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**Resisting stereotypes in Alice WALKER's
*Meridian***

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Dedication

First, I thank God for my arrival to this place and blessed me with strength and patience.

This work wholeheartedly dedicated to our beloved parents, who have been our source of inspiration and gave us strength when we thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, emotional, spiritual, and financial support.

To my brothers Mohi, Ayoub, Ahmed and my sweetheart sister Randa who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this work. Also, to all Benflis family.

I thank my best friend Chirine, my other lovely friends and classmates.

Lastly, I dedicated this dissertation to my Dear Honourable Supervisor Dr. Ahmed Seif Eddine Nefnoug for his faith and trust in us.

RIHAB SAFA BOUZIDI



Dedication

Before all, I thank *Allah* for helping me to

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List of Abbreviation

USA : United States of America

CRM : Civil Rights Movement

NAACP : National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

BSCP : the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

NOI : the National Of Islam

SNCC : Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee

CORE : Congress On Racial Equality

NOTC : Not Only True but Colored

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Abstract:

The African American woman traumatic experience with slavery, oppression and racism aroused another battle with resisting stereotypes for the long term. African-American literature was a way to express the experiences and suffering of black women with the oppression practiced on them by American society. Among the African-American writers the activist Alice Walker; the author of *Meridian*, who examined the struggles of black women for equality and freedom during the Civil Rights Movement. Through her novel, Walker highlighted a reverse view of the deep-rooted stereotypes of African-American women. This present research divided into two chapters, the first one offers the issue of resisting stereotypes from a womanism approach and sheds the light on the African American literature at the height of Civil Rights Movement. The Second chapter examines resisting stereotypes through Alice WALKER's *Meridian*.

Key words: Resisting stereotypes, *Meridian*, oppression, Civil Rights Movement, African American woman, Womanism.

General introduction

Introduction

Black Americans have endured a long history of injustice and struggle in the U.S, especially in the South, where they exploited as enslaved people and denied basic rights. Their fight for freedom and equality has inspired many movements and leaders.

Alice Walker was a black woman who faced racial and gender oppression and became a prominent activist in the Civil Rights Movement. She also expressed her voice and identity as a black woman through her literary works, especially her novel "*Meridian*", which explores the themes of black culture, feminism, and social justice.

The novel of *Meridian* forms a new angle, writer Alice Walker shows a reverse view of the stereotypes rooted in our minds about the nature of African-Americans. In addition, she worked to attract readers through the unusual personality of each character that contributed to breaking previous stereotypes about blacks.

Furthermore, this study focuses on social, historical, political issues and the achievement of the black African American woman.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this dissertation is to present racism, segregation, woman oppression, and its impact on the black African American women identities. In addition, it touches on the resisting stereotypes through the analysis of Walker's *Meridian*. To achieve a full depth understanding of the issues of resisting stereotype, this dissertation intended to analyse Walker's text through the lens of Womanist theory.

The Research Aims

This research aims at:

- Explores resisting stereotypes in Alice Walker's *Meridian*.
- Examines the issue of racism, segregation, woman oppression, and its effect on Black African- American woman.

Research Questions

- The main question which the dissertation raises is:

How did Alice Walker show the resistance of stereotypes throughout the characters of her novel "*Meridian*"?

- Other sub-questions that this dissertation entails are:

What were the difficulties and challenges that the Black African Woman experienced in American society?

How did the black feminist side contribute to the uniqueness of African-American literature?

What struggles did the main character in the Civil Rights Movement face?

Methodology

This study will be based qualitative method data collected from the library and the Internet. It employs two sources of data, primary data Alice Walker's novel *Meridian* and secondary sources of data (Articles and Journals, textbooks, dissertations, and Websites). We will use a Womanist approach and descriptive analytical corpus based.

Structure of the Dissertation

The work split into two chapters; the first chapter entitled historical and social, biographical, and theoretical background discusses the Womanism theory and African American literature in general. The second chapter devoted to resisting stereotypes in "*Meridian*" using Womanist Reading through the narrator. It also sees how Walker authentically dealt with the problem of the stereotypes and how she represented it in American society.

**Chapter one: Historical and
Social, Biographical, and
Theoretical background**

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Chapter one: Historical and social, Biographical, and theoretical background

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Introduction

Black history was full of racism, oppression, and violence. For centuries, African Americans suffered from racial segregation and social discrimination in several domains of life especially in the south. They disenfranchised from their rights as citizens in US. As result, African Americans decided to face racism through the nonviolence resistance to regain their rights under what is known as the Civil Rights Movement.

1.1 Historical and social background

1.1.1 Overview of Blacks origin in America

The majority of African Americans are descendants of enslaved Africans who were being captured in wars or raids and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas by European slave traders. They mostly belonged to ethnic groups from the Sahel region of West Africa, such as the Mande, Wolof, Akan, and Yoruba. They shared a common culture and religion despite their linguistic diversity... (Carson, 2019)

1.1.2 History of African Americans

In the 18th century, black Africans were neglect by applying arbitrary laws against them. The white supremacy restricting blacks in their social and educational lives, such as racial segregation in public places. In the education sector, blacks prevented from the study with whites in the same place. Also, denying them from the right to vote and imposing punitive taxes on them. (Insoe and Ruppensburg, 2007)

The 19th century was the pathway from slavery to freedom for African Americans, it was the beginning of radical transformation in in various areas of life and improved their living conditions. Also, they began treated as a private citizen in US. (Fredrickson, 1971)

The 20th century was a period of radical transformation in political, economic, social, and legal status of African Americans. Blacks got rid of slavery and the became enjoying relatively to their rights of citizenship in American society. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most Afro-Americans still lived in the south and rural areas, few of them owned their homes. They worked in farms and service jobs and most of black children attend school.

the mid-twentieth century saw the first large scale movement of blacks out of the south by deporting them to the north to employ them in manufacturing and companies. At that time government policy saw far-reaching changes regarding inequality and racism, several movements appeared to resist racial segregation and discrimination against blacks in US such as Civil Rights Movement.

By the 1990s African Americans economic conditions had changed dramatically, and they became less concentrated in the south and rural places. They entered better jobs than unskilled labourer positions; their attendance rates have also increased dramatically at all ages. Afro-Americans relatively disadvantaged in terms of education, economic, and home ownership. (Thomas, nd)

1.1.3 Black women relations

In patriarchal society, black women suffered from racism, sexism, classism, and loneliness. They treated as slaves and less than human. African Americans women lived through double oppression, racial and gender oppression, the first one because their colour of skin and the second one because sexism. In work places, Black women were neglect, invisible and her voice not heard.

Black women face multiple forms of discrimination and oppression in society. They are not only subjected to racism by white people, but also to sexism by both black and white men, and to racialized sexism by white women. Unlike white women, who only suffer from patriarchy, black women must deal with the intersection of race, gender, and class in their lives. (TAŞ, 2021)

Black women suffer from triple oppression in USA in terms of race, gender, and class. First, African Americans women faced racial discrimination because their colour of skin. Second, they suffered from patriarchy just because they are women. Third, in class system which has oppressed by the high classes stratum. According to Hooks: “My life experience had inseparable, that at moment of my destiny, my having been born black and my having been born female”. (Hooks, 1990)

In addition, during the years of slavery. Blacks treated as slaves and assigned them into an unfree labour force either as servant or slaves also black women have subjected to rape and sexual harassment. (TAŞ, 2021)

1.1.4 The experiences and the challenges facing of Black female and its impact

Black women in the United States of America have always treated as slaves and subjected to various types of racism and sexual and racial violence in various areas of life, and because of that

they have suffered the effects of this ill-treatment for a long time in silence and an inaudible voice, which created challenges and difficulties for black women.

Exaggerated disciplinary policies taken against them, leading them to arrest or expel them and push them abroad without protection or immunization, except for black boys, whites, and white girls. All of this is due to school rules in the classroom and discrimination according to race and gender. (Watson,2016, np)

Black girls classified to men in the black and white community as a second-hand creature or commodity because of the history of slavery in the United States, so that they were seen as non-human and public usable property. It is one of the bad stereotypes with which black women have described. In terms of education, specificity, white supremacy, and perceived racism included segregation between blacks and whites, especially with black girls in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. (Joseph et al. 2016, np)

Discrimination by race and gender not limited to black and white students, especially black girls, but also included teachers and professors who did not offer black girl students any opportunity despite their competence and intellectual skills, but only applied the abusive stereotype to them. (Watson, 2016, np)

In domain of health; health care and poor health, women in the United States have marginalized and humiliated, especially during pregnancy. For example, when a black woman presents her information in the hospital, she not believed and treated in a bad and humiliating way because of her different gender and because of her low income, so that most black girls have aborted their children because of an unintended pregnancy and because of the difficulty of living. And this, of course, is on the other hand, that is, by exploiting them physically and sexually, to result in the black female psychological diseases such as depression and suicide because of the pressures and many experiences she went through. (Logan et al. 2021, np)

In the labour market, many black women have become employed and endured all the pressures in their workplace and tried to adapt to that, to ensure and provide for the survival of the family and preserve its dignity, not like white women who had great opportunities in employment and in an easy way to make money and live well. Therefore, most of the work of black women was related to domestic activities in white homes and informal jobs for low wages, thus becoming exploitation and discrimination against them, and even if they tried to rise socially at work, there were barriers preventing them from doing so because of race and gender, of course. (Teixeira et al. 2020, np)

Family and social. Unemployment greatly affected black men as heads of households, so that the wife endured the hardship of working abroad for the sake of the family and to meet her minimum needs. Working out in a patriarchal society made it difficult and made the relationship between women and men fluctuate, so black women subjected to violence of all kinds. Most marital relationships permeated by infidelity and led to divorce or separation, so that children become victims of that family failure. (McGddrick et al., 2005, 91)

The humiliating and intolerant patriarchy existed not only in the family, but also in society. Black women have suffered the pain and effects of sexual and racial abuse psychologically and physically as easy prey because of black and white men and an unjust society. (Aldridge,2009, 133)

1.1.5 Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Right Movement was a concerted effort by Black Americans to end racial discrimination and gain equal legal rights. It began in the mid-1950s and ended in the late 1960s to stop racial segregation and violence against black Americans, especially in the South. It was a nonviolent, social, and political movement that resulted in laws that protect all Americans' constitutional rights, regardless of colour, race, gender, or national origin. (Civil Rights Movement, nd)

According to Martin Luther King Jr.

“The black revolution is much more than a struggle for rights of Negros. It in forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws-racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism. It is exposing evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society...and suggests that radical reconstruction of society is the real issue faced”. (Hall, 2005, 1233)

Blacks had no consideration until they began with uprisings and demonstrations that served as a glimmer of hope for a new beginning and liberation from white infallibility.

1.1.5.1 Awakening and growth of movement

The Civil War succeeded in eliminating slavery, but this does mean that racial segregation against blacks ended too. At that time, blacks were still suffering from race and inequality in all aspects of life, especially in the south.

During reconstruction, African Americans life was full of limitations, restrictions and strict laws because of Jim Crow laws which provided for racial segregation in public facilities especially in the southern states. (Fremon, 2015, np)

Jim crow laws aimed to take away freedom and equality from black Americans and treated them as second-class citizens. In addition, discrimination, and marginalization. These laws established the southern way of life where whites were master race and blacks owned only hardy labour, low wages, negligence as well as denial of the right to vote. These laws were key factor for began the nonviolence resistance to regain their full constitutional rights as citizens in American society under Civil Rights Movement. (McNeese, 2021, np)

Brown v. Board of Education

Desegregation of the African-Americans education system was a starting point for ending Jim Crow laws. Since 1951, many local of the NAACP struggled to broke unequal conditions at segregated schools, in 1952, The Supreme Court heard five cases and named after the first case Brown v. Board of Education, these cases (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Briggs v. Elliot, Davis v. Board of Education of Prince Edward County, boiling v. Sharpe, and Gebhart v. Ethel) were different but the main concern was about racial segregation in public schools. Nearly a year and a half before the Supreme Court reached a decision change the Plessy v. Ferguson decision in 1896 “separate but equal”. On May 1954 the Supreme Court declared that racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. (History - Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment, nd)

Warren stated that: “in the field of public education there is no place for a separate but equal term because separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” (History - Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment, nd)

Segregation declared unconstitutional and this was the beginning of African-Americans change and the of Jim Crow laws.

The Montgomery Bus boycott

Montgomery city was known by its racial segregation policies in public facilities, schools, and transportation. As an example, the seats in the city buses separated into two parts; the front section reserved for whites, while the back part were for the blacks and if the front section became full, blacks must give up their seats to the whites; Otherwise, they would be under arrest.

On March 2, 1955, a bus in Montgomery crowded and some whites were standing up because no seats were available. When the driver noticed that the whites were standing up, he ordered some blacks to give up their seats to the white passengers. Some blacks forced to leave their seats, while a young woman called Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat to white passenger. She arrested because of her action. After this accident. On Thursday, December 1, 1955. After a hard day, Rosa Parks was a boarded the bus to return home and sat in the black seat, after a white man got on and could not find a seat because all the seats in the front section occupied. The driver ordered the four seats in the first row of the black section to stand up for the white man to sit down. The three obeyed the order while Rosa refused to give up her seat to the white man. As a result of her refusal, the police officers arrested her and placed her in custody, her for a day and fined ten dollars. Parks wrote on her autobiography: “People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired... but that isn’t true. I was not tired physically... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.” (Mullen et al. nd)

As a result, Martin Luther King and other member king formed new organization to manage the boycott named the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and led the bus boycott relying on the nonviolence resistance to destroy racial segregation. On December 5,1955, the boycott started and after the long period which lasted 381days. The Supreme Court ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional on November 13,1956, and the boycott ended in December 20, 1956.In the end Rosa succeeded in eliminating racial segregation on buses and became known as the mother of the Civil Rights Movement. (Friedman, Clack, Neely, & Yao, 2005, np)

Sit in the movement

After the success of the Montgomery bus boycott relying on non-violence strategy. In the early of 60s Martin Luther King and many activists start planning a new tactic based on youth, where the instructions were simple consisted of sitting quietly and wait to serve.

On the 1st of February, 1960. Joseph McNeill, Ezell Blair, Jr., Franklin McCain, and David Richmond were African Americans students who would become known as The Greensboro Four entered to the Woolworth’s downtown Greensboro store which was segregated lunch counter and refused to leave until served. They knew that the white waitress would not serve them just because they were blacks, but they ordered a coffee drink and sat patiently waiting to served until the lunch counter closed. They sat quietly and did not care about the harassment and threats by the white agents. In The next day, a group of students organized to support and support the four students. They did not quarrel

or raise their voices, doing nothing just sitting and waiting to serve. The number of students increase over time. The sit-ins spread across the southern states to destroy the segregation policies. The pressure on lunch counters bring impressive results across the South abandoned their policy of segregation. (Schmidt,2018, np)

In April 1960, Martin Luther King held a meeting in which he discussed the new strategy. Students from the North and South met and formed Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee SNCC, Among the members were the early leaders such as Stokely Carmichael and Fannie Lou Hamer. Congress On Racial Equality CORE headed by James Farmer who suggested the direct action. These groups became the main base for future sit-ins after the success of the February protest, which confirmed the success of direct action to face racial segregation and eliminate it. (Friedman, Clack, Neely, & Yao, 2005, np)

The march of Washington

On the 28th of August, 1963 more than 200000 from different races and states marched peacefully in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington to demand jobs and freedom for blacks. In this massive march the leaders of Civil Rights Movement deliver their individual speeches among them was Martin Luther King how share with the presence his dream of equality with the presence covered by the press and Welcomed by the President John Kennedy who express his support for equality.

This great event was planned by A. Philip Randolph the founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and his chief aide Bayard Rustin to obtain fair treatment and equal opportunity for black Americans, it intended to sheds the lights to the suffering and marginalization practices as well as in quality against blacks.

The march brought around a quarter million people who across the streets of the Capitol to protest racial discrimination and support Civil Rights Movement leaders. This presence of huge number of people was the perfect time to deliver the most famous orations I have a dream by Martin Luther King which describe the suffering of blacks and demand equality between members of American society and classified as one of the signature moments of the Civil Rights Movement (march of Washington, 2009)

1.1.5.2 Prominent Leaders of civil rights movement and their Achievements

The Civil Rights Movement Leaders are activists who follow the nonviolence resistance to fight segregation, inequality and unfair Jim Crow laws by protest, marches to gain their rights as citizens and achieve equality and justice for all people in America.

Rosa Parks

Rosa Louise McCauley known as Rosa parks, an activist and leader in the Civil Rights Movement, she was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. Her parents, James, and Leona, they separated after the birth of her brother Sylvester 1915. At the age of 11, she moved to Montgomery where she continued her education until she attended high school at 16 where she needed to left school to take care of her grandmother. She married Raymond Parks who was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he Help her complete her studies. She was against racial segregation and Jim Crow Laws. When she became secretary in NAACP, she worked to integrate schools abandon the segregation system in public schools in Montgomery. She was best known for her refusal to giving up her seat to white man in Montgomery bus and she arrested for one day because of her action. (Hanson, 2011, np)

Phillip Randolph

Philip Randolph was born on April 15, 1889, in Crescent, Florida. He was the second of two sons of an itinerant AME preacher who supplement his income by running a sewing shop. At age of 18 Philip Randolph, become one of the founding fathers of the contemporary civil rights movement, also he was the founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), he was a strong leader throughout his life. Randolph polished his public speaking tactics and plans to face racial segregation and destroy Jim Crow laws (Anderson, 1973, np)

Malcolm X

Malcolm Little was one of the most influential leaders in Civil Rights Movement by his speeches, writing and thinking. He was born on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, his parents Louise and Earl Little, his father died when he was young. Malcolm become a member of the National of Islam (NOI). In 1952 he moved to Chicago and became a minister under Elijah Muhammad, By the late 1950s, Malcolm become the official spokesperson in the National of Islam (NOI). In early 1965, Malcolm X and other activists had a secret meeting in Selma and he killed on February 21, 1965. (Mamiya, 2023, np)

Martin Luther King Jr

Martin Luther King was born in January 15, 1929, on Atlanta, Georgia. He was born on Auburn Avenue, the church, Ebenezer Baptist, is on Auburn Avenue. He went through the public schools of Atlanta for a period. Martin's father, Michael King, was a pastor at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Martin Luther King Jr became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize because of his nonviolence resistance through his motivating speeches to gain equality and freedom for African Americans. (Lewis et al. np)

1.2 Theoretical background

1.2.1 African American Literature and its development

Centuries ago, African Americans suffered from slavery and racism, treated badly by whites. These practices prompted many African Americans to use literature as a weapon to defend their rights and express their suffering to achieve social equality and obtain rights as citizens of the United States.

In the early 18th century, blacks of African descent deprived of their rights to vote and testify in courts, especially in the south. They also forced to pay taxes and arbitrary laws imposed on them. They considered an alien element in American society and called by many names such as Negro, Blacks, Colored, African Americans. (Bilal,2011, np)

African American literature went through many literary periods: The Colonial Period (1746-1800), the Antebellum Period (1865-2900), the Protest Period (1960- 1969), and the Contemporary Period (1970-present).

African-American Literature during the Colonial Period distinguished to show the abusive practices against slaves and to reject slavery. Many literary works prevented from publishing, such as the works of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass (Sedrini, 2019, 11).

The Antebellum Period. This period witnessed an increase in awareness and the beginning of blacks' rejection and resistance to slavery. Literature during this period was a tool to abolish slavery restrictions by telling slaves their stories to describe the injustice of slavery and call for freedom, such as William Will Brown and Harriet Jacobs. (Sedrini, 2019, 13)

Harlem Renaissance Period. The Age of Reconstruction saw the beginning of an improvement in social, economic, and political conditions for African Americans, as black writers incorporated their dialect, traditions, and language into literature to make African American literature unique

and distinct. Many American magazines have supported the writers to publish their work, such as *The Crisis*. (Sedrini, 2019, 15)

The Protest Period, although the Civil War succeeded in abolishing slavery, it did not eliminate the laws of racial segregation, and writers faced many difficulties in obtaining wages for their work and professions. Interest in theatre and drama began, as black theatre became more successful in addition to films that were widely popular in the twentieth century. During the Protest Period, novelists, poets, writers, and playwrights were active. (Sedrini, 2019, 16)

During The Contemporary Period, many movements made to face racism against African Americans, The Civil Rights Movement was the most influential movement during 50s in Southern United States. The main goal of establishing this movement was to destroy oppression, segregation, inequality between blacks and whites. (Sedrini, 2019, 18)

By the late of 50s, many writers support the Civil Rights struggle such as Gwendolyn Brooks how was the first African American won a Pulitzer Prize in 1950 after publishing his book of poetry *Annie Allen* (1949), Sterling Brown, Margaret Danner, and others used poetry to express their suffering in white society. (Gwendolyn Brooks, nd)

Some writers choose plays, novels, essays to express their experiences as blacks in white society such as Ralph Ellison how published his novel *Invisible Man* (1959) (Armstrong& Schmidt 2009). The bus boycott, Rosa Parks refusal and other important events during the 50s inspired many writers to convey different themes such as: race, gender, and equality. As an example, the play of The African American Lorraine Hansberry *Raising in the Sun* (1959) become an important play in American Art because it shed the light to many issues in that period. (Andrews, 2001, np)

African American writers face racial discrimination by their literary works as a tool to defend their rights. Alice Walker, Sonia Sanchez, Mudhubiti and other writers used their poems to deliver their voices as African Americans. Black Power and Black Arts Movement influenced on the literary works like Earnest Gaines *Catherine Cormier* (1964), also Ishmael Reed the *Free-lance pallbearers* (1967). Through their novels, short stories, and poems they express their suffering and share their dreams of freedom and equality like Martin Luther King how deliver his famous speech *I have Dream* (1963) which consider as one of the most influential speeches, through this passage, the king gave African Americans hope that one day they would gain their rights as citizens in us and create society of freedom and equality. (Sickels, 2010, np)

African American Writers

During the twentieth century, African American literature flourished and achieved great success because of the interesting themes and writers such as:

W. E. B. Du. Bios

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, African American sociologist, writer, editor, and activist in the Civil Rights Movement. He was born on February 23, 1868, Great Barrington, Massachusetts. After graduating from Harvard University, he becomes a professor of sociology at Atlanta University. Du Bois considered one of the most important black activists of the twentieth century. And one of the founding leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NAACP and the Niagara Movement. After completing his graduate, he devoting himself to social studies on race, racism, and the social status of blacks in American society during Jim Crow period and racial segregation laws. The studies undertaken by Du Bois stressed the need for protest to achieve social change and improve the condition of blacks. (Seed, 2010, np)

In 1905 he led the Negara Movement, which attacked Booker T. Washington, who called on blacks to adapt to racial segregation and accept discrimination. Du Bois black nationalism called for the need for blacks to rise to develop their economy to confront economic discrimination and to provide jobs for blacks.

In 1903, Du Bois authored a collection of essays *The Souls of Black Folk* 1903, which became one of the most important literary works. In addition, he publishes several novels such as *The Black Flame* 1957, and *The Autobiography* 1968. In most of his writings, Du Bois shed light on the conflict between whites and blacks, and focused on fighting Racism and defended blacks to improve their social status and regain their rights as citizens in US. Du Bios died on August 27, 1963 after his health declined in Ghana. (Rudwick, 2023, np)

Maya, Angelou 1928

Maya Angelou Marguerite Johnson, better known as Maya Angelou, writer, poet, novelist, essayist, actor, director, and activist, she was one of the most important pioneers of African American literature. Maya Angelou was born on April 4, 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri. After the divorce of her parents, Vivian Baxter and Bailey Johnson, Margaret moved to live with her grandmother. She grew up in difficult conditions and raped by her mother's boyfriend Freeman during her stay at her mother's house. While she was in New York, Angelou met the leaders of the

civil rights movement Martin Luther King and Mal Colm X and became a Coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and she led several marches and protests and led a march to the United Nations to protest racial discrimination and oppression. (Bader, 2004, 3-4)

In 1966, Angelou began focusing on her literary works. She released many biographies, books, and poetry collections, in addition to a list of plays, films, and television programs for more than fifty years, in which she dealt with many topics such as racism, sexism, oppression. She also received dozens of awards for her literary and theatrical works, from the most famous of them is the series *"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"*, which is a series of six volumes talks about her childhood and teenage experiences, and she traced the details of her difficult childhood and her experiences, through this work Angelou won wide fame and international support. Also, a ten-part television series on African influences in American life, and wrote a play titled *Less Than These* 1966, in addition to publishing several volumes of poetry. Her first collection of poetry won a Pulitzer Prize nomination for *"Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Die"* (1971).

Angelou becomes the first African-American woman join the Directors Guild. Also, she has many achievements including writing, directing, authoring, and starring in many cinematic works and television productions. In addition to her work as a university professor at Wake Forest University in Boston-Salem, North Carolina, and she became the first Reynolds Professor of American studies in 1981. (Bader, 2004, 6)

Richard Wright

Richard Nathaniel Wright, born on September 4, 1908. His grandfather was a slave who worked in the cotton trade. Wright was born after the end of the Civil War, which succeeded in ending slavery, but it eliminated racial segregation and inequality. Wright grew up in a poor family and had a difficult childhood. After his father left them, his mother had to work hard to take responsibility. Richard took care of his mother at home, and they later moved to their grandfather's house. After Richard completed his education, he began working to help and support his mother, and his literary career began, as Richard touched on the lives of American blacks in his literary works, portraying them as victims of poverty and arbitrary laws.

Richard grew up in the Jim Crow Period, when blacks suffered from racial segregation and persecution in American society. The environment and conditions in which Wright grew up affected his literary themes and writings. His themes included persecution, racism, and poverty, as these topics were the most prevalent in African-American literature. (Rowley, 2008, np)

The Black Boy (1944) is an autobiography of Wright, in which he recounts the experiences he suffered and the psychological problems he went through, such as fear, insecurity, and persecution, and portrays the difficulties he faced as a black man in American society. (Britannica, 2023)

1.2.1.1 The Uniqueness of Afro-American and Literature

The history of black literature dates to the late eighteenth century. It has written many different poems on moral and religious topics. In 1773, Phillis Wheatley, a black African girl, wrote her first work as an African-American author so that she wanted to portray the desire for equality and upholding freedom in her book. Many other writers followed. The events of Harriet Jacobs in 1861 and in the life of a slave girl raised many issues about whether women should be free from slavery. Therefore, the author stressed that black women suffer more than black men, looking at their responsibility for domestic duties, having children, raising them, and working outside the home despite raped and neglected. (Abu Farda, 2014, 35)

Some critics have pointed out that Afro-American literature owes its uniqueness to the use of black linguistic style, music, culture, myths, and folk that have existed in African selves and traditions since ancient times. On the other hand, others have argued that it goes back to the issues referred to in the themes of their writings on injustice, slavery, and racial discrimination... Others believed that black writers produced their own Negro Literature (Negros), and that their works were not African-American. Writers such as Phillis Weathley, Jupiter Hamon, Frederick Douglas and others have tried to establish a lasting identity for black culture and literature. They also looked forward to spreading their literature, culture, folk tales, music, and African costumes everywhere to prove themselves and their existence. (Abu Farda, 2014, 35)

“We black folk here may help for we have within us as a race new stirring; stirrings of the beginning of a new appreciation of joy, of a new desire to create, of a new will to be; as though in this morning of group life we had awakened from sleep that at once dimly mourns the past and dreams a splendid future; and there has come the conviction that the youth that is here today, the Negro youth” (Napier,2000, 19)

African-American literature not only reflected the social and political spheres but also intellectual, ideological, aesthetic, and psychological themes. This literature seen as a production of oppressed and subjugated people under white power, who wanted to rebel against the racial injustice that imposed on them. So, they tried so hard to differentiate and distinguish between their identity.

The reality as African individuals and the American culture that imposed on them. And get their own language and literature so that other people appreciate the creativity and art of black people. (Abu Farda, 2014, 36)

1.2.1.2 African American Women Literature:

. The black feminist side had a great role and influence in the development of African-American literature, in terms of the contribution of the black African-American writer by communicating the suffering of black women through literary works.

1.2.1.3 The womanist side in Afro-American Literature

The publication of The Post slavery Era gave structure to newly born African-American literature in the United States. Although the contribution of black male writers to the black writing movement was huge, Afro-American women played an important and prominent role in the movement and African-American literature in a serious way. Therefore, these women succeeded in achieving fame in Negro literature and won public recognition and judgment on critics for their important and expressive works, among these able writers Alice Walker, Tony Morrison, Paul Marshall, and others. Afro-American women have long suffered sexual and racial oppression, with most novels in recent years written by black women revolving around the reciprocal effects of sexism and racism as well as the theme of individual and collective identity. “The argument that African American woman confront both a woman question and a race problem capture the essence of black feminist theory”. (Sedrini, 2019, 32)

According to Walker, black female characters in African-American literature classified into three types. The first is abundant in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries called "suspended woman", a woman oppressed by males and society who cannot even protect her soul and defend herself. The second category is "assimilated woman" so that women try hard to define and highlight themselves in white society, which did not suffer from physical and sexual violence, but the psychological need to accept it within society, to determine the presence of this type in the forties and fifties. For the latter type, called "emergent woman", women of this type characterized by the necessary awareness of their needs, abilities, and self-awareness, and enabled them to live their lives according to their personal choices and were fully willing to share their experience with others without fear to know the oppression practiced on them by males, and this was during the sixties and seventies. Critics thought of adding a new category called "liberated woman" based on liberal

and independent women who recognized their desires and are striving hard to discover their abilities and tendencies and work to achieve them and go along with them. (Abu Farda,2014, 38)

Black women are the basic structure of African-American literature. In the Afro-American literary tradition, especially African women writers, developed special strategies for dealing with the duality of consciousness of Negro-Americans. In their works, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Lauren Hansbury have worked to connect “two-ness” with “womanism” and its concepts. In Alice Walker’s article “*In Search of our mother’s Gardens*”, she identified “black feminism as the way to attract black women to attention to their identity and racial energy.” (Martins,2010, 28)

In the twentieth century, black writers such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker tried hard to spread their ideas and rehabilitate Africans for Americans, as well as to highlight the important role of black women in American literature and draw attention by writing about their experiences, culture, and African traditions rooted within them. (Seif Eddine and Walid, 2017, 15)

1.2.2 The Use of stereotype

Since ancient times, stereotypes or prejudices have unleashed about black individuals in American society, affecting them detrimentally.

1.2.2.1 Notion of stereotype

The origin of the term stereotype goes back to the Greek word, which is a compound word divided into two parts “streos” which means firm and strong, and” tupos” means impression, which means strong impression of an idea. The term stereotype first coined in 1798 by the French printer Fermin Didaut to describe the printing process that relied on copying and printing letters. The term used during the 18th century to refer to the process of copy printing, an impression taken from a lead meld that used to replace the original type. (Sosnizkij, 2004, 2)

In 1922, the American editor and political thinker Walter Lippmann published *Public Opinion* known by the phrase “... picture in our head” it is the title of the first chapter of the book and considered the most famous quote in Lippmann book, a precursor to social perceptions of stereotypes. Lipmann considered the first to use the concept of stereotype as a social scientific term, where he gave several ideas regarding stereotypes in his book *Public Opinion*, in which he discussed social ideas and perceptions and how stereotypes affect public opinions, through this book, Lippmann presented his main thesis and defended stereotypes that simplify perception because reality is complex and cannot fully represented. (Lippmann,1997, np)

Lippmann opened the way to the study of the concept of stereotypes so that the number of stereotypical publications in psychology, sociology and the media increased. Psychological empirical studies focused on stereotypical concepts of ethnic and national groups.

In addition to studying the stereotypes that portrayed in the media such as newspapers and magazines. In the mid-twentieth century, empirical research on the fold templates increased, addressing many topics such as how to understand people, gender, ethnic groups. (Kleg, 1993, np)

1.2.2.2 Stereotype in Literature

Stereotypical characters play important roles in a literary work, as they facilitate the process of understanding the roles of these characters because the reader has an idea of the characteristics of these characters because of the stereotype that he has formed about them. Stereotypical characters can easily identify by the roles they play and expected by the reader, such as the Princess, the Hero and the Villain, these characters perform conventionally, and their actions are expected because the stereotype about them similar to most people. Stereotypical characters are the central characters that control the course of events and the plot in the story, and sometimes they are aids to understanding events because they facilitate effective communication between characters. (Jahan et al, 2021, np)

Writers usually choose ideas and images that entrenched in the minds when writing their literary works, as these stereotypes fit with readers' knowledge and correspond to perceived ideas about the outside world. Jonathan explains the strategy of remote characterization, this strategy enables the reader to draw a picture in his mind while reading the literary work, and this is due to the reliance on the fold images in our minds, where he said: “a representation of character [is] constructed in the mind during the process of reading” (Rosenthal et al. 2018, np)

The writer works to show the characteristics of stereotyped characters established in the readers by highlighting the stereotypical personality traits entrenched in the mind, which he recognizes as soon as he reads the events and this is due to the importance of studying stereotypical characters from several aspects. (Rosenthal et al. 2018, np)

1.2.2.3 Sexism, Racism, Classism stereotypes in US

Most societies suffer from racism, classism, and sexism, this is the result of the complexities and generalizations circulated about a topic or group in general. Stereotypes arise because of social and cultural beliefs in society and are just mental images and generalizations circulated among

individuals in general without regard to general differences. Stereotypes affect behaviour and feelings due to the formation of a prior mental image on the subject. Among the social stereotypes prevalent in American society are: racism, classism, and sexism.

Racism is one of the most widespread forms of discrimination in the United States against black people. The stereotype is that blacks seen as inferior and that they are inferior to whites. Whites enjoy full rights as citizens of America, while blacks deprived of many of their rights and exploited as slaves to serve whites, according to Abdelhamid Zoubir:

“In the resulting colour caste system, white people made certain that any Mares they allotted to the Negro were inferior. The Caucasian American socialized the black man to internalize and believe all the many vile things he said about him. They encouraged and rewarded behaviour and attitudes in Beg roes that substantiated their indicting stereotypes.”

(Zoubir, 1994, 49)

Whites force blacks to accept the idea that blackness is evil and Negroes “no-good” in addition that only “white is right”. (Zoubir, 1994, 49)

Blacks were inferior to whites; the whites look as superior while blacks look as inferior and neglect. White oppressed blacks in several areas of life, they prevent them from their rights such as: voting and education. According to Fremon:

Whites kept blacks from voting, oppressed them through the legal system, and abused them in many ways. They cheated blacks out of their earnings. This was easy to do, considering that poorly educated blacks had little ability to read or negotiate fair contracts. (Fremon, 2015, np)

Like racism, sexism in another form of discrimination based on gender inequality between man and woman. Patriarchy society shows that male have power than female for centuries, woman stereotyped as weak, oppressed from sexual violence, racism, and inequality with man. Man and woman have not same rights and opportunities in society. Female were inferior to male because the male has power to control female in patriarchy view. In addition, woman cannot be free of man’s control. (Jost and Kay, 2003, 498)

Men generally stereotyped as competent, assertive, independent, and achievement oriented and women are not. While women generally stereotyped as warm, sociable, interdependent and relationship oriented. (Jost and kay, 2003, 499)

The United States society is highly classist and racist society, classism is from of discrimination based on socio-economic level in society, it is negative attitude in American society, the rich people was upper class and treated as first class citizens, while the poor people suffering from poverty. The stereotype of rich people about their lives was high living, spending, and earning. While working class or poor people living in poverty and suffering in their lives. (Lott, 2012, np)

1.2.3 Feminism and black women

Feminism has evolved through waves over the years, to achieve equality between men and women and to elevate the status of black women in society.

1.2.3.1 Feminism

Many women have subjected in recent centuries to oppression and the imposition of male control over the female, by depriving them of their rights and freedoms, as a revolution on that feminist theory emerged, whose topics dealt with the study of the impact of women in various areas of life, especially in the literary field by highlighting the female touch in art, history, music, and mathematics by focusing on the demand for gender equality and criticism of male domination. To give women their rightful place in society, the government, and the whole world.

Previously, the concept of women confined to the meaning of the housewife only, subject to the rule of men, so she deprived of exercising her rights and achieving her dreams, which led to the formation of feminist theory. In 1792, the Philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a book entitled "*Proving Women's Rights*", and this book formed the first wave of the feminist movement, and despite the interest of women in it and its wide spread, the feminist movement began in July 1848 at the Cinecafuls Conference in the United States, and during World War II most men left to fight in the war, so women took their positions and participated in raising the economy and continuing it to prove that they are able to work and employ, to begin After that the second wave of feminism and followed by the third as well. This theory has evolved in waves over the years to aim to fight for women's rights and equality between them and men politically, economically, personally, and socially and to break the patriarchal system. It also studies and analyses women's experiences, struggles, societal influences on them, and critiques male domination through literary

writings. She had several directions, including: French feminism, Enlightenment feminism and black feminism. (Abu Farda, 2014, 1-92)

1.2.3.2 What is womanism?

Black women suffered socially, emotionally, and politically oppression and violence in a large proportion of black males and white women because they were inferior in society because they were female and black as well. They tried to defend their identity and rights for a long time against sexism and the racism of black and feminist literary history. Because of this, this situation needed a black feminist movement that would influence the black female future and address the diverse issues of black female life: the crisis of black femininity, the dominant black masculinity and black motherhood... Black feminism addressed the needs of not only black women but also black men and children. (Das, 2014, 123-124)

"Womanism celebrate the ideals of black life and at the same time gives a balanced presentation of black womanhood and black gendered struggles". (Das, 2014, 124)

Alice Walker was the most vocal advocate and activist in the black feminist movement because of her fascination with black people and their real-life experiences. This led her to create the term "Womanism" or "black feminist" or "feminist of colour", to illustrate the view of black feminism and its difference from feminism, and the use of this theory has appeared in many of her literary works. She noted that black feminism is rooted in black popular culture and shaped by the accumulation of black women's experiences and the marginalization of women of colour in all areas of life. Alice Walker said: "Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender". (Das, 2014, 124). Alice Walker described Womanism as lavender to make it unique from feminism and more special to black women. From the pioneers of womanism theory:

Dr, Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964)

Born during slavery on August 10, 1858 in Ralig, North Carolina, she studied and worked hard to become a pioneer of black feminism with a unique and audible voice. (Giles,2006, 623). According to Giles"...Anna Julia Cooper that highlights her role as a pioneer black feminist, her activism in the uplift of black community..." (Giles, 2006, 622)

She occupied her life as a teacher, social activist, early model, and supporter of black theory. A black woman and a socially committed public thinker with abilities and achievements that are multi-contextual and multi-pathway. (Giles, 2006, 621-622)

"Her work as a scholar-activist with women's clubs, social service centers, and educational institutions indicate that she understood the importance of maintaining multifaceted attack against systematic racism, sexism and poverty..." (Giles, 2006, 632)

This pioneer Cooper has made her mark through her activism, field work and unique and audible voice.

Toni Morrison:

Born in Lorrain, Ohio in 1931, Tony was interested in African-American literature, studied and succeeded in becoming a teacher at the University of West Texas and a writer, most of her works dealing with problems of identity and class struggle, race, and gender. The pioneer and writer Morrison was one of the pioneers of black feminist theory and the black female and sought to highlight her interest and support for womanism through her writings and literary works, for example the novel "*The Bluest Eye*." Both Toni Morrison and Alice Walker as well-known pioneers of black feminist in their writings frequently stimulate black women to love themselves, their race and their culture..."(Konzadi et al.2011,1307)

Zora Neale Hurston:

Hurston was born on January 7 and probably 1901 in Eatonville of the Nobel family. She was smart and claimed to be older and stronger than her age and that she was a young woman despite her young age, and one of her professional traits was resourcefulness. She was always hostile to her father unlike her mother, she grew up like gourd vines (Hemenway, 1941, 13-14). "A Hurston scholar, delve into areas of the feminine psyche that stimulate question apropos for feminist as well as womanist theories". (Leasure, 2005, 16). Zora was interested and admired in reading books and lost her mother at the age of nine, and later sent to Jacksonville School. She worked as a maid for many years for white people, only to understand for the first time the meaning of poverty and suffering and feel that she would not limit a man to take care of her. She left her homeland and went to discover the world and complete her desire to attend high school and college. She then worked as waitress at the exclusive cosmos club and as a maid for the black Washington families. To secure her livelihood and study expenses, after Professor Alan Locke discovered her talent for writing, she became a writer and publisher of her first story "*John Redding Goes to Sea*" and followed by other works after this story (Hemenway, 1941, 14-15). "Hurston's personal lifestyle

was more similar to womanist theory” (Leasure, 2005, 16). Hurston was one of the pioneers of black feminist theory and we have shown her support and use through her literary writings.

1.2.3.3 Womanism in Meridian:

The protagonist Meridian deals with several experiences to develop herself, try to discover her identity and herself, and fight the unjust patriarchal society. The black feminist movement emerged because of the sexism of white and black feminists, which led Alice to try to portray the lives and experiences of African American women in a racist and sexist American society, elevating black women from decadence to renewal and leadership from the crescent of self-awareness of their identity, dignity, and importance, as well as challenging patriarchal and racial authority. In *Meridian's* novel (1976), under the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement, the author wanted to give Afro-American women a voice since they were an oppressed group and to seek authenticity and self-development.

“Meridian narrates the struggles of the protagonist to define herself and search for self-acceptance and self-knowledge with her enlightened views about motherhood and spirituality. It is the spiritual and political biography of the protagonist’s transition from victim, black female, daughter, wife and mother to a fully responsible activist”. (Mathew, 2021, 41)

The novel revolves around four main characters: Meridian, her mother, Mrs. Hill, the opportunistic white woman Lynne, Truman, and some minor characters as well. Walker spoke through the protagonist about the latter's struggle, search for herself and her acceptance, so that Alice said about her novel *Meridian* that it would be about the many active and inactive women in the Southern movement who reached the age of sixties and who discovered Alice their family relationship and political backgrounds. This novel is the vital spiritual and political path of the character "Meridian Hill" and her transition from a miserable victim to a political activist.

In *Meridian*, Walker fights the generational myth of black motherhood, in which the mother is supposed to be sacrificial and strong, and has suffered greatly. The heroine Meridian wanted to be a mother of society and rejected her situation as a biological mother who abandoned her child and did not abort it. Meridian Hill learned this idea and stereotype from her mother who married Mr. Hill to please society and not through love, Alice believed that her mother lost her independence and personal life because of motherhood. Mrs. Hill made the mistake of pretending to be perfect motherhood and did not make her daughter Meridian aware of the dangers and sacrifices of black

motherhood. Meridian's love and marriage to Eddie and her experience of motherhood at an early age made her realize what slavery looked like to abandon her only child and embark on her dreams and pursuits.

Walker examined one aspect of society, the contradictions around black women, through the experience of the daughter and her mother, so that Meridian gets rid of society's limitations in becoming an obedient daughter, faithful wife, and perfect mother, to be the cause of her liberation from sex and motherhood. Morrison points out in his book *Contemporary Fiction*: "This problematisation of the axiomatic status of maternity as the destination of the black women signals one of the key concerns of Walker's fiction. That is, the (re)constitution of black American femininity in relation to the family, to political struggle and Christianity" (Mathew, 2021, 43). Motherhood was the strength and weakness of women in general and black women. As if this were not enough for black women, they also marginalized and discriminated against because of the racist patriarchal attitudes of men of their sex.

Meridian's experience at Saxon College was successful despite the difficulties and pains she endured. On the other hand, Truman's personal outlook showed us the gender differentiation in black society. On the other hand, he is aware of gender discrimination. Truman was a womanizer who had failed to love Meridian and replaced her with the attractive Lynne, the white woman, only to return years later to beg Meridian to return under the pretext of children. " He had gone to Meridian three years after he married Lynne...he had begged her, or tried to beg her". (Walker,1976, 129)

1.3 Biographical background

1.3.1 Alice WALKER's life, works themes, and style

Afro-American literature shone with a variety of writings and themes, including racial issues. Alice Walker was one of the African-American writers who was famous for embodying reality in her literary works.

Life and works

Alice WALKER is one of the greatest African Americans writers. She was born in a small rural town of Eatonton, Georgia on February 9,1999, she was the eighth and the last child of Willie Lee and Minnie Lou Grant WALKER who were sharecroppers. She grows up in a difficult and poor environment, this did not prevent her parents from support her to focus on her studies and

appreciate art and beauty, her childhood was full of pain, violence and feeling of being an outcast. When she attends Spelman College in 1961, her teachers discover her passion for writing and they inspired her to start her writing career. After graduation in Spelman college, Walker choose to attend Sarah Lawrence College in New York to fellow her graduation. After success she become a teacher, social worker, and activist in Civil Rights Movement (Walker, 1976)

Walker was preeminent writer in African American literature, she wrote in different literary genres such as: novels, short stories, poems, essays, and other forms of literature. Her first novel “*The Third Life of Grange Copeland*” published in 1970. The second novel *Meridian* published in 1976, the third novel was “*The Colour Purple* “(1982)

Also, she produced other novels such as: *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), *By the Light of My Father’s smile* (1998), and *Now in The Time to Open Your Heart* (2005)

Walker published her collection of essays which represent several topics including “*In search of Our Mather’s Gardens*” (1983) and “*Living by THE Word*” (1988)

Her first story collection, “*In love & trouble*” (1973). Walker use the power of poetic language to express her thoughts such as “*Her Blue Body Every We Know*” (1990), and “*Absolute Trust in the Goodness of The Earth*” (2003). (Walker, 1976)

Themes and style

Almost all of Alice Walker’s works Variety and multiple. It deals with sexism, racism, classism and colorism against black women. Through her works she sheds the lights to the struggles facing Black women in patriarchy society such as violence, and persecution. In addition, Walker’s writing reflected her real life and personal experience as an activist in Civil Rights Movement. Walker themes explore racism and misogyny. (Crayton, 2017)

Alice Walker use creative style of writing which attract the reader attention, she uses literary devices through her works by adding a taste of enjoyment such as irony, imagery, and symbolism. She uses the dialect in her works, in addition the using of slang and profanity. (Walker, 1976)

1.3.2 How she became activist?

When teenager Alice Walker turned 16, she became an activist in the Civil Rights Movement and her first start in this career as an activist. Her passion, dedication and nonviolence inspired by

leader Martin Luther King Jr., who always inspired her, as well as her past traumatic racial experiences in the black community. The strength of this teenager's feelings and the boldness of her endless thinking to put an end to racial injustice made her a force to reckon with and a voice heard in her society. Alice was aware of all the sit-in measures taken in the movement and counties, such as the Montgomery bus boycott in 1995. This was not enough for Walker. She wanted a complete change that depended on her, and she even described her activism early in life, stating: (Harris, 2010, 29)

“My activism—cultural, political, spiritual—is rooted in my love of nature and my delight in human beings . . . I believe people exist to be enjoyed, much as a restful or engaging view might be. As the ocean or drifting clouds might be.”

(Harris, 2010, 47)

As we said earlier, the protest was not enough for Alice because the path of movement she took would not be easy for her, and required sacrifice from her. Walker graduated from high school and moved into college life in 1961, after deciding to devote herself to the movement and learn to balance her studies with her activity in the movement. (Harris, 2010, 29)

Before Alice left her home in Georgia and moved to the prestigious Spelman College for Black Women, she took part in her last act of protest, so she boarded the bus and sat in the white area deliberately, and because of the segregation law, and after the white woman complained about it, Alice rose from the place with tears and heartbreak in her eyes, and determined to face the racial injustice that humiliated her. In December 1963, Walker withdrew from Spelman College due to accidents that made her repeat One such incident was the experience of Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "*I Have a Dream*" on August 28, 1963. (Harris,2010, 30-31)

Alice moved to Sarah Lawrence College because of her high grades, where Professor Stott on Lindh saw her writing abilities and commitment to the civil rights movement. Alice Walker's voice heard in the South as a poor and talented young black woman with her writing was a source of pride for her family and acquaintances. (Harris,2010, 32-33)

In the summer of 1965, Alice returned to the South as a civil rights activist in Liberty County, Georgia to register voters, even though that place was full of violence and brutality against blacks. Alice Walker suffered so badly after she miscarried her baby that she wrote about her experience in many of her poems. Therefore, she re-attached to life and returns to aid the civil rights movement

as an activist, writer, journalist, and teacher facing racial discrimination in the south. (Harris, 2010, 34-35)

When she moved north in 1966, after working as a New York welfare specialist and witnessing abuse and health care in hospitals, she decided to change this failed policy, joining protest marches against domestic and foreign policies and the importance of racial equality in Atlanta and the North, after ending her job as a case manager and writing again. Walker left for the most dangerous and violent place full of wild and angry whites "Mississippi" and as an activist in the Civil Rights Movement she got a job in the NAACP's Legal Defence and Education Fund to face the dangers, changes, and hidden relationships of the movement. (Harris, 2010, 35-36)

“Activism is often my muse ... it is organic. Grounded in my mother’s love of beauty, the well-tended garden and the carefully swept yard her satisfaction in knowing everyone in her environment was sheltered and fed” (Harris, 2010, 103)

1.3.3 Critical Studies on Alice Walker’s Major Works

In most of her work, Alice Walker deals with the vulnerability, oppression, and disregard of her rights by the bigoted man, where black women have subjected to all kinds of physical, sexual, and verbal abuses, so they not allowed to feel safe, self-evaluate, share their feelings, and express their opinion in the black community. In rejection of male slavery, these women wanted to dust themselves off to defend their rights and freedoms. According to Alice Walker: "Woman was a mindless body, a sex creature, something to hang false hair and nails on". (Walker, 1976, 65)

Alice Walker was very popular for the diversity of her writings in African-American literature, so she criticized for evaluating her work. The critical study of Suganya and Kowsalya analysed the oppression of women and black feminism in most of Alice Walker’s work, which focused on the heart and soul of women and how they fight an oppressed society to have a good education and their rights before and after marriage (Suganya and kowsalya, 2019).

In *Everyday Use*, Alice describes the concept of inheritance, which is the basis of black culture (the art of quilting), especially as it is based on black women and their creativity as well as their solidarity with each other to revive their personalities. The black woman became a symbol of strength and dedication to work, demonstrating her image in her mother by creating art that included the care of the flowers located next to the hut (Suganya and kowsalya, 2019).

In search of our mother's Gardens. We find that she talks about black Afro-American women and motherhood. Mariama Ba says that “black Africans must be able to adapt in a black African society.” Where hope achieved an important role in changing the psychological character of the hero to revive herself and highlight herself. (Suganya and kowsalya, 2019)

The idea in *Meridian*'s novel is to look at racial discrimination and misogyny, so Alice tries to show the links between intolerance and sexism and their impact on women.

In this novel, Alice also described ongoing domestic violence in African-American families, because children usually apply the actions of their parents. This is what makes this novel attractive to literary critics to evaluate it and know the environmental, psychological, cultural, and religious environment in which the child grew up and which made her character (Raman,2004, 224).

This novel and *The Third Life of Grange Copland* talk about the Civil Rights Movement that brought together many passionate young activists to defend their rights and freedom. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, television played an important role as a media outlet in shedding light on the Civil Rights Movement and its activists. The novel's character, Ruth, gained support from her parents after gaining self-awareness from watching the achievements of this movement in TV. On the other hand, the man who showed that change is possible and starts from the same individual. Walker did not hint at the future of Ruth and Meridian, although they were victims because of a painful past (Suganya and kowsalya, 2019)

The successful novel *The Color purple* attracts the reader to remind him of the suffering and struggle of ancestors against injustice, oppression and liberation that brought society to where it is now. Alice makes her readers find themselves, their individuality, and the history of their ancestors, and suggests that if a black woman ignores knowing her past, she will not be able to face the next. As for the writer, his job depends on re-embodiment of the history of black society so that readers can see how their ancestors fought discrimination against individuals and gender to obtain their rights, as well as the author must focus on the previous cultural, religious, and historical life that in turn contributes to changing and rebuilding the present. African culture and spirituality revived and the value and status of women enhanced through the ideas and choice of writer Alice Walker (Suganya and kowsalya,2019).

Walker received a complaint from a mother at a public school in Oakland about her book, saying it had a sexually degenerate meaning that formed a bad stereotype about black people. Alice explains that her use of this folk language and her point of view as well as the stereotype of blacks

show the extent and intensity of sexual and physical violence to which black women have subjected. Not only was Alice to take this method in her work, but there were also Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and others. Walker has used them same method in many of her stories and novels such as *Coming Apart*, with critical theorist Cheryl Wall arguing in her essay that “claiming the right to speak is a necessary part of self-claim,” and Mary Helen Washington arguing that “restoring one’s voice gives a sense of independence.” Criticism of the writers is a philosophical matter that must done in literature to understand his active writing and the goal he wants to reach (Hively, 2011, 15-16).

Barbara Smith describes the situation of black women novelists in her essay “*Toward a Black Feminist Criticism*” that “thematically, stylistically, aesthetically, and conceptually Black women writers’ manifest common approaches to the act of creating literature as a direct result of the specific political, social, and economic experience they have been obliged to share”

She also spoke of Walker’s use of her mother tongue, cultural experiences, and literary art as a weapon to counter oppression and racial and sexual discrimination (Handique, 2020)

Conclusion

The main conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that black women have left their mark in defending their rights and making their voices heard. She shone literarily through her unique Afro-American fatherly works that revealed the essence and power of black women based on their experiences and struggles. On the other hand, this was not enough for African-American women who also sought to join the Civil Rights Movement and work to achieve their demands and goals.

Chapter two:

Resisting stereotypes in Alice

WALKER's *Meridian*

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Chapter two: Resisting stereotypes in Alice WALKER's *Meridian*

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Introduction

Black woman was a victim suffered from triple oppression, such as: racism, sexism, and classism. She did not have to fight the white community and white women's racism only, but she also forced to confront the oppression of men within her community by joining political movements in support of women's emancipation, such as the Civil Rights Movement that sought to change the traditional thinking of making incorrect prejudices about black women. On the other hand, shattering stereotypes about her, she has taken a different path by using Afro-American literature as a means of making her voice heard and reflecting her suffering, experiences, and challenges in black society and beyond. This novel reflected the journey of the African-American writer Alice Walker in self-discovery and finding the beauty of the black female soul, as Delia Jarrett-Macauley said: "Black is Beautiful" (Macauley, 2005), as well as resisting stereotypes in black African-American society. The narrator opens her novel by recalling her memories during her time in the civil rights movement to revive it, and inspiring black women to continue fighting to show the power and essence of black women.

This chapter explores resisting stereotypes about black African American women and the impact of racism, oppression, neglect on the personal growth of the character through the novel *Meridian* and how these external factors did influence the development of the personal identity of the African American woman individual through the protagonist Meridian Hill; using Womanism theory to analyse the effect of oppression and racism on the identity of the black women. Also, how they resisting stereotypes about them.

2.1 Motherhood: Breaking images of good black motherhood

In fact, motherhood is a blessing for most women. A mother is a protective umbrella for her children and a warm embrace to which they resort, in joy or sadness. The duty of motherhood requires that the mother sacrifice everything she has for the happiness and comfort of her children without hesitation, grumbling or blame for their presence in her life.

"She mumbled, lurching towards his crib in the middle of the night, is what slavery is like. Rebellious, she began to dream each night, just before her baby sent out his cries, of ways to murder him". (Walker, 1976, 63)

Here, Meridian Hill was just the opposite, as she wanted to sacrifice her son to achieve her dreams. Taking care of her baby made her feel like she trapped in a room and could not breathe, “Her pregnancy came as a total shock.” (54), calling it a kind of slavery. As soon as Meridian thinks about killing her son, she makes her a bad and selfish mother, because she preferred to love the mother of the black community and this by engaging in activism in the Civil Rights Movement to defend black women and their rights, which made her put her son Eddie Jr. For adoption instead of containing and caring for him. I think that despite Meridian’s mistake and her pregnancy at an early age and forcing her to marry Eddie, “She was still only seventeen. A drop-out from high school, a deserted wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law.” (69). It is due to the mistake made by her mother, Mrs. Hill, not to educate her daughter about the dangers and sacrifices of black motherhood, she considered her mother as a living ideal for perfect mother. However, Meridian should not have overdone her son and held him responsible for her mistakes and bad decisions. Seeing herself as more valuable than the stereotypes of black society and patriarchy, she struggled to create a strong, new self and space of her own. Through her protagonist, Alice Walker tried to show us the concept of black motherhood and what an Afro-American black mother is like and that this task is not the destiny of all women. Critic Lynne Sterane also pointed out that motherhood is due to the nature and identity of women and their harmony with nature and their external surroundings:

“Celebration of motherhood as the source of women’s attunement to nature and as a feminine universal [...] overemphasizes the place of motherhood in women’s lives, and splits off women who are not mothers into a theoretical cul-de-sac. This construction of motherhood additionally promotes an identification of women as exclusively and essentially mothers, thereby diminishing other identities or other roles for women in the environmental movement, or in the world at large”. (Chavan,2015, 190).

As mentioned earlier, motherhood is an appreciated responsibility for all women, but the nature of its practice varies from one woman to another. In many of their works, African-American women writers have made it clear that most black African women were not worthy of motherhood.

“During the twenties a young girl named Mary had a baby in the tower off one end of tower Hall. She had concealed her pregnancy and muffled her cries (and of course was too ashamed to ask for help or tell anybody anything) as the child was being

born. Then she had carefully chopped the infant into bits and fed it into the commode”. (Walker, 1976, 39)

For the young girl Mary from *Meridian*'s novel, and most notably in section Sojourner, she is one of the victims of early pregnancy at a young age, she suffered and pained in silence without asking anyone for help because she felt guilty, ashamed, and blamed herself for the mistake of her pregnancy. After the birth of the child, she turned from a girl and an innocent victim into a murderous mother without conscience. She carried out a gruesome operation and coldly cut her new-born son into small pieces and hid him. I thought that Mary felt lonely and afraid that her son would identify her weakness and an obstacle in the way of living her life and achieving her dreams. The tale of Mary was one of the previous horror stories circulating in the Saxon campus that they still believe in. From my perspective, Walker tried to show us the extent to which African-American people, especially women, attached to the ancient stories and legends of their ancestors and deeply influenced by their Afro-American culture, and linked the girls' attachment to nature, especially the sojourner tree, which served as a symbol of nature that gives comfort and clinging because they thought it carried their tragedies, their pain, and the persecution they subjected to. This story affected Meridian and frightened her because if she had not adopted her son, she would have committed the same frightening crime against her son.

“Walker seems to remind us that the relationship between women and nature is not simple, that women, like men, can react to oppression by turning their anger against that which they love, rather than against the oppressor” (Chavan,2015, 197)

Motherhood requires great responsibility and double effort. Her role lies in the mother meeting the needs of her husband, her children, and the requirements of her family. If she connected to working life outside the home, she must reconcile in both, otherwise she will lose one of them.

“Her mother was not a woman who should have had children. She was Capable of thought and growth and action only if unfettered by the needs of Dependents, or the demands, requirements, of a husband. Her spirit was of such Fragility that the slightest impact on it caused a shattering beyond restoration” (Walker,1976, 43)

Meridian's mother, Mrs. Hill, a teacher who did not tire of her work, but was passionate, respectful, and made money from her work, moved from city to city to teach. Like any young Afro-American girl, she discovered her desire to marry Mr. Hill, who was also a teacher, to feel loved and to add a new, special, and beautiful character to her life. She wanted to feel the continuation

of happy moments only and never delved into her future or her duties and the requirements of her husband. Of course, she had no idea about marriage or motherhood at all because her mother had never advised her before. After becoming pregnant, having children, and hitting the real wall, she felt the end of her life for saying “it’s not fair”, “She never learned to cook well before, not even to nail hair beautifully or to be creative inside her home, although creativity was inside her, but she refused to express it” (45). Mrs. Hill’s inclination to work and practice herself to serve the black community made her a careless mother towards her children, Mrs. Hill and Meridian did not have a love relationship and advice as natural as any mother to her daughter, but Meridian could not even reveal her feelings to her mother. This girl created a sense of guilt in stealing her mother’s life and making her weak, affecting her psychologically. We see that the writer Walker wanted to explain the psychological changes that have occurred in the character of the heroine. Meridian’s vision of her mother’s history of motherhood left her unable to replicate her mother’s experience of motherhood. Since the patriarchal black society requires women to have children, take care of them and give up their dreams and ambitions, Meridian thought about living her life in her own way and with the standards that suit her. Nagueyatli Warren says:

“In our society, there is a fundamental expectation that women make others instead of making themselves, and that women naturally want to sacrifice their own freedom in order to nurture children and husbands”.
(Chavan,2015, 194)

As Sengupta pointed out: “Afro-American motherhood, is traditionally viewed as a vehicle for preserving black heritage in the face of white cultural domination”. (Lawrence and Priscilla,2018, 356)

2.2 Childhood: The child as symbol of destruction of mother’s dreams in black community

Childhood is the most beautiful period in a person’s life, this period is full of love, tenderness and affection between the child and his parents. Also smile and joy fill the child’s life in childhood because his mind is free from thinking about the requirements of life and responsibility in making his decisions because this matter is to his parents or adults’ people around him who care about him. In childhood, the concept of life for children is play and lasting happiness. Therefore, parents must provide all means of comfort and safety to protect their children and provide them with food and drink, while ensuring that the child given all his rights, such as proper upbringing and monitoring his actions and behaviour. During childhood, a child’s personality

refined and greatly influences a person's life in the future. Parents take care of their children protect them, and take care of them because the child at this period is unable to take care of himself or make the right decisions regarding his life because his mind is not able to comprehend the difficulty of life

“The Wild Child was a young girl who had managed to live without parents, relatives or friends all of her thirteen years. It was assumed she was thirteen, though no one knew for sure.....” (Walker,1976, 29)

In The Wild Child section, Alice Walker showed us a opposite meaning of childhood. The Wild child suffered from the harshness of life without her parents. At a time when children taken care of and attention from their parents, the wild child, despite her young age was taking both care of herself and responsibility of her decisions. She deprived of her most basic rights as a child such as care and safety. She forced to eat from garbage and collect and wear old clothes. “Wile Chile was seen going through garbage cans and dragging off pieces of discarded furniture,” (29). Childhood considered one of the most period which the child enjoys, tenderness and family warmth, but the wild child her childhood was the opposite of what we know about childhood, she grew up unaware of the meaning of being a child, while the childhood is the period of playing and laughing because she was busy searching for her food and drinking from the garbage and facing dangers of live alone. Also, I wanted to point out is that the wild child had begun to smoke at the age of eight which is far from what children think.

“By the age of eight (by the neighbors' reckoning) she had begun to smoke, and, as she dug about in the debris, kicking objects this way and that (cursing, the only language she knew), she puffed on cigarette butts with a mature and practiced hand.” (Walker,1976, 29)

while the child in through this period gets sweets and candies, the wild child begun to smoke brown cigarettes, this is another image that breaks us the meaning of childhood, because the child characterized by innocence and distance from social ills, but the wild child was an example breaks the stereotype that we know about childhood. In addition to her pregnancy at the age of thirteen, which is another aspect included in resisting the stereotype of childhood, “it was four winters after they first spotted her that the neighbours noticed Wile Child was pregnant” (29), because at this age her mind is aware of motherhood responsibility and how to take care of a baby, and being pregnant at this age is another example that supports resisting the stereotype of childhood.

As we know, during childhood, children's thinking is simple, devoid of all complications and far from understanding the complex matters of life. Life seems simple to children because their thinking is about playing and having fun without feeling of any responsibility or preoccupied with other people's problems, but Meridian Hill was not like other children. Her thinking was like an adult person. Throughout her childhood, her thinking was different from the other children. One example found in the section "Have You Stolen Anything?"

"Meridian was conscious always of a felling of guilt, even as a child. Yet she did not know of what she might be guilty. When she tried to express her feelings to her mother, her mother would only ask: "Have you stolen anything? (Walker,1976, 43)

Meridian always felt guilt in her childhood towards her mother Mrs Hill, because she felt that she stole her life when she decided to give birth to Meridian and give up freedom in her life and choose to sit at home to take care of her

It was for stealing her mother's serenity, for shattering her mother's emerging self, that Meridian felt guilty from the very first, though she was unable to understand how this could possibly be her fault. When her mother asked, without glancing at her, "Have you stolen anything?" a stillness fell over Meridian and for seconds she could not move. The question literally stopped her in her tracks

(Walker,1976, 45).

She felt sad because she was the reason her mother shouldered the responsibilities of motherhood and preoccupied with taking care of her and her siblings. This act considered one of the examples that breaks the stereotype of childhood, because a child by nature does not think about such matters. Meridian, despite her young age, reached this stage of thinking, which is remorse for stealing her mother's life. The philosopher and psychologist Jean-Jacques Rousseau considered one of the research scientists. His research was about to take care of the child and their upbringing and respect them. He became famous for a book called *Emile*, where he confirmed that children are logical and that their thinking not limited, as he said:" children are rational" (chapman, 2015)

As I mentioned earlier that during the childhood, the child enjoys, coddled, and family warmth, however, Alice Walker showed us a completely opposite example in the, section, where the lives of children are not important.

Bearing in her arms the bloated figure of a five-year-old boy who had been stuck in the sewer for two days before he raked out with a grappling hook. The child's body was so ravaged, so grotesque, so disgusting to behold, his own mother had taken one look and refused to touch him (Walker, 1976, 179)

Although, the childhood period considered one of the most important periods which the child receives care and attention from his parents, in this example we notice negligence and indifference to the life of the child. His body was stuck for more than two days without anyone asking about him. His little body deformed and swollen to the point that it became disgusting. Alice Walker provides us with another model in removing the stereotyped image of childhood through the story of this child, because while the child must enjoy his full rights and receive constant care and monitoring from his parents, the five-year-old child expresses the opposite image of childhood because he is the one who did not receive care and control, with evidence that he remained stuck in the sewers for days without caring for his life. This incident considered one of the most common accidents among black children because they did not have access to swimming pools that monitored like white children, so they forced to play in dangerous places that cause the loss of their lives and cause great damage to them. The philosopher John Locke confirms that children are weak and unable to think logically, as he said: "children are weak, vulnerable and incapable of providing for their own main tenancy" (Chapman, 2015). At a time when the child needs protection and care from parents or adults around him by observing his actions and behaviour and trying to keep him away from dangerous places because he is unaware of the meaning of danger, we note in this example the lack of concern for the child's actions, the lack of attention to him and the provision of the necessary care to protect him from the danger of the outside world. Thus, this example is a picture that supports the stereotypical image of childhood.

2.3 Selfhood: the changing face of selfhood

Self-concept or so-called self-formation, or self-identity, means that the feelings, sensations, perceptions, and thoughts of an individual about himself are himself or his identity. It is also the result of the human experience of the different phenomena and experiences that shape his emotions, thoughts, and perceptions. From the novel, Walker tries to show us an example of self-stereotype through the novel's characters; Meridian and Lynne, who did not value themselves and sought to break it.

"...methods of killing herself. She found it pleasantly distracting to imagine herself stiff and oblivious, her head stuck in an oven. Or coolly out of it, a hole through the roof of her mouth. It seemed to her that the peace of the dead was truly blessed, and each day she planned a new way of approaching it. Because of her growing reliance on suicide, the thought of it, she was able to function very well."(walker,1976, 63)

Meridian's idea of killing her son, made her terrified and returned in her decision to look for methods to kill herself and get rid of the melancholy thoughts that controlled her. For her, the peace of the dead blessed and comfortable instead of living at the mercy of her son, she thought about it for several days, which increased her desire to commit suicide and made her idea work well. Alice Walker explained to us that Meridian was a young black woman who was self-defeated, unaware of the importance of her identity, struggling with her bad ideas, patriarchal society, and white racial discrimination. Which made her lose her soul and neglect her body to become paralyzed.

“Meridian felt as if her body, growing frailer every day under the stress of her daily life, stood in the way of a reconciliation between her mother and that part of her own soul her mother could, perhaps, love. She valued her body less, attended to it less, because she hated its obstruction.” (Walker,1976, 88)

But this was not the end after her internal struggle with herself and with the disease, Meridian decided to put her son for adoption. She begins to struggle to discover herself and start her life anew, throwing herself into the civil rights movement, studying in college and escaping the stereotypes applied to her from her patriarchal society. As well as her lack of faith in God and the strict traditions of her ancestors, and the experiences she went through from childhood to adolescence, then being a mother at a young age who abandoned her son, also a divorced woman in a fanatical African-American society, made her an independent woman aware of her identity after she was a week, poor and self-broken young woman. Dr. Benny Mathew pointed out in his article titled” Return of the Repressed: The Emergence of the Black female (Womanist) Self in Alice Walker's *Meridian*” that Deborah McDowell says: "Meridian transcends the boundaries of the female gender to embrace more universal concerns about the individual autonomy, self-reliance and self-realization." (Mathew,2021, 46). Also, Dr. Benny claims that walker sought to highlight the number of experiences that the Protagonist “Meridian” went through by making efforts to find her identity and develop herself as an individual and as a female to fight her society that demands the disregard of self-freedom and individuality.

As I mentioned earlier, the selfhood consists of a set of sensations, thoughts, and perceptions. A person can progress in his life and realize his identity, or destroy himself and return to square one. For example, the journey of self-discovery of the black African-American woman in the novel.

"A voice that cursed her existence—an existence that could not live up to the standard of motherhood that had gone before. It said, over and over, until she would literally reel in the streets, her head between her hands: Why don't you die? Why not kill yourself? Jump into the traffic! Lie down under the wheels of that big truck! Jump off the roof."(Walker,1976, 83)

Meridian HILL, after she sent her son away from her and submitted him for adoption, she thought that she would rest and start a journey of self-discovery and the pursuit of her dreams, but this decision made her life worse for a while, and she felt guilty all the time towards her son. Her conscience blamed her and cursed her for her action because she was not worthy of motherhood, and he kept telling her that until she walked in the streets afraid of this voice, the voice that came from inside ordering her to commit suicide and die to get rid of her guilt, he asked her to sacrifice herself to fix her mistake. Meridian wanted to resist and suppress the voice inside her, to convince herself that she had done the right thing and saved the life of the little boy, even the nightmares in which she saw her son crying, suffering, and asking for help from his mother, who was not by his side had also ignored her. What terrified her so much was that the voice hated her and said bad things about her. So, her conscience cannot stand her anymore with these actions. This woman tried to immerse herself in her studies at Saxon College to forget what was happening to her and focus on things more important than spiritual decadence for her. Alice Walker says in this novel "She was not to pause long enough to respond to this spiritual degeneration in herself "(84). I thought that Walker wanted to show us the painful path taken by Protagonist" Meridian "; the Black Woman to discover herself and seek to develop her through the suffering and pain she experienced by sacrificing her son Rundi. And how the stereotype of black women and motherhood by the principles and traditions of their ancestors transcended by her, namely to be a nurturing mother, a sacrificer subject to patriarchy without dreams, goals and with lost identities. Deborah E. McDowell says in his article under the title of "": The Self in Bloom: Alice Walker's *Meridian*" that Toni Cade argues that the individual must take responsibility for his bad decisions and accept their consequences, work to correct mistakes and follow the truth. "You find yourself in destroying illusion, smashing myths ...being responsible to some truth, to the struggle ..." (Cade,1981, 266).

Internal psychological conflict, collapse and attempted suicide were not limited to the African-American woman Meridian, but also to her white American friend Lynne.

" The boys were as courteous and shy as ever. Truman was not at home very much and when he was home, he did not speak to her. Some nights when she became lonely to the point of suicide"... (Walker,1976, 156)

Lynne is a white woman who survived the rape; as well as an anti-racism activist in the civil rights movement, a friend of Meridian and Truman, who became her husband for several time. Lynne's white skin colour in a black society made her the heart of racism, as her body was sacrificed to black desire. When she raped by her friend Tommy Odds, she felt guilty and ashamed that she had caused him to lose his hand, and that all this was due to her own race who raped so many black girls, so she thought she deserved everything that happened to her. This is what made Tommy feel obligated to take revenge to his mothers, sisters in society and rape her, this intense desire that swept him to take revenge on her made this American girl feel with the power of black. Odds not only raped Lynne but also told his other friends and embarrassed her in front of them. As another feeling, during her husband Truman's absence from home, she felt pain, collapse in silence and tried to commit suicide, only to ignore it and rest. Lynne was not like Meridian, who was freed from Truman's narcissism and manipulation, but sought to discover herself. Rather, she felt pain at the loss of Truman, who was everything to her, offering herself to him for nothing to finally leave her. She remained silent on her right to show justice and condemn her rapist Tommy Odds to forgive him from the beginning. Dr. Abha Shukla Kaushik claims in his work that just as Meridian and young black women raped, Lynne and young women of her sex will pay the price..." thus if Meridian is exploited for being black, Lynne has to pay the price of being white "(Kaushik, nd, 5). Walker also tried to show us through womanism that not only black women suffered and oppressed, but even white women had a share in the face of reverse racial discrimination.

2.4 Sis-Motherhood: The sympathetic tale of sisterhood as a substitute for motherhood

Women of different races and cultures have suffered from various forms of oppression, discrimination, and neglect. The sisterhood came as a result of the inability of African-American motherhood to play its role to make women able and support each other to survive, confront discrimination and inequality. In *Reconstructing Womanhood, Reconstructing Feminism WRITINGS ON BLACK WOMEN* book, the poet Kay said that:

Sisterhood is Powerful. Once we see
that light reflects our various colours;
when we feel complexity clear as an orange sun
(Macauley, 2005, xii)

The relationship between the protagonist and the other friendly personality considered as an example or symbol of sisterhood, when providing support and assistance to each other during days of suffering, racial discrimination, and oppression. The difference in skin colour, religion or race was not a problem in the sisterhood and motherhood relationship, but rather an incentive for both to fight racism and sexism. From this we conclude that brothers have an important and prominent role in fighting the unjust society and resisting stereotypes within the fanatical patriarchal society, as Dr. Nefnouf said in his doctoral thesis that: “This successful model of the sisterhood depended on the unification of their problems and differences and their shared stubbornness” (Nefnouf, 2022, 120). The term Sis-Motherhood is a new synthesis invented and explained in detail by Dr. Nefnouf Ahmed Seif Eddine in his thesis.

Through the concept and principles of womanist approach, Walker showed us that sisterhood and motherhood evolved, rose to another level and was able to overcome the barriers of racism, classism, and sexism. On the other hand, Dr. Nefnouf also added that: “that sisterhood is possible and capable of performing miracles which is represented by the setting up of the other to reduce racism, religious and male oppression ” (Nefnouf, 2022, 120)

The Afro-American writer Alice Walker used sisterhood in many of her works to highlight the power of sympathy and union formed between protagonist and the other friendly character which is sisterhood to be an alternative to motherhood in resisting stereotypes, and this is what creates for us a new sense that sisterhood can be better and close to motherhood under the so-called innovation relationship "Sis-Motherhood" It was coined by Dr. Nefnouf Ahmed Seif Eddine, who invented it and used it for the first time in his doctoral thesis.

The sisterhood between Meridian and Lynne was special and different. According to the Black feminist scholar Auder Lorde declares through the thesis under the title of *YOU AND ME WILL NEVER PART: A STUDY OF BLACK Women's BEST FRIENDSHIPS*:

“At this point in time, were racism to be totally eradicated from those middle range relationships between Black women and White women, those relationships might

become deeper, but they would still never satisfy our particular Black woman's need for one another, given our shared knowledge and traditions and history" (Shambly, 2012, 5)

Meridian is an Afro-American black woman who survived illness and recovery from rape herself, and who tried to rise again to discover herself and leave her mark inside and outside society. On the other hand, Lynne was a white woman with a weak personality because she always felt like a ticking time bomb within a black society and a source of racism. She blamed herself for the rape of black girls by the boys of her community, also did not even bother to develop herself and impose her presence. When Meridian and Lynne first met, the former fell in love with the latter because of her passion and kindness. " 'Meridian Hill,' I said, starting to laugh, because I liked her and because sure was eyeball deep in her greens. They were so healthy they flashed in the sun, like they'd been greased." (92), Which made Meridian be her friend and like her sister.

"(Meridian would sometimes, in the afternoons, read poems to Lynne by Margaret Walker, and Lynne, in return, would attempt to cornrow Meridian's patchy short hair), they hungered after more intricate and enduring patterns. Sometimes they talked, intimately, like sisters." (Walker, 1976, 164)

So that their relationship develops after that, and their sisterhood become close to motherhood, both were active in the civil rights movement that seeks to promote equality between black and white women and to achieve the demands of black women. Despite the different colour and race of Meridian and Lynn they worked in the same movement to achieve the same demands for being victims of racial discrimination. "They've been here a week, and I've already been out canvassing voters with Lynne. "I like her." (91).

From our perspective, we see that Alice Walker tried to highlight the sis-motherhood relationship that formed between Meridian and Lynn and its role in breaking stereotypes that black and white society is not united. And to prove that the relationship of sisterhood and motherhood that unites them was able to challenge both societies despite their differences, as Dr. Nefnouf said: "*It can be said that sisterhood and motherhood, because each completes the other according to their needs, had a significant role in reducing the racist and compulsive problems on the part of the male and racial society.*" (Nefnouf, 2022, 121).

Delores is an African-American black girl who is a friend of Meridian and Nelda, who have been playmates since childhood, used to spend time and study together. She had a strong and bold

personality that enabled her to join the civil rights movement with Meridian and became “another movement worker” (77). Delores is the biggest supporter of Meridian's decisions always right or wrong. This encouraged Meridian to take her every time to confront Mrs. Hill to convince her that her daughter had the ability and talent to attend the prestigious Saxon Women's College. “She was to have—if she wanted it—a chance to go to college.” (77), when Meridian’s mother refused to enrol her daughter in college, Delores prompted to convince her friend to rebel against her mother’s decisions in favour of her friend Meridian to discover herself. “No matter what your mother says,” Delores continued, “just remember she spends all her time making prayer pillows.” (79)

Through our previous analysis, we found that the relationship between Meridian and her friend Delores went beyond the boundaries of sisterhood to reach another level close to motherhood, when Delores insisted on the rebellion of Meridian against her mother, who refused to complete her daughter’s academic career in order to keep and care for her son Eddie Jr. We also notice here a kind of stereotypes in the black motherhood relationship that forces a woman to stay in her home and raise her children by sacrificing her studies and dreams, which prompted Delores to seek to break down this type of stereotypes. According to the concept of Womanism, she believes by doing that she will help her friend achieve her ambitions even if it means sacrificing with an innocent young child.

Through these events, Alice Walker tried to show us how to be sismotherhood between individuals of the same race. Dr. Nefnouf confirms that: “SisMotherhood has a significant role in reducing racism, ethnic-religiosity, as well as the modernity of the same race” (121)

The mysterious Wile Chile, a reclusive, rape victim and one of the black children who abandoned from birth, grew up in an environment devoid of the emotions that created in a natural environment usually between individuals, such as motherhood, sisterhood, and friendship... She forced to take responsibility for herself despite her young age as she suffered to survive in a cruel society that does not have mercy on the week. This girl reaped her daily food from the garbage" she would be seen scavenging for food in the garbage cans, and when called to, she would run "(29).

Meridian heard of Wile Chile and her suffering for the first time, through one of her neighbours while convincing Meridian voters to join and support the civil rights movement. The story of this little girl affected Meridian and stirred the feelings of sisterhood and motherhood, and soon begins to search for her, although she tried to avoid her and escape from her. Meridian did not give up and sought to find her and help her to improve her life and put an end to the misery she lives by cleaning

her, changing her clothes, feeding her and finding her safe shelter" she brought her onto the campus with a string around her arm ;when Wile Chile tried to run Meridian pulled her back"(30) .After Meridian brought Wile Chile to the Saxon campus, she was acting in a barbaric and inappropriate manner with the morals of a student living on campus " At dinner Wile Chile upset her tablemates with the uncouthness of her manners. Ignoring their horrified stares she drank from the tea pitcher, and put cigarette in her cup. She farted, as if to music, raising a thigh"(30). This prompted the house mother to tell Meridian that Wile Chile was not her responsibility and that she should expelled because of her disgraceful character that is not worthy of Saxon College students "She must not stay here "(30). Despite all Meridian's attempts to seek another refuge for this girl, she rejected, and because of this Wile Chile managed to escape to regain her freedom and remove her burden from Meridian's shoulders, but she died in the street while escaping by a speeding driver.

After discussing and analysing the events that took place in the life of this child, we concluded that there was an accumulation of a mixture feelings of sisterhood and motherhood between the two characters that mentioned above, where Meridian supported Wile Chile in her ordeal and held herself responsible for her care, even though she was of bad character and because she was a victim of male oppression. Through our past gains, the black community holds women responsible for their rape and the mistakes resulting from the irresponsible actions of males, so Meridian tried to break this stereotype about the ancient black ancestors through her great support for the cause of Wile Chile to become after her death a public opinion issue in the face of stereotypes that black African American women were victims of it.

Alice Walker embodied the importance of Sis-Motherhood through the main character Meridian and the child friend character Wile Chile of the same race. This is one of the principles enshrined in Womanism, which is that women support each other, also the Sis-Motherhood relationship was a contribution to the recovery of the girl Wile Chile from her tragic previous life. Dr. Nefnouf prove to us what we said on this point: "Sismotherhood, which would have been a point of healing for her from the previous trauma" (Nefnouf,2022, 121). Meridian wanted to be the turning point in Wile Chile's life and forget her pain by helping her and standing by her.

2.5 Womanhood: The strong Black woman

The black society has developed a fixed traditional image, which is also a kind of stereotype of black African American women, represented in the fact that they are weak and have no future in study and work, and even think about their dreams and achieve their ambitions. Rather, she must

stay at home, take care of her children, and carry out her husband's orders. Delia Jarrett -Macauley noted in her book *Reconstructing womanhood, Reconstructing feminism* that Claudia Jones wrote:

“In the film, radio and press, the Negro woman is not pictured in her real role as breadwinner, mother and protector of the family, but as a traditional ‘mammy’ who puts the care of children and families of others above her own”

(Macauley, 2005, x)

Black women struggled for self-respect, status, and invisibility and to change that traditional stereotype.

“Meridian she was doing a good thing: typing, teaching illiterates to read and write, demonstrating against segregated facilities and keeping the Movement house open when the other workers returned to school.” (Walker, 1976, 77)

Meridian was not weak even in her illness and collapse after abandoning her son, but woke up to get back on her feet and face her fanatical society, so Truman admired her.

“I’ve never understood your illness, the paralysis, The breaking down ... the way you can face a tank with absolute calm one minute and the next be unable to move. I always think of you as so strong, but look at you!”

“I am strong, actually,” said Meridian” (Walker, 1976, 26)

From a young age, Meridian wanted to study and achieve her dreams, and she even wanted to volunteer in liberation movements and politics, as well as the election, completely opposite to her mother. After her son was offered for adoption, she wanted to attend Saxon College and complete her academic career, and begin the journey of discovering herself and achieving her ambitions on the ground, despite her mother's rejection of her decisions and urging her to follow the path of her grandmothers and grandparents, former and old ancestors. Meridian’s mother refusal did not change her decision, but encouraged her to study at the prestigious Saxon Women's College, as well as joining the civil rights movement that served as another safe home for her. Elizabeth TORFS in her thesis “Alice Walker’s Womanism” that Alice Walker wrote about the civil rights movement that:

“If the Civil Rights Movement is “dead,” and if it gave us nothing else, it gave us each other forever. It gave some of us bread, some of us shelter, some of us

knowledge and pride, all of us comfort. It gave us our children, our husbands, our brothers, our fathers, as men reborn and with a purpose for living.”

(TORFS, 2008, 20)

Through the civil rights movement, she sought to achieve the demands of black women and regain their place in African-American society inside and outside it, where she succeeded and excelled in doing so. “She thought, perhaps it will be my part to walk behind the real revolutionaries—those who know they must spill blood in order to help the poor and the black and therefore go right ahead” (189). Meridian tried to penetrate the electorate and convince them, even buying food for those in need and trying to understand and help them.

“And so, she had left the North and come back South, moving from one small town to another, finding jobs—some better or worse than others—to support herself; remaining close to the people—to see them, to be with them, to understand them and herself, the people who now fed her and tolerated her and also, in a fashion, cared about her.” (Walker, 1976, 25)

Meridian worked as a writer, educator, and civil rights activist, shattering stereotypes about her ancestors and former grandmothers, and achieving success as a strong, independent woman within and outside African-American society. This is what made her think that she is more and stronger than she is. “At times she thought of herself as an adventurer. It thrilled her to think she belonged to the people who produced Harriet Tubman, the only American woman who’d led troops in battle.” (101)

Following Womanism approach to portraying black women as strong and perfect, Alice Walker worked to bring out the strength, determination, and determination of black women through the protagonist Meridian, who sought to break down the irrational stereotype of black women, as modern activist Claudia Jones also says:

“This traditional stereotype of the Negro slave mother, which to this day appears in commercial advertisements, must be combatted and rejected as a device of the imperialist to perpetuate the white chauvinist ideology that Negro women are ‘backward’, ‘inferior’ and the ‘natural slaves of others’”

(Macauley, 2005, x)

Also, Walker show us through Meridian character that she has the ability as black woman to find the beauty inside herself in the face of stereotypes.

Without the strength and determination of black African women in supporting the continuation of the Black Revolution under the shadow of political liberation movements, led by the Civil Rights Movement, these movements would not have been able to achieve several gains and victories for the benefit of the black African-American community.

“Why don’t you say something?” Anne-Marion’s voice, angry and with the undisguised urgency of her contempt, attempted to suppress any tone of compassion. Anne-Marion had said, “Yes, I will kill for the Revolution” without a stammer" (Walker,1976, 21)

Anne Marion is one of the active figures in the Civil Rights Movement who believes in the need to support the revolution to reach and achieve the goals of the movement. She had a bold, rebellious, and violent personality, her logical political ideas made her thirsty to support the revolution, believing that weapons were the only way to restore the rights of blacks looted from the white community, and that there was no point in following a peaceful approach. For her, she considers everyone who has peaceful ideas like her colleague in the Meridian movement to be fool. “Anne-Marion’s once lovely voice, beloved voice. “Like a fool!” the voice added, bitterly and hard (25).

Anne-Marion was known for her recklessness and enthusiasm to argue about the simplest issues and lose her nerves easily, once when a policeman inadvertently pushed her at a protest demonstration, she did not restrain herself and attacked him, and she could not always resist holding on to her expressive tongue to the extreme.

When she was attempting to be nonviolent and a police officer shoved her, she dug her nails into her arms to restrain herself, but could never resist sticking out, to its full extent, her energetic and expressive pink tongue. (Walker, 1976, 32)

This strong woman did not respond to preachers and was unsympathetic to church customs, as well as singing and praying in public places. “If she bowed her head during protest demonstrations it was to see if her shoelace had come untied, and if she sang it was a song muttered through clenched teeth.” (32).

From the strength of her faith in supporting her cause and gave herself to her and never cared. In doing so, readers believed in the power of the black woman's personality and her ability to demolish the stereotype of African-American women's vulnerability and male domination. According to the thesis of Elizabeth TORFS entitled by Alice Walker's Womanism, Walker says: "Womanists love struggle, which probably means that they do not give up to easily in their striving" (Torfs, 2008, p20). Through the character Anne Marion, Alice Walker introduced us to the concept of black feminism and how black women should build a personality independent of black men without exposed to him, according to Collins: "Womanism seemingly supplies a way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking black men." (Torfs, 2008, 19-20).

Despite the black society's restriction of women's freedom and practices, in *Meridian's* novel, Alice Walker highlighted the strength of black women in defying the odds and their determination to reach their goals. TORFS mentioned in her work that Walker says: "Women, in general, are not a part of the corruption of the past, so they can give a new kind of leadership, a new image for mankind." (Torfs, 2008, 25). Although black women within the African-American community have struggled to prove themselves, this has not discouraged them, but encouraged them to innovate in making the world realize their worth and power. "Her mother appeared huge, a giant, a woman who could trust in God, hold up her head, never look back, and get through everything, whether she believed in it or not." (112)

From a young age, she had the idea of becoming a teacher one day, so she stood tall in the face of her father, who opposed the idea of completing her studies, staying at home, and learning cooking for her future husband.

"She had come up against her father, who said she did not need to go to school because if she only learned to cook collard greens, shortbread and fried okra, some poor soul of a man might have her, and second, she had to decide to accept the self-sacrifice of her mother, whom she had worshiped."

(Walker, 1976, 114)

The continued suffering encouraged her to continue studying and not give up her dream, as well as to take care of and help her siblings in their studies. "Meridian's mother had finished school and, what was more, helped four of her sisters and brothers do the same. And she had become a schoolteacher, earning forty dollars a month, four months out of the year." (115)

Mrs. Hill succeeded in becoming a professor who made money and spent on her family members, including her husband and daughter Meridian. She had integrity and made her money in a legitimate way that she was tired of. she said: “I never stole, I was always clean, I never did wrong by anyone, I was never bad; I simply trusted in the Lord” (115). She believed in the Lord because He was her guide and the way of her salvation.

From our point of view, we concluded that Mrs. Hill served as a bridge between the traditional black woman and the civilized black woman, as she was characterized by the traditional ideas of the woman from her faith in God and that the black Afro-American woman should stay home after childbearing and be forced to take care of her husband and children, on the other hand, Mrs. Hill was able to succeed in continuing her studies and did not give in to the barriers set by the black male society as a black female.

According to the theory of Womanism, Alice Walker showed us through the character Mrs. Hill the possibility of a woman changing her thoughts and beliefs after exposure to trauma and life experiences over time. And to develop itself in order to break the traditional stereotype circulating about her and to keep pace with the liberation of black women from the constraints and domination of African-American society in particular and patriarchal society in general. Alice Walker mentioned in the work of Elizabeth Torfs that Coretta King says:

“The black woman has a special role to play. Our heritage of suffering and our experience in having to struggle against all odds to raise our children gives us a greater capacity for understanding both suffering and the need and meaning of compassion.” (Torfs, 2008, 25)

2.6 Friendship: Dismantling Friendship stereotype

True friendship lies in sharing the feelings of a person with his friend and helping him in the most difficult situations, the last comes from the friend who abandons his friend when he needs him, because the ideal friendship highlights the time of trouble. Friendship is based on a set of principles and close foundations such as love, cooperation, honesty, sincerity, understanding and trust. According to Czech sociological Encyclopedia Michaela Cerna said in her work: a reciprocal relationship connecting two or more persons based on mutual sympathy of non-sexual character” (Cerna, 2020, p17). On the other hand, the concept of true friendship differs from the meaning of

friendship that exists between members of the African-American community, where friendship in the black society was built on betrayal, hatred, suspicion, and jealousy.

“Anne-Marion had the audacity of the self-confident person who, against whatever odds, intends to succeed. Hers was an exploitative rather than an altruistic nature, and she would never have attempted penetrating Meridian’s reserve if she had not sensed behind it an intriguing and valuable inner life—an exploration of which would enrich her own existence. That she would learn to care for Meridian she did not foresee.” (Walker,1976, 28)

Anne Marion is one of Meridian's black friends, she had a bold, strong and sharp personality, her relationship with Meridian was characterized by suspicion and hatred and trying to exploit her in order to enrich her existence and reach her goal to prove her presence in the civil rights movement through the ideas of Meridian, even in the most vulnerable periods of Meridian's illness and collapse, she could not deal with her as a true friend and abandoned her, she did not know that her greed to exploit Meridian would force her to take care of her and take care of her during her recovery from paralysis. This is what made her realize belatedly that she could not bear the burden of this friendship, which requires her vigilant care.

“Anne-Marion watched the sun climb again to illuminate the edges of her hair, and knew she could not endure a friendship that required such caring vigilance. Meridian, for all her good intentions, might never be ready for the future, and that would be too painful. Anne-Marion could not continue to care about a person she could not save. Nor could she end a close friendship without turning on the friend.”

(Walker,1976, 28)

And since a friend cannot hurt his friend's feelings, Anne confessed seriously to Meridian that she was not obliged to love her and take care of her. “Meridian, I cannot afford to love you. Like the idea of suffering itself, you are obsolete.” (116)

Alice Walker showed us through the characters Meridian Hill and Anne Marion that the African-American friendship was always punctuated by a large gap containing selfishness and jealousy that in turn leads to the destruction of this close relationship It also confirms the theory of Womanism quest to prove her existence even if by abandoning and sacrificing her friend, and this explains how Anne Marion’s character shattered the stereotype of true friendship. As Michaela

Cerna said about friendship: “Human relationships, however, are not static, their general direction is forward – either a friendship lasts and is further cultivated or it is neglected and eventually ends (...) or it can be destroyed by misunderstandings and selfishness” (Cerna, 2020, 49)

Previously, the friendship between whites and blacks was minimal and if it happened to exist, it was always strange, tense, and unstable. This is what we will discuss in analysing and discussing the relationship of Tommy Odds and White Lynne.

“She was in the center of the racist Esquire painting, her white body offered up as a sacrifice to black despair. She thought of the force, the humiliation, the black power. These boys were no longer her friends; the sight of her naked would turn them into savages.” (Walker, 1976, 152)

Lynne was a white woman of American descent, with a passion for the black African-American community that she described as black art. “To Lynne, the black people of the South were Art.” (119). Lynne felt guilty and sinful for thinking of black society as an art created for her to enjoy and contemplate in all its details and beauty. She did not hold any grudges or racist ideas towards the black community in general, and Tommy Odds in particular.

“It is probably a sin to think of a people as Art.” And yet, she would stand perfectly still and the sight of a fat black woman singing to herself in a tattered yellow dress, her voice rich and full of yearning, was always—God forgive her, black folks forgive her—the same weepy miracle that Art always was for her.

(Walker, 1976, 120)

While active in the civil rights movement, she met many black friends, led by Tommy Odds, who held a special place in her heart. "Lynne loved Tommy Odds, she admired his NOTC. It was Lynne who designed and sewed together those silly badges that they wore, that gave them so much pride."(124). Suspicion has penetrated between Lynne and Tommy. Lynne whiteness caused Tommy's hand to be amputated, and their friendship deteriorated. That is what prompted Tommy to take revenge on Lynne, believing that he would avenge black women by raping and embarrassing her in front of their friends in the Civil Rights Movement. “What do you want?” she asked, looking—for the first time—downward toward the genitals of Hedge and Altuna and Raymond. They were looking sideways at her, as if embarrassed"(150)

According to our belief, friendship requires us to defend the friend we care about, and we always strive not to hurt and embarrass him, but this is what Raymond, Hadge and Altona did not adhere to. Although Lynne was a white woman and her friend Tommy was black, they worked in the same movement to achieve the same demands for the benefit of the African-American community, "between friends would be different" (142), but Tommy did not appreciate the value of this friendship that unites them and hurt Lynne to satisfy his self-ego. and his selfishness.

Alice Walker explained to us through the previous two characters and the type of friendship relationship between them, that she resisted the friendship stereotype between black and white societies, and that the individual has the characteristic of selfishness and self-arrogance that exploits it at the expense of his friend, Thus, despite the imperfection of the person, but Tommy Odds imposed the control and power of the black man on Lynne when he discovered her weakness and guilt towards him and the society in order to reach the degree of perfection and determine his identity and self.

A friend is usually happy and proud of his friend's success, also wishes him all the best and repayment, but the relationship between Miss Winter and Meridian was contrary to that.

"Miss Winter...when she learned meridian had been accepted as a student, she fought down her first feelings, which were base. She had enjoyed being the only person from her town to attend such a college; she did not wish to share this distinction". (Walker, 1976, 111)

Miss Winter was a reclusive, polite, and multitalented woman, especially musically. She is the only organist in the school and one of three black teachers on the faculty. She was best known for playing English and German hymns every morning on the Saxon campus. While teaching her music class, she deliberately revolted against Saxon traditions and classical music, insisting on teaching jazz, spirituality, and blues, many did not even think that she would survive and continue her teaching at Saxon College again because of her actions and stubbornness, but she endured it and survived herself. Miss Winter was a resident of the town of Meridian, and she was in contact with the Meridian family throughout her life. She was also one of the lucky ones to study and graduate from the prestigious Saxon women's college, who felt always proud of her superiority over the rest of the Afro-American girls, but soon these feelings changed when she learned of Meridian's enrolment and excellence in Saxon's college, this ignited the fires of jealousy within her and she felt frustrated that she used to be the only person from her town who attended Saxon

College, she never wanted to share that title even with her friend and neighbour Meridian. Michaela Cerna mentioned, according to Czech sociological Encyclopedia that: " Naturally, each friendship is unique, based on different details, but the core understanding of it as a concept stays the same."(Cerna,2020, 17)

Alice Walker praised through the concept of womanism and the relationship between both the characters Miss Winter and Protagonist Meridian that the friendship relationship is often impure and punctuated by grudges, jealousy, and selfishness as evident in the feelings and emotions of Miss Winter towards the success and superiority of Meridian despite the difficulties she faced. In doing so, she has broken the stereotype of a true successful friendship.

Conclusion

Concluding this chapter, African-American literature has long been a mirror of racial issues for black women. Many African-American writers have raced to raise these racial issues in order to awaken black women's awareness of the need to claim their rights and freedoms. Author Alice Walker created wonderful image about the power of African-American women in challenging black patriarchal society, by presenting the challenges and successes of black women. The main character of the novel was a vivid example of the fact that black women succeeded and how they immortalized their mark during the time of the novel, in addition to their struggle against various forms of racial discrimination to remove absolute stereotypes from their roots.

General Conclusion:

Previously, blacks suffered from various forms of racism and slavery that deprived them of their rights as members of American society. Black women have been victims of male violence and oppression, domestic violence, sexual abuse and forced marriage. This is what made her determined to challenge male domination and work to prove herself as an independent black female by joining the civil rights movement as an active and active female element in American society, to change the worldview and break absolute stereotypes about her.

African-American literature was unique in its distinctive style and themes that dealt with sensitive issues in society such as race, class, and male domination. During that period, African-American literary works varied, to shine among them the female element with his writings, the beauty of his literary style and its themes that study the experiences and challenges of black American women of African descent to gain respect to prove themselves and their identity as an individual inside and outside their society. These include writers Toni Morrison, Zora Neal Hurston, and writer Alice Walker; the inventor of black feminist theory “Womanism”, who seeks equality between black and white women. The winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for her acclaimed novel “*The Colour Purple*”, also the author of “*Meridian*”, which examines the reality of racial discrimination in America during the sixties and seventies. In addition, she focused on the impact of the role of a feminist element in the Civil Rights Movement and its achievements. This latest novel gained the attention of many critics, including African-American critics, and encouraged them to do many critical studies about it.

Our study aimed to address the idea of resisting stereotypes and their impact on members of the African-American society, especially black women, by showing their experiences and challenges in American society. In addition to focusing on the influence of the black feminist side on the uniqueness of African-American literature, and her activism in the Civil Rights Movement.

We argue that former Afro-American literature encouraged traditional stereotypes of blacks by portraying them as identityless and oppressed slaves, and highlighted the vulnerability and subordination of black women to patriarchal society. Over time, this literature evolved to change these absolute judgments and show the power of blacks, as well as the determination of black women.

We are confident that our study will serve as basis in future studies on the work of Alice Walker's *Meridian* can translated through other theories. Also, we believe that the end of our research will be a new the problematic beginning of a new study.

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Résumé :

L'expérience traumatisante de la femme Afro-Américaine avec l'esclavage, l'oppression et le racisme a suscité une autre bataille pour résister aux stéréotypes à long terme. La littérature afro-américaine était un moyen d'exprimer les expériences et la souffrance des femmes noires avec l'oppression pratiquée sur elles par la société américaine. Parmi les écrivains Afro-Américains, l'activiste Alice Walker ; l'auteur de *Meridian*, qui a examiné les luttes des femmes noires pour l'égalité et la liberté pendant le mouvement des droits civiques. À travers sa roman, Walker a mis en évidence une vision inverse des stéréotypes profondément enracinés des femmes Afro-Américaines. Cette recherche est divisée en deux chapitres, le premier propose la question de la résistance aux stéréotypes d'une approche féministe et met en lumière la littérature afro-américaine à l'apogée du mouvement des droits civiques. Le deuxième chapitre examine la résistance aux stéréotypes à travers le méridien d'Alice WALKER.

Mots-clés : Résister aux stéréotypes, *Méridien*, Oppression, Mouvement des droits civiques, Femme afro-américaine, Féminisme.

ملخص:

كانت تجربة المرأة الافروأمريكية مع العبودية، الاضطهاد والتمييز العنصري سببا في اثاره معركة أخرى مع مقاومة الصور النمطية على المدى الطويل. كان الأدب الافريقي الأمريكي وسيلة للتعبير عن تجارب ومعاناة النساء السود مع الاضطهاد الممارس عليهن من طرف المجتمع الأمريكي. من بين الكاتبات الامريكيات من أصل أفريقي الناشطة أليس وولكر مؤلفة رواية "ميريديان" حيث تناولت هذه الاخيرة نضالات النساء السود من أجل المساواة والحرية أثناء فترة حركة الحقوق المدنية. من خلال روايتها، سلطت وولكر الضوء على النظرة العكسية للصور النمطية المترسخة في أذهاننا عن النساء الأمريكيات من أصل أفريقي. تنقسم هذه الدراسة إلى فصلين؛ الفصل الأول يتطرق إلى قضية مقاومة الصور النمطية استنادا على نظرية النسوية السوداء، بالإضافة إلى تسليط الضوء على الأدب الإفريقي الأمريكي في أوج ازدهار حركة الحقوق المدنية. بينما يدرس الفصل الثاني مقاومة الصور النمطية من خلال رواية "ميريديان" لأليس وولكر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مقاومة الصور النمطية، ميريديان، الاضطهاد، حركة الحقوق المدنية، المرأة الأمريكية من أصل أفريقي، النسوية.