

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 11 : 8 August 2011

ISSN 1930-2940

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Female Circumcision: Myth and Fact in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*

Gulab Singh, Ph D.



Alice Walker

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Walker

One of the targets of Alice Walker's critical exposure has been the taboo territory of female circumcision being practiced in a number of African communities. Alice Walker is a crusader against this inhuman practice and uses all her means as an artist to attack this custom with a view to freeing the society from this scourge. This is evident from the way she lays bare the horrors of this brutal sexist practice in her fiction, prose writings and in a documentary which she prepared in collaboration with London-based Indian film maker, Pratibha Parmar. This film, *Warrior* Language in India www.languageinindia.com

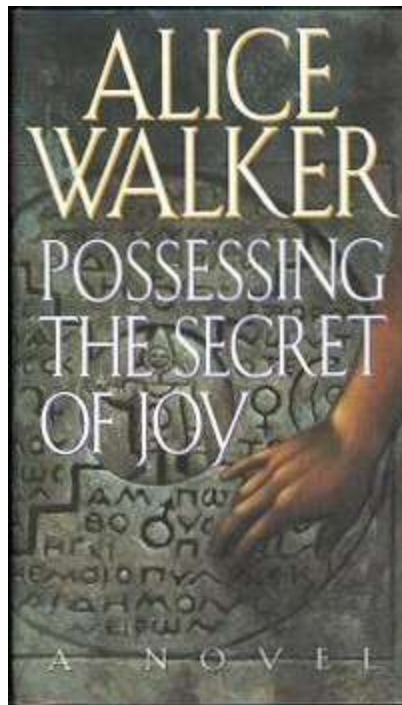
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Marks, shown in the United States, created a stir in American society, especially in the Afro-American community. Drawing attention to the magnitude of this problem, she estimates in her book, entitled *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women* that “one hundred million women in African, Asian and Middle-Eastern countries have been genitally mutilated causing unimaginable physical pain and suffering.”(Walker:55)

Possessing the Secret of Joy



Walker has been in the front line of those writers, journalists and women organizations who have led a campaign for the last two decades against this practice. In her novel, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* she has dealt with this theme in depth and detail providing flashes of insight into the causes of the prevalence of this custom as well as its consequences on the life of its victims like Tashi.

The story of the novel revolves round the character of Tashi, caught up in the cross-currents of her Olinkan traditions on the one hand, and the influences of Western culture on the other. She is an African woman who comes under the influence of Christianity and falls in love with Adam, the adopted son of a black American missionary. Their love is passionate and they defy even the strongest taboo of her community against love making in the fields. But, neither the influence of the missionaries nor her love for Adam can liberate her mind from the hold, the customs and traditions of her Olinkan community have on her mind and soul. She, as a girl, can neither understand the sexist politics behind these traditions constructed by men nor can she visualise the consequences of their practice on the content and quality of the life of a woman like herself. This leads her to submit her freedom of mind as a girl to the authority of her patriarchal community

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and is drawn to live her life in strict “conformity with the norm of her Olinkan culture.”(Gruenbaum:13)

Responding to the Pressures

Tashi seems to find in her society an effective way of responding to the pressures besetting the political and cultural life of her people. They are faced with the all important question of the very survival of their identity as a distinct race. Tashi's conformity to her culture seems to hold out a solution even to the problems she faces as an Olinkan girl. She as an uncircumcised maiden has to face the jeers and sneers of her own friends as her uncircumcised vagina is “thought of as a monstrosity” (*PSJ*: 121).

Leadership Guidance

Tashi's desire to be liked and to be right impels her to follow the instructions sent by the leader of the community from prison, he is particularly strong in his assertions: “We must return to the purity of our own culture and traditions. That we must not neglect our ancient customs” (*PSJ*: 117). The Olinkan “thought him a god” (*PSJ*: 117) and they “believed everything he said” (*PSJ*: 118). They thought that “he knew best...about everything” (*PSJ*: 118). He bore Olinka tribal markings on his face and he was obviously proud of it.

It was, therefore, difficult for Tashi and her people to hear objections of missionaries who had made a big campaign against the Olinkan tradition of scarring their faces. He was also very particular in his emphasis on the Olinkan tradition of female initiation into womanhood through circumcision : “From prison Our Leader said we must keep ourselves clean and pure as we had been since time immemorial-- by cutting out unclean parts of our bodies” (*PSJ*: 121).

The Hold of the Terrifying Myth

Every Olinkan “knew that if a woman was not circumcised her unclean parts would grow so long they'd soon touch her thighs; she'd become masculine and arouse herself. No man could enter her because her own erection would be in his way” (*PSJ*: 121).

Tashi, too, like everyone else in the community believed it “even though no one had ever seen it... And yet the elders, particularly, acted as if everyone had witnessed this evil, and not nearly a long enough time ago” (*PSJ*: 121).

Tashi had experienced the pleasure of love-making, but even then she gave it up in order to “be accepted as a real woman by the Olinka people, “to stop the jeering” (*PSJ*: 122). Otherwise she feared she would be “considered a potential traitor,” and would not be trusted “besides, Our Leader, [who is]our Jesus Christ, said we must keep all our old ways and that no Olinka man--in this he echoed the great liberator Kenyatta--would even think of marrying a woman who was not circumcised” (*PSJ*: 122).

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Forced Volunteering

Tashi's ignorance of the consequences of circumcision, the naive credence she gives to the myths about the elongated vagina of uncircumcised woman and her urge for being accepted by her community lead her to volunteer herself for clitoridectomy. The aura of sacredness surrounding the ritual of this female initiation influences her with a kind of religious fervour to undergo this painful operation. She is carried away by her keenness to show loyalty to her Olinkan leader who was leading a "struggle for political freedom and cultural survival of his people in the face of cultural invasion of the Western world"(Hernton:68) backed by its power of technology, industry and material wealth.

Preserving Cultural Identity through Adherence to the Dicta of the Myth

Walker clearly brings out that it is Tashi's keenness to preserve her Olinkan identity as well as her fears of her culture being destroyed by the white that motivate her to get herself circumcised. She becomes so much obsessed with the idea that neither the influence of Christian missionaries nor the love of Adam and the friendship of Olivia can dissuade her from submitting her body to the knife of *tsunga*, the circumciser. In fact, when Olivia pleads with her not to get herself genitally mutilated, Tashi fails to control her feelings of indignation and accuses Olivia and her family of being "the white people's wedge" (*PSJ*:22). She spits with contempt and snubs Olivia and the missionaries of trying to convert Olinkans. She exudes the feeling of cultural pride which makes her insensitive to the feelings of even her best friend and well-wisher, Olivia. She hurts Olivia's heart when she looks at her and her people with pity and scorn: "You don't even know what you've lost! And the nerve of you, to bring us a God someone else chose for you! He is the same as those two stupid braids you wear, and that long hot dress with its stupid high collar!" (*PSJ*: 23).

Misplaced Loyalty to Culture

As a mark of loyalty to her culture, she takes off her "gingham Mother Hubbard"(*PSJ*: 22) and what is left of her dress now rides negligently about her loins. She does not have a rifle or a spear, but she has found a long stick with this she jabs at the ground near Olivia's feet. Tashi, then declares, "all I care about now is the struggle for our people" (*PSJ*: 22).

Imbued with a feeling of glory in her Olinkan identity, Tashi mounted the donkey, dug her heels into its flanks and trotted out of the encampment like a heroine with a stick in her hand. Thus, Tashi went to *tsunga* wanting "the operation because she recognized it as the only remaining definitive stamp of Olinkan tradition"(*PSJ*: 64). She felt that the operation would join her to the women warriors of her community, "whom she envisioned as strong, invincible. Completely woman. Completely African. Completely Olinka" (*PSJ*: 64).

Tashi, in this way, tries to find an answer to the crisis of identity she has to confront as an individual as well as an Olinkan woman. She seeks it by conforming to the tradition of her community. She submits her body for female initiation and *tsunga* performs the painful

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operation, her clitoris is excised and only a very tiny aperture is left by tsunga “after fastening together the raw sides of Tashi's vagina with a couple of thorns and inserting a straw so that in healing, the traumatized flesh might not grow together, shutting the opening completely” (*PSJ*: 65).

Tashi, in this way, subordinates herself to the will of community embedded in its traditions. Like millions of Olinkan girls, she undergoes genital mutilation done, as Walker tells, with “shards of unwashed glass, tin-can tops, rusty razors and dull knives of traditional circumcisers” (*PSJ*: 284). This was performed with all the sacredness of a ritual, the accomplishment of which is celebrated by women by preparing special foods and cleaning house, by washing, oiling and perfuming the body of the circumcised. The attraction of affirming her Olinkan identity is so overwhelming for Tashi that she not only fails to exercise her faculty of reasoning and the independence of her mind, but also sacrifices the claims of her body for a natural life of fulfillment and wholeness.

Effect on the Physical and Psychic Life

Walker's main purpose in this novel does not seem to be limited only to a description of the practice of female circumcision, however. Her main concern, it appears, is to expose fully the terrible consequences of this ritual on the physical and psychic life of its victims. She brings out with great courage and candour how this operation cripples women, bodily and emotionally, rendering them incapable of leading a normal human life. She reveals clearly the limitations inherent in conformism as a strategy of negotiating with the problems encountered by her characters, both as individuals and as members of their community.

Against Blind Commitment to Any External Authority

It is evident from the novel that blind commitment to any external authority, be it an idea, traditions ritual or instruction, creates more problems than it seems to solve. It may offer a temporary solution to some of the problems at a particular juncture, but it may lead one deeper into a serious state of crisis. The way Walker underlines the anti-human forces demanding conformity makes it amply clear that she has no patience with anything that impedes the individual's quest for wholeness. Walker alerts her reader to the dangers implicit in the attitude of conformism by dramatizing powerfully the consequences Tashi has to suffer for her uncritical acceptance of the tradition of female circumcision.

The writer's intentions to attack this inhuman practice become obvious when she describes the appalling effects of genital mutilation on the life and personality of Tashi. Before the operation, she was a girl full of vitality, love and life. She exuded cheerfulness and a feeling of peace, both with herself and her friends, Adam and Olivia. Her easy and playful manner underlined the confidence and self-assurance with which she seemed poised to take of life. But when one meets her in the Mbele camp after the operation, she looks utterly broken and devastated.

Effects of Mutilation

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Adam, on his return from England, tears across the country to find Tashi in the Mbele camp, lying on a mat in the most unhygienic conditions, he does not know whether to laugh or cry at her sight. Tashi also feels the same. Her eyes do see Adam “*but they do not register his being*” (PSJ: 45). She has to battle with the flies “*eager to eat at the feast*” (PSJ: 45) provided by her wounds.

After the operation, Tashi presents sharp contrast to her former self. It is painful to see how passive Tashi has become: “No longer cheerful or impish. Her movements, which had always been graceful, and quick with the liveliness of her personality, now became merely graceful. Slow. Studied” (PSJ: 66). Her cheerful smiles no longer played freely on her face and “that her soul had been dealt a mortal blow was plain to anyone who dared look into her eyes” (PSJ: 66). Her “own proud walk had become a shuffle” (PSJ: 65).

Circumcision gives Tashi untold pain, physical and mental. Her entire physiological system as a woman was disturbed and it now took her a quarter of an hour to pee. Her menstrual periods lasted ten days. She was incapacitated by cramps nearly half the month”(PSJ: 65). She suffered cramps because the aperture left by tsunga after sewing her vagina is so narrow that residual flow “could not find its way out...”(PSJ: 65). There was the odor, too, of soured blood which no amount of scrubbing could ever wash off. She appears totally broken and battered by this experience, her cheerful spirit, her self-possession and self- assurance seem to desert her forever.

Walker, through this depiction of the havoc done to Tashi's body and mind underlines in no uncertain terms the hazards all Olinkan women run by their conformity to the tradition of circumcision. The uncritical acceptance of what the elders of the community lay down for these women dooms them to pain and misery for the rest of their life. They are to internalize the belief that a woman can enjoy real pleasure when she subjects her body to the experiences of pains. An Olinkan woman is conditioned to associate her pleasures with pain which she is destined to receive each time her vagina is sewn. In fact, this pain becomes for her synonymous with love-making and, thus, an integral and inescapable part of her existence.

Possibility of Death

Walker, thus, shows that genital mutilation not only renders a woman incapable of normal human life, but it also becomes too painful for the victim to endure. Crude methods and primitive tools such as “unwashed, unsterilized sharp stones, tin tops, bits of glass, rusty razors and gringy knives used by the tsunga” (PSJ: 251) can infect and kill the innocent little girls and women. The incident of Dura's death, presented poignantly in the novel, serves as an illustration of the ritual of circumcision as an instrument of torture and destruction. The reader learns about the incident of Dura's death mainly, through the memories of Tashi, who recalls vividly how Dura, her sister had “bled and bled and bled and then there was death”(PSJ: 83).

Tashi remembers the day she “had crept, hidden in the elephant grass, to the isolated hut from which came howls of pain and terror” (PSJ: 75). She saw a row of dazed girls of Dura's age lying underneath a tree on the bare ground near the hut. Dura, however, was not among them and

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Tashi “knew instinctively that it was Dura being held down and tortured inside the hut” (*PSJ*: 75). These, “inhuman shrieks that rent the air”(PSJ: 75) chilled Tashi's heart. Suddenly, the shrieks stopped and there was silence. And then came tsunga carrying something insignificant and unclean between her toes which she flung in the direction of a waiting hen. The bird gobbled down the tiny object in one quick movement of beak and neck. The practice of female initiation thus results in “Dura's *murder*”(PSJ: 83).

What makes the nightmare of Dura's shrieks and pain more ghastly and inhuman is the way it is just buried away into silence even by women of her village. Tashi could not believe that these were the same women whom she had known all her life, the same women who had known Dura and whom Dura had known, Dura had often gone to buy matches or snuff for them nearly every day. She had carried their water jugs on her head but even then these women were tight lipped about her death. Like Tashi, the reader, too, feels intrigued and disturbed by the silence of women. In fact, this is what the writer is probably seeking to do in order to expose the repressive nature of the taboos imposed by the elders of the Olinkan community. Nobody talks about Dura's death; nobody can even jerk a tear because it might bring bad luck to the community.

Dumb Victims, Dumb Cattle

This compliance with the prescribed norms of behaviour tends to reduce these women to the level of dumb driven cattle. They can neither feel nor think independently nor can they act in accordance with their natural human impulses. The way they have to stifle their grief and act as if nothing has happened only indicates their slave-like position in their own society governed by superstitions and taboos. This subservience to external authority may give them some sense of identity and a feeling of freedom from the responsibility of the consequences of their actions, but it certainly perpetuates the tyranny of conventions.

Crippling Consequences on the Psyche

The novel, thus, underlines how conformity to the practice of genital mutilation inflicts pain and death on its innocent victims. Walker's disapproval of the attitude of acceptance of this cruel practice is further evident when she depicts its “crippling consequences on the psychic life of the circumcised women”(Sanderson:24). She candidly brings out how it undermines the rights of women for a natural life of wholeness and fulfillment. She provides insights into the damage done to the psyche of the woman when she is forced to pass through the traumatic experiences of circumcision. She shows that the operation not only scraps away some of the most valuable parts of the body of a woman but also leaves a permanent scar on her psyche.

The pain of circumcision traumatizes her so acutely that she is hardly ever able to come out of the rest of her life. It goes so deep into her psyche that she tends to associate her sexual experiences with this pain. As her vagina is sewn tightly and the passage left is so narrow that every act of love making means fresh pain to her. This makes it impossible for a woman to lead a normal and natural life. She can no longer experience the moments of consummation in love and, thus, the demands of her body and soul remain unfulfilled. This results in the repression of her

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natural sexual urges and energies, throwing her health and personality out of gears. This repression of her natural self creates tension, sickness and problems of maladjustment.

The disruptive effects on Tashi's psyche begin to surface when Adam, her lover, brings her home. Even as Adam marries her, she protests that "in America, he would grow ashamed of her because of the scars on her face" (*PSJ*: 66). Though nobody speaks of the hidden scars between her thin legs and of the smell, her embarrassment at it is so complete that she takes to "spending half the month completely hidden from human contact, virtually buried" (*PSJ*: 67). Her embarrassment and her tendency to avoid human company indicate the beginning of her feelings of alienation from the springs of life, health and happiness. Her consciousness of being an odd figure in a society of normal human individuals haunts her so acutely that she begins to sink into a state of mental tension and depression.

The trauma of circumcision turns her into a nervous wreck. She suffers frequent fits of melancholy and depression. Her grip on life becomes so tenuous that she tries desperately to get some hold on it. The way she clutches her pillow shaking with fear at night, indicates very clearly how her life has been turned into a terror by the excision of her vulva. It has completely dispossessed her of her right to fulfillment as a woman. The possibility of sexual pleasure, the satisfaction that flows from procreation, and the feeling of self-worth and love as a whole woman become painfully alien to Tashi. The frustration of her sexual instinct is evident when she dreams of a tower, a tall tower and she is inside it:

It is cool at first, and as you descend lower and lower to where I'm kept, it becomes dank and cold, as well. It's dark. There is an endless repetitive sound that is like the faint scratch of a baby's fingernails on paper. And there are millions of things moving about me in the dark. I cannot see them. And they've broken my wings I see them lying crossed in a corner like discarded oars. Oh, and they're forcing something in one end of me, and from the other they are busy pulling something out (*PSJ*: 27).

Guilt and Fear

The passage is a revealing account of how clitoridectomy has knocked her out of the rhythms of natural life. The description of the inside of tower as cold is suggestive of the loss of her ability and capacity to experience the warmth and pleasures of sex. The "endless repetitive sound that is like the faint scratch of baby's fingernails on paper" (*PSJ*: 26) indicates that her natural urge and energy, seeking expression in motherhood, have been stifled, causing dislocation and disharmony in her life. This alienation from her natural self fills her with weird feelings of guilt and fear. The acceptance of genital circumcision is an act that amounts to violation of the very principle of life the consequences of which she cannot escape. The life-force symbolized by millions of things moving around her in the dark seems to take a revenge on her for divorcing herself from a woman's natural course of fulfillment.

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This tends to devitalize her and she feels like a bird whose wings have been broken. Tashi loses her sense of self-worth and begins to have feeling of self-disdain: "I am long and fat and the color of tobacco spit. Gross! And I cannot move" (PSJ: 27). She speaks about "*the strange compulsion*" she sometimes experiences "*of wanting to mutilate herself*" (PSJ: 51). One morning, Adam, much to his horror, wakes to find the foot of their bed red with blood. Completely unaware and feeling nothing, she had hurt and smeared herself with blood (PSJ: 51). Circumcision and the resultant frustration unsettle her mind so much that she cannot respond to any situation of stress in a balanced manner. Her behaviour in the face of pressures is marked by fits of depression and violence. For example, when she learns about Lisette's pregnancy by Adam, she flies into a rage that subsides "into a yearlong deterioration and rancorous depression"(PSJ: 127). She feels upset so deeply that she tries to kill herself and speaks of even murdering Benny, their retarded son--a legacy of the brutal practice of genital mutilation. She is in such a depressed and unbalanced state of mind that she loses self-control completely and runs to assault Pierre when he comes to see his father in America. The moment he gets out of taxi, she, like a dark specter moves to the steps of her house "picks up a large jagged stone, grey as grief" and strikes, "him just above the teeth"(PSJ: 145). She had begun to collect stones the day she had learnt of Pierre's birth"(PSJ: 145). She throws stones incessantly at Pierre as if, "like Kali," she has "a dozen of arms"(PSJ: 145).

Tendency to Become Violent and Catharsis

It is clear from the analysis of her behaviour that Tashi's psychological compulsions to indulge in violence against herself and others are rooted in her circumcision as well as her repressed grief over the death of her sister, Dura. This emerges further particularly when Tashi is under the treatment of Mzee, a "doctor of the soul"(PSJ: 49). The doctor subjects her to psycho-drama and shows her grainy black and white films. It is during the screening of these films that something peculiar happens to her. The doctor explains a scene screening several small children being prepared for adulthood. The film then shows a large fighting cock "walking freely and crowing mightily"(PSJ: 73). The scene fills Tashi with such an overwhelming fear that she faints: "It was exactly as if I had been hit over the head. Except there was no pain" (PSJ: 73).

As a compulsive act of catharsis, Tashi begins to paint what becomes "a rather extended series of ever larger and more fearsome fighting cocks"(PSJ: 73). Then one day she draws a foot "sweating and shivering" (PSJ: 73). She feels "terribly sick"(PSJ: 73) as she paints the foot and the cock which grow larger and larger in size. Then suddenly one day, she realizes that the foot she painted was the foot of a woman, the foot of tsunga. This lifts the lid off her brain and she clearly remembers the death of her sister, Dura. She now vividly recalls how tsunga after circumcising Dura came out of the hut holding the circumcised flesh between her toes and throwing it to waiting cocks. The mystery surrounding Dura's fate suddenly disappears and Tashi realizes that it was not death but a murder. The causes of disorder in Tashi's physical and psychic life also become clear to the reader with this incident it was her repressed grief over the death of her sister, Dura, and the trauma of her own circumcision which have combined to throw her off the hinges.

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Imparting Realism to the Story

The way Walker narrates the social and cultural issues imparts an element of realism to her handling of this theme. Her fiction gains in depth and complexity when she deals with the tendency of individuals like Tashi to conform to the pattern of thought and behaviour treated as sacred in their socio-cultural milieu. It also underlines Walker's critical attitude towards her own African culture. As an enlightened woman championing the cause of freedom, equality and dignity, regardless of race, colour and gender, she holds the customs and traditions of her community to rigorous critical scrutiny and denounces them strongly wherever they seem to undermine basic human values. This, however, does not mean that Walker has no love for her people and their culture. She only exposes all that is unnatural and anti-human in the customs of her people. In this, she seems to be motivated by her commitment to the democratic principles of freedom, dignity and to a life of wholeness.

Walker's Love for African People

Walker's sympathies for the people of Africa are reflected very clearly in a number of ways in her fiction. The very fact that she delivers a scathing attack on all that weakens and destroys African people and their culture is a sure evidence of the deep love she cherishes for them. She feels deeply disturbed at the sight of poverty, hunger and disease afflicting the people who once used to be an embodiment of strength and stamina. Her agony is seen when she describes the sick and destitute. She ascribes the spread of AIDS in Africa to such practices as clitoridectomy which tend to destroy "their country's future doctors, dentists, carpenters and engineers. Their country's fathers and mothers. Teachers. Dancers, singers, rebels, hellraisers, poets" (*PSJ*: 250-51). What seems to disturb Walker the most is people's ignorance and incomprehension of the causes responsible for their doom.

Tashi appears to express the sentiments of her creator when she feels angered by the "animal-like ignorance and acceptance" (*PSJ*: 250) of her countrymen waiting for death. She, scornfully calls it "the assigned role of the African: to suffer, to die, and not know why" (*PSJ*: 250).

Walker regrets deeply the loss of power and prosperity which African people once possessed proudly. They owned hectares and hectares of land but now they own nothing. They have been "reduced to the position of beggars-except that there was no one near enough to beg from, in the desert" (*PSJ*: 22) they were in. Her love for African people and their culture is not sentimental and irrational. Her fiction indeed provides a critical insight into the strength as well as weaknesses of the cultural practices prevalent in African community. The way she seeks to demolish the myth that a woman is basically lascivious and her genital parts are unclean bears testimony to her impassioned rejection of all that is irrational and baseless in the beliefs of African people.

Walker suggests that uncritical acceptance of such beliefs and traditions has done terrible damage to the life of the Africans and has even threatened their survival. The spread of AIDS due to the genital mutilation jeopardizes the very existence of these people. As a major artist,

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Walker goes deeper and tries to bring out some of the factors responsible for the construction and prevalence of such myths. She suggests that it is man's desire to weaken and cripple woman in order to be in full possession and control of her life that is behind the conventions like initiation. Her angry rejection of this irrational male strategy to enslave and degrade woman is evident when we hear a woman like tsunga, the circumciser, coming out against it frankly and strongly.

The Confession of the Circumciser, Tsunga

Tsunga is a professional circumciser, and she has been doing this assigned role only for compliance to the traditions constructed by men in her community. Though she performs operations, she questions the validity and justice of the practice. She is indignant when she asks: "Did Our Leader not keep his penis? Is there evidence that even one testicle was removed? The man had eleven children by three different wives. I think this means the fellow's private parts were intact" (*PSJ*: 244). She sneers at women for being "too cowardly to look behind a smiling face. A man smiles and tells them they will look beautiful weeping, and they send for the knife" (*PSJ*: 244).

Walker is indeed bitter when she accuses women of accepting the man-made myth that women get pleasure from the pain men inflict by breaking into their body. "The bitches are used to it," she says (*PSJ*: 245). This practice has been invented by males to have control over women and to assure them of their manliness: "It is only because a woman is made into a woman that a man becomes a man" (*PSJ*: 246). This tendency of man to control woman, Walker suggests, is an evidence of his selfishness as well as his lack of tolerance and respect for the individual identity of a woman. At the same time, her criticism of women, too, is also demonstrated when she brings out their naiveté in conforming to base and degenerate inhuman practices that dispossess them completely of their right to a life of wholeness and fulfillment as women.

To Conclude

Walker's fiction is a plea for resistance to any authority outside one's self. She underlines the necessity of resisting all oppressive forces that impair one's attempts to realize one's humanity. Reasoned resistance is necessary in order to cure one's society of various ills such as oppression and exploitation based on racism and sexism. According to Walker, uncritical acceptance of false beliefs, ideas and conventions created and propagated craftily by forces with vetted interests only serves to perpetuate the discrimination and oppression in various forms. When ideas and customs constructed cleverly to legitimize the dominance of one sex over the other are internalized by the victim, the possibility of establishing a just social order becomes bleaker and remoter. This only serves to maintain status quo and perpetuates inequality and injustice.

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