped her repeatedly gave away the two children she bore him, and forced her into a loveless marriage with a widower who beat her for no other reason than "she is my wife". Through her relationship with other women - mainly with Shug Avery, a dazzlingly vital blues singer who moved in with Celie and her husband as his suffering but also becomes Celie's lover - she surpasses her humiliating circumstances and is transformed and exchanged. The reader remains engaged as Celle tells of her life through her letters to God. Raped and



impregnated twice by a man she believes is her father, who gives away her children, she is then given to a man who uses and abuses her to such a degree that she cannot bear to speak his name because Celie's step-father warns Celie: "You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy". This is an important feature of the suspended state is its impersonality. It is not concerned with individual enemies, but with the intimidating system itself. The senselessness of individual response is outward when she tries to take out her rage over the oppressor. Though the individual sees the well-organized nature of her oppression, she has no systematic counter and withdraws into a suspended state of thought. Suspended state is a interestedly alert and thoughtful state, with more virtues at its roots than appear on the surface. It conveys its own retreat towards self-assertion. The woman in this state does not quite break the surface, but she anticipates it with the savage joy of someone of superior gifts provoking everyday demand that has forced her down.

**The Meridian:**

This novel tells about a black female student in Saxon College, who became an activist in the Atlanta Movement for black people's civil rights. Nevertheless, despite of the complicated personal problem that Meridian dealt with, she moved on to live individually and dedicated her life to conduct campaign on human rights movement for black women and children. She devotes herself to join Civil Rights worker because as black woman she felt discrimination from white. She fights against discrimination not only for herself but also for black women. Black women at that time were suffering for bias and oppression, both from white and black men. Alice Walker's Meridian by in this novel highlights the issue of black women discrimination in American society, in which the main character had to struggle, both for herself and also for the sake of her fellows in black women society. At seventeen, Meridian finds herself a dropout from high school, a deserted wife, approach to her mother for being "fast, and a mother herself to a baby she cannot love, and for whose care she is responsible. Suspended in a fog of blankness, she suddenly finds some of the mist blown away by a picture on the TV screen. It shows a house on her street bombed by white racists and she learns that black children and adults have been killed. Responding to these events Meridian volunteers to work at the local movement house typing, teaching illiterates to read and write, demonstrating against segregated facilities and keeping the movement house open when the other workers returned to school. Inhibited Women takes up for examination the physical and mental sufferings, the traumas of the black women belonging to different times, age groups and background. Women characters belonging to different generations such as Margaret, Mem, Meridian, Celie from different novels are discussed and the movement of some of them towards the next cycle is analyzed in detail. Some of the minor women characters also contribute to the growth of the protagonists. The chapter ends with an analysis of the variations among the 'suspended' women.

**Integrated women:**

"Integrated Women is devoted to a study of the black women of the 1940s and 50s. Walker presents many contemporary burning topics affecting women of this period, who no



more fasten up to the forces of society but try to act in a rebellious way. Meridian and Celie, who grow from the 'Inhibited to the 'Integrated' stage, gain a new consciousness of their surroundings and move towards self-identity. Someone the analyst realm, Some reject the mainstream while others prefer integration after gaining some power for themselves. Many of the black women, discussed in this chapter, continue the progress towards spiritual health and self-definition begun by Ruth, Meridian, and Celie. Host of them are the "chosen ones" to have their education in the colleges. Some of them have participated in the Civil Rights Movement or the Black Power Movement. Walker portrays a few characters as trying to get integrated and to join the 'mainstream'. Some characters have an inconsistent stance. Some try to come back to the South with their understanding Of their selves. These women are not exposed to extreme physical abuse. One learns that the self that survives is not a self-dictated by others and that rejection of one' spiritual principle signals failure and destruction .Walker depicts the story of girl in Meridian has crossed the early stages of her integration and there is always sadness in her eyes as she represents still the soul of her Southern ancestry. As discussed the so-called characters in novels in order to shaping their lives move from inhibited to integration and never bothered about their Southern heritage. Their suffering is not of physical violence, but of a kind of psychic violence.

**Evolving women:**

Emergent Women speaks about women who achieve a sort of 'wholeness'. These women have not totally become 'Evolving ' but are on the way to become one. The growth of Meridian, Celie, women characters from the novels are discussed various aspects, have contributed to their physical, societal, psychological and spiritual wholeness. The distinctive voice in Walker's works is the voice of a woman genuinely wrapped up in her blackness, her womanness, and her Southernisms. Even when she writes ardently about problems that ruin the land and the lives of people, Alice Walker highlights the healing parker of love and the possibility of "revolution: **Evolving** personal, and evolving in society. In "The Black Writer and the Southern Experience,' she writes with conceit and gratefulness of her "deprived background."Her vision, however, is a disturbing one. She depends much upon sexual violence and physical abuse to portray breaches in black generations. Typically, she brings to her work a awful observance of black self-hatred and destruction.

**Conclusion:**

Walker reveals the lives of the American black women by giving a voice to the oppressed and voiceless. In her descriptions, she assesses both racist and sexist hegemony. She argues that the black women have been unresolved for standing against oppression and have made significant contributions in the making of the American nation. Hence, this article intends to show that despite being oppressed, African-American women have never yielded to victimhood. It seeks to examine how Alice Walker reveals the black-American women's search for identity and contentment through a pleasant existence with their men-folk.

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