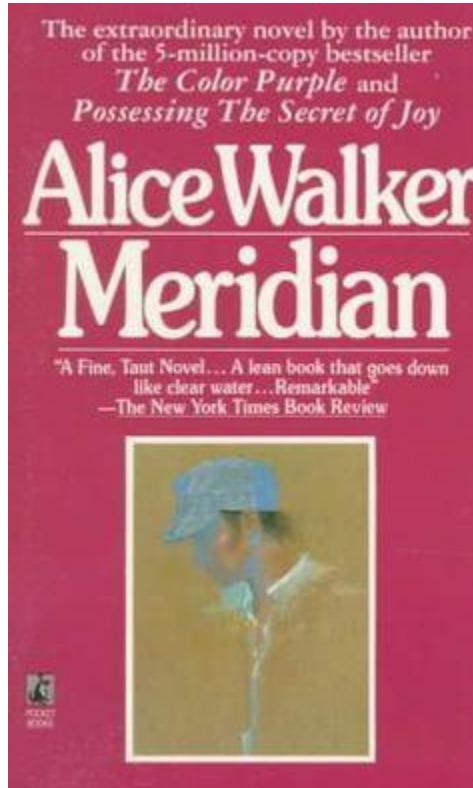


Celebration of Self in Alice Walker's *Meridian*

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Abstract

African American women novelists offer a glimpse into the interpretation of African American experience and the exposition of that reality. The authors use their native language and their literary convention to give different perceptions of the African experience. The women novelists explore the issues of freedom and equality which were denied to Blacks in the United States for a long time. Their text consists of the native accent present in Black speech. This takes the reader accurately into the experiences of the Blacks. Most of the themes in their novels include the examination of subjects related to African American culture, racism, religion, feminism, poverty, slavery, etc. They expressed the feeble voices of the Black women in

particular, in their novels. The authors of interest had double advantage of being a black and a woman in a racially discriminated society. Hence their writings were authentic in delineating the lives of the African American people, especially that of Black women. This paper studies and presents these aspects in the African American writer Alice Walker's works, particularly, in the *Meridian*.

Keywords: Alice Walker, *Meridian*, Black culture, Racial discrimination, Feminism, Black women

Introduction

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. It is rich in expressive subtlety and social insight, offering illuminating assessments of American identities and history. This literature explores the issues of freedom and equality long denied to Blacks in the United States, along with further themes such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery, and a sense of home, segregation, migration, feminism, and more. This writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues, and rap. Its oral culture is rich in poetry and appears in the African American tradition of Christian sermons, which make use of deliberate repetition, cadence, and alliteration. It has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects.

Alice Walker (1944-) belongs to the group of writers who write through personal experiences. Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, to Willie Lee and Minnie Tallulah Walker. Like many of Walker's fictional characters, she was a sharecropper's daughter and youngest of eight children. Alice grew up in an environment rife with racism and poverty, which, along with her passion for gender issues, remains a large part of her narratives. Walker started her writing career when she joined *Ms. Magazine* as an editor before moving to Northern California in the late 1970s.

Works of Alice Walker are certainly concerned with the liberation of all women-kind

from the culture of oppression. In her novels, Walker continues to express her wishes for wholeness, for those who have been suppressed, silenced and denied freedom. She captures the folklore, language, pain, spirit and memories of Afro-Americans only to weave them into a quilt of compassion that she spreads before the world. This philosophy of Walker makes her women characters celebrate their circumstances. It does not happen to them, they make it happen. They know that each of them is the creator of their own thoughts and states of mind. This does not mean ignoring the often painful reality of what happens, but understanding that they can choose their response to something at any given moment. So they celebrate “self” even in the worst conditions of life.

Meridian

Meridian (1976), one of her most celebrated novels, reflects her strong belief in the black womanist tenets. It tells the story of a black woman in a period of transition, the story of coming to consciousness and a subsequent development of self and search for authenticity. The novel is set in the times around 1960 when the African-American Civil Rights Movement aimed at overcoming racial discrimination against the African Americans and setting the stage for the claim and the granting of voting rights to the Blacks. The period saw important events and dates: The assassination of John. F. Kennedy in 1963; the famous speech of Martin Luther King “I Have a Dream” in 1963; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, or national origin; and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Alice Walker, who was herself a major activist working in the movement, in Mississippi, wrote various accounts out of her own life in the novel. The novel scales a historical field with political details.

Meridian in Real Life

The novel deals with Meridian, a black woman who is acted upon in real life. The title character Meridian is born into a lower middle class family. Her parents are educated and respectable. Meridian never receives the love and nurturing that children need from their parents. As a child, she resents her mother’s life of “sacrifice”, her piety, and her “tolerance shown to different beliefs outside the community”. (M 16) To Meridian, religion is a “withdrawal from the world”, a living in “constant awareness of death”. (M 16) When Mrs. Hill, Meridian’s mother asks the question, “Have you stolen anything?” this haunts the sensitive Meridian who “weeps

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and wishes that she had not been born to this already overburdened woman". (M 122) She grew up without much thought and planning, and being one of the six children, her mother raised her without much care. She was the one who had to take care of five younger brothers and sisters while their mother was away. She remembered her mother and the day she lost her. Her mother's love was withdrawn from her when she was thirteen. Her sense of alienation and isolation deepened in her and she accepted violence as the path to change.

Moves Backward in Time – Quest for Identity

The novel moves backward in time to Meridian's recent past and her mother's past to introduce their upbringing. The flashback mentions Meridian's experience with a revolutionary group in New York City. When they pressed her to answer the question "Will you kill for the Revolution?" with a positive "Yes", her womanly tenderness revolts. (M 26) She dissociates herself from the revolutionary group and asserts that "I'll go back to the people, living among them, like Civil Rights Workers used to do". (M 18) Preferring non-violence as a new approach to social reform she had "come back south...remaining close to the people to see them, to be with them, to understand them and herself". (M 31)

Meridian's quest for self-identity begins early, even before she is fully conscious of it. Meridian always remembers her early days in the funeral home when the owner of the house, George Daxter, would give her candy and money to abuse her. Her initial exposure to sex is still a nightmare with her. But this does not prevent her from acquiring a boy friend, Eddie. Meridian knows that her social standing in her society will be determined by her ability to attract and keep a boyfriend. As Meridian leaves on her dates, her mother teaches her how to deal with the man. After her engagement with the boy friend, she finds herself pregnant. Eddie, who is an attractive high school basket ball player, marries her. When Meridian becomes pregnant, she drops out of school to have the baby boy and awaits the birth of her son, but her husband remains in school in spite of his new role as husband and father since he is a male. They move to a small house near the school. Though her parents dislike her early marriage, they acknowledge that the boy friend has high aspirations. He continues his study and works overtime at a restaurant to support his small family. His parents welcome her into the family, spend time to know her and prepare for the baby's survival.

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Vile Sexual Relations

Sexual relations in *Meridian* are presented as vile. The early details of the period of her childhood and youth emphasize the quality of the black woman's life. As a young girl Meridian is innocent and loving. Her marriage to Eddie is an accident as her mother never tells her the truth about sexuality. Her mother, Gertrude Hill, only tells her to be sweet without specifying what she means. Her mother never uses the word "sex" and has told her nothing about what to expect from men and from sex. Mrs. Hill lacks concern about her daughter's morals. Having told her nothing, she expects her to do nothing. When Meridian leaves the house in the evening with her boyfriend, who takes her straight to the nearest lovers' lane or its equivalent, which in their case is the clump of bushes behind the city dump, her mother only cautions her to be sweet. Meridian does not realize that this is the euphemism for "keep your panties up and your dress down" (M 42), an expression she has heard and been puzzled by. While not enjoying sex, she has it as often as her lover wants it, sometimes every single night. She does not know that having sex could produce a pregnancy. This is the reason why her pregnancy comes as a total shock to her.

Marriage as a Sanctuary

Meridian, as a teenager, does not seriously think about the baby, who would disturb her lifestyle. She only knows that she does not want the baby. Even her love for Eddie starts to fade. Instead of being very grateful for her husband's kindness, she is oblivious to it. Her husband is unable to measure the width of her dreams. However, their marriage soon falls apart because she feels that to live merely as someone's wife means self-effacement which she with her sense of freedom cannot accept. Thus Meridian needs to exist meaningfully in society, in the larger context. So their marriage ends in divorce.

According to Meridian marriage is a "Sanctuary", something which has cut her off from the outer world. (M 62) Her physical experiences with Eddie are linked in her mind with those earlier experiences at the funeral home. The birth of their son sounds the alarm of the end of Meridian's married life. From the start, she links the child with slavery and dreams each night of ways to kill him. Walker describes the teenage Meridian's experience of motherhood as "slavery". (M 63) The thought of her inability to enjoy or endure the troubles of happy

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motherhood frightens her and creates a sense of guilt in her, leading her to entertain thoughts of suicide. Meridian leaves with Eddie because she can neither love him nor the baby. Meridian is just like her mother, who finds no pleasure in married life. Walker indicates that marriage can stifle an individual's growth if the man fails to be the right choice for the woman.

Meridian is not happy to have the child because she did not want it. Tradition imposes motherhood on a woman and encourages her self-sacrifice for the sake of her family and society. But Meridian finds the condition of motherhood simply suffocating. The plight of her own mother makes her see motherhood as "being buried alive, walled away from her own life, brick by brick". To her, maternal sacrifice is but another form of "slavery". She even curses herself for "shattering her mother's emerging self". (M 51) African American motherhood is traditionally viewed as a vehicle for preserving black heritage in the face of white cultural domination. But Meridian finds no fulfillment when she herself is entrapped into an early marriage and motherhood. But Meridian wants to get rid of her maternal bonds too, because they prevent her from realizing her personal and social self. The myth of black motherhood as a "sacred calling" is reversed in this novel. Meridian craves for freedom and feels as though something perched inside her brain was about to fly. Moreover, she does not want to rear her child in a society "where (black) children are not particularly valued". (M 174)

Break Away from Tradition

Meridian is caught in a dilemma as she struggles to break away from tradition, for socio-historical factors have cemented the mother-child bond strongly. After much conflict, she renounces her child and decides to study at Saxon College and to actively participate in the Civil Rights Movement. But she simultaneously feels guilty for her failure to reach "the standard of motherhood that had gone before". (M 91) The agony of such an inner conflict results in her illness from which she recovers after her reconciliation with her mother in a dream. She tells her: "Mama, I love you, Let me go". (M 125) Meridian gets back her lost strength and sets out alone in search of her identity and social justice for her people.

Meridian rejects the role of the happy mother, recognizing that happiness is merely an empty sign that accompanies the equally empty role of a young pregnant wife. In the chapter

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entitled “The Happy Mother”, happiness does not apply in any way to the emotional state, but the conventional association of happiness with motherhood precludes her ability to state otherwise. When Meridian says ‘no’ to motherhood, she offends and loses her own mother, her family and her community. She feels guilty for leaving her child, and cannot adequately explain why she must. By shedding her prescribed happy mother role and standing up for her own needs, Meridian takes the first step towards “becoming a revolutionary petunia”. (M 2) She stops living according to the norms established by racial and sexual society, learns to discover her own identity, as she must, in order to survive. This discovery is her first rebellious step in order to launch her voyage towards self-celebration.

Free from Mythic Image of Motherhood?

Walker suggests that it is not easy for Meridian to break the outer frame and to free herself from the mythic image of motherhood which culture and society have imposed upon her. The chapter "Battle Fatigue" analyses Meridian's confrontation with her mother and her inner conflict. Mrs. Hill shows her disapproval of Meridian's desire to pursue education at Saxon College. This opportunity is given to her by a white family in Connecticut. Besides, Mrs. Hill never agrees to Meridian's involvement and participation in the Civil Rights Movement and says:

As far as I'm concerned you've wasted a year of your life, fooling around with those people. The papers say they are crazy. God separated the sheep from the goats and the black folks from the white. And me from anybody that acts as foolish as they do. (M 81)

Civil Rights Movement

Mrs. Hill has a superficial assessment of the Civil Rights Movement and she wants Meridian to opt for what she has chosen for her. She says “I just don't see how you could let another woman raise your child. It is just selfishness. You ought to hang your head in shame. I have six children”, she continues self-righteously, “though I never wanted to have any, and I have raised everyone myself”. (M 86) Apparently, Meridian's attachment to the Civil Rights Movement is just a justification to herself, in order to avoid the role of the mother.

Meridian knows very well that she must leave her child for his own good. She decides to leave him instead of treating him like a burden. She does not want the child to grow up with the same feelings of guilt. Meridian has not sacrificed her life for her child, but she is trapped between her aspirations towards self-fulfillment and the regret and guilt of leaving her child. Even if she reaches any position in society, the fact that she has given her child up for adoption is absolutely a sour truth.

Freedom from Gender Role

Meridian frees herself from her gender role, and begins to explore the possibilities of her growth, beginning with her education at Saxon College. Meridian meets Anne-Marion when she goes to Saxon College. While campaigning in the local neighbourhood for voters, Meridian meets a pregnant and homeless teenager called the Wild Child. Meridian takes the girl into her custody, bathes and feeds her. The Wild Child, however, escapes into the street, is hit by a car, and dies. Meridian, Anne-Marion, and other students and neighbourhood residents carry the Wild Child's casket onto the campus grounds. The president of the college does not allow them to use the college chapel for the funeral service. In the night, students riot and chop down the Sojourner, the school's iconic magnolia tree.

Sojourner Tree

At Saxon, Meridian has the opportunity to preserve her maternal heritage, as symbolized by the Sojourner Tree, which was the largest magnolia in the country, planted by the slave Louvinie living on the Saxon plantations. Louvinie had been loved by her master's children for her ability to tell frightening stories. Yet after a boy with a weak heart died upon hearing one, Master Saxon decreed that Louvinie's tongue be removed. Seeing her tongue ground under the heel of Master Saxon, Louvinie mutely pleaded for her tongue because she holds an ancestral belief that:

Without one's tongue in one's mouth or in a special spot of one's own choosing, the singer in one's soul was lost forever to grunt and snort through eternity like a pig. (M 33-34)

Miraculously, the tree prospered after Louvinie buried her smoked tongue beneath it: Other slaves believed it passed magic. They claimed the tree could talk, make music, was sacred to birds and possessed the power to obscure vision. Once in its branches, a hiding slave could not be seen. (M 34) Within the context of the novel, the tree becomes a rallying spot for the students of Saxon. When the college's administration announces that the Sojourner will be torn down so that a new music building can be erected, Meridian and her fellow students chain themselves to the tree in protest. Yet ironically enough, after the Wild Child is buried in a nearby cemetery, the students riot and in the process hew down the tree. Meridian's protestations are not strong enough to deter the angry students, and so again, Meridian stands alone in her defense of the black woman's heritage.

Life in Saxon College

Saxon College symbolizes white values that have been seeped into the thinking of middle class blacks. The college was a training ground for capitalists and for "ladies". Meridian, Anne Marion and other friends decided that they have two enemies: "Saxon, which wanted them to become something - ladies that was obsolete, and the larger, more deadly enemy, white racist society". (M 95) Meridian despises capitalism and by her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and the Atlanta Movement she seeks social justice and wants black women to be accepted as equal with the whites. Yet other situations arise at Saxon to remind her of her life prior to College. Once again, she is the object of an older man's sexual advances. When she discovers that her scholarship will not cover all of her expenses, she goes to work for a black professor, Mr. Raymond, typing letters. In exchange for sitting in his lap, he would give her various "goodies": "Tins of tuna, bags of mints and Baby Ruths, dime-store combs and even, sometimes, typing paper". (M 109)

At Saxon College, she stubbornly resists the growth- retarding concepts of ladyhood and chastity. The Civil Rights activists expect her to be the strong supportive silent black sister who will not hesitate to murder for their cause. Meridian, who must carve out for herself, an independent niche, rejects all the tempting images that falsely promise of safety and security but actually represent death-in-life. While still at Saxon, she begins to neglect her own body, "she hated its obstruction". (M 97) She forgets to eat, suffers from fainting spells and blurred vision

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which result in a coma. In this weakened state, she begins to experience “ecstasy”, a mystical “dying-into-life” which involves a repudiation of the body’s claims for those of the spirit. (M 98) So, Meridian tells Truman that, she has volunteered to suffer until her people are delivered from oppression.

Meaning in Life

Meridian begins to ponder about giving some meaning to her life as an individual. She is awakened to her true self, the moment she learns about the Civil Rights Movement. Trapped in her own lethargy and lack of direction, Meridian has no idea how to break through her state. But by the grace of God a bomb blast does, what the community and family have failed to do. Provoked by this violence, she longs to become a volunteer. She protests along with the other volunteers against the town’s segregated hospital facilities and participates in the freedom march to the church, in singing freedom songs and keeping a midnight vigil. In a melee the police knock her down, and she is trampled by the people running back and forth. Meridian’s work in the Civil Rights Movement, which involves typing and voter-registration, results in various confrontations with the police. During one of the protests, she is beaten by a sheriff and even imprisoned. The sheriff, representative of both gender and race discrimination grabs her by the hair and someone begins punching her and kicking her in the back. However she does not even scream except very intensely in her own mind.

Meridian studies very hard, and searches for the “extraordinary”. (M 90) At Saxon College, she has an excellent social and academic reputation. As it is difficult for her to study when others are beaten and jailed, she joins the Atlanta Movement in her second year. Before journeying to Atlanta, Meridian has vowed not to engage in sex. She makes sacrifices for the movement, but her dedication is in question as she cannot commit herself to kill for the movement. Meridian, as a result, feels more and more ostracized from the movement until she is compelled to work and live among the mostly poor and impoverished rural communities of the South. Meridian lives among these people and helps out in all sorts of ways from washing dishes to gardening. Meridian’s selfless service, suffering and perseverance are like opportunities offered for her atonement and open doors for Meridian to attain self acceptance. When Meridian is well again, she rises out of her sick bed and goes out into the future with a lot of confidence

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and self assurance. Finally, she is able to forgive herself and learns to love and accept herself for who she is.

Meridian-Truman Relationship

Walker focuses on the Meridian-Truman relationship to show further development of her protagonist's personality. Truman is described as "the vain, pretentious" activist. (M 99) In the course of their struggle for human rights she falls in love with him and conceives his child. But Meridian's rapture of love does not last long. Truman gives her up for a white woman, Lynne Rabinowitz. Though Meridian feels deeply for him, their relationship gets irreparably damaged. She decides to have an abortion rather than tell him of her pregnancy:

On her way to have an abortion she saw them riding across campus in her father's new red car. From a distance, they both looked white to her, that day. (M 112)

Truman marries Lynne in order to enjoy special privileges in white America. When Truman sees her again, she feels very embarrassed to see him dating the exchange students. In fact, this seems to her strange and unfair. He dated them because their "colour made them interesting - made her ashamed as if she were less". (M 103) He approached her, put his arms around her shoulders and said, "You walk with your head down. It should be up, proud and free". (M 103) Meridian felt disgusted at his words. She asked him whether freedom, liberty, equality could cover all his beliefs, and in her mind she wished to confront him about the exchange students but she never does because she has a belief also, a realization that nobody wants white girls except for their empty heads and white bodies.

Rising Above Sexual Weakness

The event proves crucial to Meridian's quest for self. She realizes that to discover her real self, she has to rise above her sexual weakness. When Truman leaves Meridian without explanation, she feels no obligation to tell him of the child he would have fathered. Meridian's abortion is a painful experience:

Later, as the doctor tore into her body without giving her anesthesia and she saw stars because of the pain, she was still seeing them laughing, carefree, together. It was not that she wanted him anymore, she did not. It enraged her that she could be made to endure such pain, and that he was oblivious to it. (M 112)

The relationship of Meridian with Truman, however, does not end with the abortion of his child. They remain friends and Meridian becomes a source of advice and comfort to Truman, even after she rejects Truman's attempts to have any relationship with her. Lynne also maintains an ongoing relationship with Meridian, especially after her child, Camara, dies. Though nobody comforts her after the loss of her baby, Rundi, and her later abortion, she is now able to see another mother's pain. Meridian functions like a mother to both Lynne and Truman; as they suffer heartbreak and disappointment, they seek guidance from her.

Freeing from the Bondage

Through reaching out to the two people who have hurt her, Meridian is able to forgive and in turn free herself from the bondage that has held her all along. This is reminiscent of the scene in which Miss Winters plays the mother figure to Meridian in Saxon College when Meridian gets sick. She forgives Meridian as though on behalf of her biological mother who has thus far not forgiven Meridian. Miss Winters comforts Meridian, first after Meridian fails to recite a speech and later when she is very ill at Saxon College. In these moments, women are seen giving each other support in challenging times. By stepping into the shoes of Meridian's mother, Miss. Winters helps Meridian attain a forgiveness that she needs to spur her towards personal forgiveness and growth.

Once freed from the possibility of unwanted pregnancies and the sexual advances of men around her, she is able to become a mother figure for all the children she encounters. Just as she attempted to care for the Wild Child when she first arrived at Saxon, Meridian adopts the cause of defending the black children she meets during her work in the Movement. Meridian is depicted facing a tank in a small Mississippi town as she demands that black children be allowed to view a visiting sideshow. The show consists of the sham, mummified remains of a white

woman, Marilene O'Shay. Though the show holds nothing of worth, Meridian defends that right of black children to satisfy their curiosity, as the white children have done.

Final Liberation

Abortion and sterilization symbolize her final liberation from the bondage of sex and motherhood. Freed from the compulsiveness of traditional role-playing and awakened to the complexity of living, Meridian passes from her feelings of inadequacy and guilt to a new sense of self-confidence. She now wants to meet Truman on equal terms. Within the fabric of the complex relationship of Meridian, Truman and Lynne, Walker thus how the forces of racism and sexism work together to humiliate the black woman who, in order to be fully human, has to face the challenges of life with courage and strength. She also shows how forgiveness can bring all people together.

Thus her participation in the Civil Rights Movement is also a part of her celebration of the blacks' toleration power, potentialities and an effort to launch her journey in order to reach her own horizon. Further, she continues her journey in spite of the many hardships in her life even more colourfully. Due to her participation in the Civil Rights Movement she gets a scholarship for her further studies at Saxon college. Here, she becomes familiar with the world and with its ways. Like many other black women, Meridian has managed to escape the symbolic death of being killed by patriarchal standards and petrified into a perfect woman, leaving behind the phrases related to male domination, such as 'Devoted Wife', 'Obedient Daughter' and 'Adoring Mother'. She even goes a step further and escapes becoming 'Enchanted Lover' to Truman's 'Conquering Prince'. Meridian not only fights for her celebration, but she struggles for the celebration of all her people, especially the Black women, who are made victims of the double affliction of racism and sexism. But her struggle with these traumas of colour and sex is different from the general norm.

Quilt with Love

Meridian is a believer in the weaving of a quilt with love, passion and togetherness for all long-suffering people. Her life gives a message that it is only through love, peace and non-violence one can transform slavery into liberty, and hell into heaven. Though, initially Meridian

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agrees with her friends, “non-violence has failed to bring Revolution”. (M 31) She would prefer to die than kill anybody for freedom. She knows that it may be necessary to kill to free black and poor people but she can’t imagine a society created through bloodshed and dead bodies, in which people can be free and as a spiritual whole celebrate themselves. Unable to kill, Meridian offers herself as a martyr for her people’s salvation. Shortly after each march that she leads, Meridian loses consciousness and becomes paralyzed. She is ready to die for her people, because she also feels unworthy to live like a slave. But gradually she is transformed from victim to a responsible leader. She no longer needs to punish herself physically, have fits and go blind because she acts for her people. At this phase of life, she learns to value her own life, and wants to find a community to live with rather than a company of names to be listed among.

Concern for Black Society

In the final section of the novel, Meridian’s quest for self turns into a great concern for the wholeness of the black society. After Meridian has discovered her own strength and freedom as a woman, she can relate herself to her community at large. Her warm mellowed spirit born through suffering rings in the words she writes:

There is water in the world for us
brought by our friends
though the rock of mother and god
vanishes into sand and we,
cast out alone to heal
and re-create ourselves. (M 213)

She finds the ultimate meaning of self in her commitment to transform the present social system for the benefit of all black people. The transformation she insists on is possible not through violence but through a spiritual awakening. Her memory songs will be her significant contribution to the revolution because it “is the song of the people, transformed by the experiences of each generation, that holds them together, and if any part of it is lost, the people suffer and are without soul”. (M 201)

Love and Compassion for Her Son

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Meridian's mind often goes back to her son. Her heart is roused to compassion for her son. Her heart, however, refuses to beat faster. Meridian's heart has been moved to life but not to emotions. She demonstrates that she has found her identity in her environment and attained selfhood. She now has a strong and stable heart which she calls "a Fucking heart of stone". (M 223) Meridian is now able to warm up to life as expressed in her poem:

I want to put an end to guilt
I want to put an end to shame. (M 224)

Journey from Powerlessness to Empowerment

Meridian recovers and is strong enough, and ready to move on. She has nothing to pack as she owns nothing. Her inner growth with her newly found sense of identity is evident even on her physical self. Her hair has grown again. She has returned to the world cleansed of sickness. This new Meridian has grown out of the old. This new part of her is sure and ready, even eager for the world. Meridian has allowed ideas, no matter where they came from to penetrate her deeply and she gets to affirm that her value is in her individuality and not being in the company of other people. She has divested herself of dependence on the old notions of what a good woman ought to be.

Thus the novel discusses the journey of Meridian from powerlessness to empowerment and from a docile and submissive black girl to a fighter and a pioneer of black women's liberation. Meridian celebrates her capacity, will power and her own existence by registering a protest against every kind of exploitation and anarchy. Even after facing so many storms in her life, she does not perish but continues her voyage in the dark stormy night to find a new and clear horizon of her own, to fly with her own wings.

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