

**Self and Insanity in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy***

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*Transforming Education Transforming India*

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ENGLISH

**Supervised by:**  
**Mrs. Vani Khurana**  
**Asst. Prof. in English**  
**Department of English**

**Submitted by:**  
**Shobhna Kanwar**  
**Registration No: 11509663**  
**Department of English**

**Faculty of Business and Arts**

**Lovely Professional University**

**Punjab (Phagwara)**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Self and Insanity in Alice Walker's Possessing the Secret of Joy* is a first-hand record work done by Shobhna kanwar during the period of my study in the year 2016-2017 and this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship and other similar title. This field of work is new in literature.

Place: Jalandhar

Signature of the Candidate

Date:

## **CERTIFICATE**

I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled *Self and Insanity in Alice Walker's Possessing the Secret of Joy* is by Shobhna Kanwar for the award of M.A. degree is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of her study (2016-2017) and that the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship or other similar title and that this dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate.

Place: Jalandhar

Mrs. Vani Khurana

(Astt. Professor)

Date:

Supervisor

## Abstract

*Possessing the Secret of Joy* by Alice Walker, discusses about the sufferings and trauma of the protagonist of the novel, Tashi. This present dissertation shall relate the theory of identity crisis and insanity with the applied theories of Carl Jung, Michael Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud which will further help to understand the novel in a better way. In this novel the story of Tashi is told through different voices i.e. Adam( her husband), M'Lissa(tsungu), M'bati, Listtie( lover of Adam), Benny(son of Adam and Tashi), Mzee( uncle of Listtie) and Pierre( son of Adam and Listtie). The novel discusses about the blind cultural practices which directly and indirectly effects the life style of women. Female Genital Mutilation is a painful practice and it is considered to be a mark of true womanhood in certain cultures. Here in this novel Walker discusses this ill practice that is still performed in some parts of Africa. Walker has shown the darker side of the African cultural practices that results to the insanity of women through the story of Tashi. The novel explores the elements of self and insanity and discusses how the circumcision leads to psychological disorder in a woman. Walker studies the factors which are responsible for various conflicts, disintegration, identity crisis and oppression of black women and men. Her quest is to form a new identify for black women, a self-awareness which will make them self-reliant on a social basis. Walker examines black women's search for selfhood and completeness through an examination of the individual's relationship to the society. Her characters struggle throughout the novel, get aware about the reality, resist against a racist and sexist that suppress their growth.

*Keywords: Culture, Ritual, Gender, Identity, Insanity*

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### Introduction

The present dissertation entitled: “Self and Insanity in Alice Walker’s “*Possessing the Secret of Joy*” explores the elements of Self and Insanity that are predominant in the novel. Alice Walker an African-American writer born on February 9, 1944 in Putnam County in Georgia. She is talented American poet, novelist, and activist. Her works include *The Color Purple*, which won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award in 1983, and some of her other works are *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Meridian* (1976), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), *By the Light of My Father’s Smile* (1998), *The Third life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *You can’t keep a Good Woman Down*, *In Love and Trouble* and five volumes of poetry, *once*, *Revolutionary Petunias*, *Good Night Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning*, *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful*, and *Her Blue Body Everything We Know*.

Her first volume of poem ‘Once’ published in 1968 is based on her experiences during the civil rights movement. This collection of poems contains thoughts on ‘love and suicide’. Her second volume of poem that is *Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems* (1973), revisit her southern past and her other works/verses challenge the artificial radical aggressiveness. Her collection of works won the Lillian Smith Book Award.

Alice Walker is regarded for her strongly expressive fiction. She mainly write about the struggles of black women and about their survival. In some of her works one can see the stories that are related from her own life. Her works reflects autobiographical elements. She is mainly concerned for her people and that is reflected from her works and she has also participated in the civil movement. Much of her writing reveals her concern for black women and their families. She won The Lillian Smith Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Rosenthal Award from the National Institute of Arts & Letters, The Radcliffe Institute Fellowship, the Merrill Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. She published much of her work during the

black arts movement in 1960s with some other writers like Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor and who are mainly related with the 1970s attack in African American women literature. Her writing also explores multidimensional connection among women and embraces the liberating power of social and political revolution.

Much of her focuses on the struggles of African Americans, particularly women and they witness against society that are racist, sexist and violent, the role of women of color in culture and history. She is regarded and respected figure in the liberal political community for her support of unpopular views. She is sympathetic towards people of all sexualities, ethnicities and races. Her first novel "*Third Life of Grange Copeland*" was first published in 1970. Here she talks about a black family who lives in Georgia where the main protagonist 'Grange Copeland' a black farmer leaves his family (wife and son) behind as he was disappointed with his life and when he comes back he finds his son in prison and the novel tells us how as the guardian of his granddaughter, he is looking for this final chance to free himself from the spiritual and social environment. In her another novel "Meridian" she talks about the black white and black-black relationship through the life of main protagonist (Meridian) in the novel. "The Color Purple" was her third fiction of work for which she was acclaimed and received Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1983. This work was published in 1982 and was written in epistolary tradition. It tells the story of the main protagonist (Celie) who becomes the victim of incest and an abusive marriage and how she finally creates her self-image and eventually finds love and spirituality. In her other two fiction work i.e. "Temple of My Familiar" was published in 1989 and "By the Light of My Father's Smile" was published in 1998 explores human characters, history, myths and legends and talks about the fathers and daughters relationship and also explores the dangerous bonds of fidelity between sisters, lovers and memories.



“*Possessing the Secret of Joy*” was published in 1992. This novel is a political admonition against the social diseases of tribalism and sexism. Tashi the protagonist of the novel is a distressed African heroine. With the time and experiences in her life she learns that White is not the criminal this time. With the time she ultimately discovers that African tribalism and sexism are responsible for her psychological disasters. With her predicament consisting of her renouncing the egoism and the false pride of African tribalism, she discovers a unique inner voice. She creates an alter-ego in the imaginary Lara who is female panda and who is the rejected co wife, which Tashi talks about her in the starting of the novel. Tashi’s intricate about the sight of blood, the blood of her sister and the blood that comes out of her cut on the arm are the repression of orthodox images. And this further becomes the causes of her mental instability in the future.

This is the painful story of a black girl named Tashi. She is a tribal African woman and was first seen in the novel “*The Color Purple*”. She was just the minor character in “*The Color Purple*” and who becomes the main character in the novel “*Possessing the Secret of Joy*” and the whole story revolves around her. Her faith in her culture and to carry on that culture with her to America leads her decision to submit to the tsunga’s knife and be genitally mutilated. This decision gives her a trauma that appries her life and varies her existence. This trauma lead her life into dark and she goes mad with the time. She is treated by disciples of both Freud and C.G. Jung, and even by Jung himself so to regain the ability to recognize her own reality and to feel her “self” i.e. her identity. While struggling with her life she started to study the mythical "reasons" that are invented by her ancient descendants. She does this so to find out what was done to her and to millions of other women and girls over thousands of years. With the time her understanding grows with the experiences in the life and with that her capacity to encounter with

her devastating anguish also grows. And with that her anguish and her grief grows which pushes her to act. Her action brings two types of feelings feeling. Firstly she feels life where the ability to exist with consciousness in the moment and secondly she feels death where she finds that she has completely lost her fear.

The novel presents the worse conditions of women that is on the account of female circumcision which is a custom that is prevailed in African society since many ages. It is a kind of circumcision in which a woman's vagina is operated and tightened to make it more enjoyable for men. Walker has strongly condemned and criticized this age old practice of female genital mutilation in this novel. The female characters face the problem of existence where they are circumcised under the pressure of male patriarchy. The novel shows the gender politics behind these mucky practices, subjugation of women and status of women in African society. Women's are ill-treated in African society and they have no identity of their own and are fully dependent on their husbands and their only work is to make home, care for children and satisfy their husbands. They are just a statue or an object in the hands of the society and they use them as per their needs. This books also discusses about such type of filthy practices and many other things that are considered as taboos in African society and which are actually the ill practices against women.

This novel is written in continuation with "The Color Purple". Her works deals with the themes of subjugation of African women, racism, and male domination and "Possessing the secret of joy" mainly focuses on FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) the filthy and ill practices done against women on the basis of the name of the religion and culture. Walker is a post-modernist writer and so in this novel she has used stream of consciousness technique of writing that is at one time the reader goes in past and on the other hand comes in present and the book is

divided into twenty one parts and the story is told by different characters who are related with Tashi the main Protagonist i.e. Adam her husband, Olivia her husband sister, Lisette her husband lover, M'Lissa (who is godly figure for olinkan people), Benny(Tashi and Adam son), Perrie(Lisette and Adam son). In this novel Walker's rage is the practice of female circumcision in African cultures. She very boldly talks about FGM and how it is forced on women and to accept it as their culture and how their lives are affected by this. We also come to know that their women are just an object used for the sexual pleasure by the male society and their (women) only purpose is to satisfy their husband and take care of the family and without this FGM process done they are not accepted in the society. With her work Walker shreds Africa of the idealistic image that is bequeathed upon it by black writers in the 1960s and the Harlem Renaissance artists of the 1920s.

In this novel Walker has talked about Female Genital Mutilation and this thesis will focus on how this process leads to one to a lifelong trauma where one goes insane and lose ones 'self'. Self means ones identity and how one sees himself/herself in relation with other or other society or when he/she comes in contact with other culture. Self-concept refer to show how someone thinks about himself and distinguishes themselves. To be aware of oneself means to have a concept of oneself. According to Baumeister (1999), he states that: "The individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is". According to Carl Rogers (1902-1987), he says that every person can achieve their goals, wishes and desires in life and when they do so then self-actualization takes place. This Rogers greatest contributions to psychology.

Lacan says that human infant's passes through the stage in which external image of the body produces a kind of psychosomatic response that gives growth to the mental picture of an

"I". The infant then identifies with the image, which makes infant's developing the awareness of selfhood when this image of a amalgamated body does not resemble with the immature infant's physical susceptibility then this establishes an Ideal 'I' towards which the subject will continuously struggle throughout his or her life.

In beginning of the novel Tashi says "I did not realize for a long time that I was dead". Here then she tells a story of a Panda who has a co-wife and in the first part of chapter one Tashi compares herself to that with Lara a co-wife. "Lara who by now was quite indifferent to them both leaned over and kissed her own serene reflection in the water, and held the kiss all the way to the bottom of the stream". She sees her 'self' in terms of her country when she goes to America to see a psychiatrist and when he says "Negro Women" are considered the most difficult of all people to be effectively analyzed. Tashi hesitates and says "since I was not a Negro woman I hesitated before hazarding an answer. I felt negated by the realization that even my psychiatrist could not see I was African. That to him all black were Negroes" (17). There are many instances from which one can find that Tashi finds her 'self' firstly in terms of her country her culture as a woman and "Tashi was happy that the initiation ceremony isn't done in Europe or America, said Olivia" (The Color Purple, 1982).

Michel Foucault says that "Self-attachment is the first sign of madness and it is because man is attached to himself and that he accepts error as truth, lies as reality, violence and ugliness as beauty and justice. In the novel one can find madness as when Tashi goes through the circumcision ceremony and after that she goes through many psychological disorders. As Adam says- "she began to paint a chicken. Over and over. On larger and larger paper. She grew frenzied as the size of the paper hand seemed to shrink in comparison to the monstrous bird she had in her mind" (73). This happens when Tashi was going under psychological therapy under

Mzee and he tell Tashi to draw a painting and this is what she draws and what exactly she was drawing she herself don't know but she was so much into painting that she grew so frenzied when her drawing doesn't fit on the given sheet of paper. And she starts drawing the same thing on the wall when she doesn't get any bigger sheet other than the wall.

Lacan says that 'the unconscious is the discourse of the other' – it means that human desires or hunger is controlled by the desire of others and we express deep feelings through the 'relay' of others. The starting page of the novel that has been taken from “The Color Purple” where Olivia says: “I told her nobody in America or Europe cuts off pieces of themselves. And anyway, she should have had it when she was eleven, if she was going to have it. She's too old for it now”. From this one can find that as Tashi decide to go for circumcision and this is the act of the insanity because she decides to do it at a stage where one can have it many side effects and everyone tried to make her understand but she listened to none and firmly decides to do it and just to find her 'self' and because of this her life changes and she lives in a lifelong trauma and this is the act of insanity itself and there are many instances of insanity that are discussed later on.

## **Literature Review**

Ashli Dykes in her research article “Scars of Oppression” writes about the sufferings of the women.

*“Female circumcision, a major theme in Alice Walker's novel “Possessing the Secret of Joy”, is a rite of passage extending far beyond the initiation ceremony. There are three types of female genital mutilation: clitoridectomy, the partial or whole removal of the clitoris in which the bleeding is stopped with pressure or a stitch; excision, where*

*both the clitoris and the inner lips are amputated and the bleeding is stopped with stitching; and infibulation, the removal of the whole clitoris and some or all of the labia minora.”(2)*

Here in this article she mainly focuses on the main theme of the novel that is Female Genital Mutilation and talks about different type of Female Genital Mutilation processes. And she boldly talk about this in very deep how women are mutilated with sharp weapons like stones , blades etc. at very early age and which is very un-hygienic and sometimes the excessive bleeding leads to death. Then she talks about that Tashi goes through third process of Female Genital Mutilation and that too at very later age when she was going to marry and it is just because of the culture that is olinkan culture and then she suffers. Here in this article she also focuses some other women characters that have also gone through this Female Genital Mutilation.

Vijay .D. Songire and Kamalacr B. Gaikwad assistant professors in their research article " Existential Crisis in Alice Walker’s “Possessing the Secret of Joy” and Arun Joshi’s “The Foreigner” writes:

*“After marrying Adam Tashi goes to America .There she understands the reality behind FGM. It clearly shows that the difference in African and American culture is responsible for her mental trauma.”*

Here in these articles they talk about the existential crisis, male domination society, FGM, racism and quest for identity. They write that FGM is their (African) culture and which is forced on women. They write that Walker throws light upon the evil practice of genital mutilation and convincingly shows women as victims of male patriarchy in the respective novel

and how Tashi undergoes this thinking about that this is her culture but later on she realizes the reality and dark side of it when she faces mental trauma. In this research article they have taken two novels that is Walker's "Possessing the Secret of Joy" and Arun Joshi's novel "The Foreigner" where Joshi talks about a person name Sindi Oberoi who suffers mental trauma and also faces the mental illness. In this article both the novels are compared and contrasted through the main protagonist Tashi and Sindi Oberoi.

Vijay Digambar Songire (ass. Professor) in his research article "Humanist Agenda in Alice Walker's "Possessing the Secret of Joy" says-

*"The novel appeals to all to develop humanist approach towards women and not to humiliate and oppress them under the name of culture. The novel is a cry for establishing humanitarian principles like equality and freedom"*

This research article mainly focuses on humanism, male chauvinism, Female genital mutilation and exploitation of women due to the culture which is prevalent in Africa. This paper particularly studies Walker's respected novel in order to depict her humanitarian concerns and exposes the falsehood of the age old culture in Olinkan tribe which cripples woman's natural instinct of receiving sexual pleasure by practicing female genital mutilation. The custom which is completely barbaric and unscientific makes women's lives vulnerable. They write that Walker in this novel makes a revolutionary attempt to stand against the age old custom of FGM in order to bring out change and to establish a new kind of society which values humanitarian principles of equality and freedom. She wants to create a society, which does not differentiate men and women.

Dhavaleswarapu Ratna Hasanthi a research scholar in his research article “The Whirlpool of Pain in Alice Walker’s “Possessing the Secret of Joy” write-

*“Female circumcision as a cultural practice is considered as a passport for a girl to enter womanhood and wifehood. In cultures where it is practiced, it is considered as a mark of inviolate virginity, as the procedure is performed on girls who haven’t reached puberty”.*

He has mainly talked about the culture, gender, taboos of culture and whirlpool of pains. This paper mainly focuses on how the whirlpool of pain created for women under patriarchy in the name of cultural loyalty to practices like female genital mutilation devours the lives of many young girls and women and stresses on the definite need to put end to it and Walker through this novel has put forth hope that there are certain ways to put end to the whirlpool of pain for women by men. He says that Culture makes gender roles meet certain inescapable beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and obligations. Here in this paper he mainly focuses or concentrates on the main protagonist of the novel Tashi and showcases how she is sucked into a whirlpool of pain unwittingly, unaware of the repercussions of infibulation undergone by her. It showcases the life cycle of an infibulated woman and the various difficulties she is forced to face on being infibulated, at different stages of her life. He also says that through this novel Walker also showcases how women in a patriarchal society willingly get their daughters circumcised and nothing is spoken of the repercussions of the procedure, or even the possible death associated with it and the women are unaware of what is happening to them and what is going around them because they are not educated and have no rights.



Dr. Nutan Kotak in her research article “Womanism: Black Feminist Theory with a Difference” talk about various works of Walker and also about “Possessing the Secret of Joy” where she writes-

*“Walker demystifies and upholds Black woman’s body through her theory and fiction both. “Possessing the Secret of Joy” deals with the issues of Female Genital Mutilation being practiced in many African Tribes. It traces the psychological aspect of a woman who has undergone this horrific and extremely unhealthy procedure. Tashi is a woman who under peer pressure decides to take revenge by killing the woman who performed this operation on her and many girls like her. In this novel Walker discusses the inhuman practice of stealing women’s sexuality in the name of tradition. The grave psychological danger that these women are exposed to as one of the consequence of the Genital mutilation is at the center of the novel.”(3)*

Here she talks about the theory of Walker’s ‘Womanism’ which discusses both the lived experiences of black women lived in America and the need to develop such a theory. To explain this theory she has taken many works of Walker that are “The Color Purple”, “By the Light of my Father’s smile”, “In search of our Mother’s Garden” and “Possessing the Secret of Joy” and where through the story of Tashi she talks about her theory of Womanism.

Kumar E and Dr. R Mummachi in their research article “Racialism, Violence And Cruelty In Alice Walker’s Works” has written about the violence on black women and racism by taking various works of Walker and where by taking the extract from ‘possessing the secret of joy’ i.e.

*“Another glaring example of traditional cruelty within the black community itself is the custom of female circumcision a kind of most painful memory. Walker could never get rid*

*of. She handles this theme with its serious implications for life in Possessing the Secret of Joy (1992). The plot of this novel can be simply told as that of Tashi, a tribal African woman, who has been harmonically circumcised. Female circumcision is the most extreme form of genital mutilation practiced in Indonesia, Malaysia and many African countries. Tashi agrees to have this done out of a sense that it will reaffirm her connection to her own culture, which has been destroyed by colonization (7)”*

He has mainly talked about Africa and the problems of black people and mainly focuses on black women struggles. He talks about this struggle through the works of Walker where he talks about “Possessing the Secret of Joy”. He focuses mainly on Female Genital Mutilation and it affects the health of the women and how this process is done. He says that right from the days of slavery, the blacks, irrespective of sex had realized the cruel reality of racism and that Sexism is more oppressive physically and mentally was the cause of grievance to the black women who were sexually exploited by both the black and white men. From the story of Tashi from “Possessing the Secret of Joy” he put light on how women are subjugated and discriminated in the society. He thus says that- “Walker’s depiction of the black experience in America ranges from various kinds of evil starting from white prejudice to age-old oppression of women in human societies.”

Many have talked about and have written different works like women subjugation, male domination, African culture, colonialism and many nobody has talked about ‘self’ and ‘insanity’ with regard to this novel and so this field of work is different and new and Where this paper will explores the elements of “self” and “insanity” and how the African culture is spoiling the life of people mainly the women. This paper will also discuss the side effect of Female Genital Mutilation and how it affects the life of the black women through different

women characters in the novel and mainly through the story of the main Protagonist (Tashi). This thesis will show the journey of the main character towards the darker world and how first she loses her 'self' and how then she goes insane and which become the reason of her death.

### **Objectives:**

The main objective this dissertation is to explore the elements of self and insanity examples from the novel "Possessing the Secret of Joy" and to explore how the women struggles for their identity and how the main protagonist of the novel goes Insane and mentally ill.

1: Analyze how women are suppressed due to cultural practices

2: Analyze how one losses her Self and goes insane due to Female Genital Mutilation (main cultural practices of African society)

3: Study the society and culture of Africa

This thesis is divided into two chapters, where chapter 1 will deal with 'Self' and what is self all about and how and why the main protagonist loses her 'self' that means her identity and will feature elements of self and will also talks about African culture and the status of women in African culture. As this novel mainly talks about Female Genital Mutilation so here this chapter will focus how this problem is the far most important thing in women life in African society or culture and how this thing leads to lose ones identity or lead them to gain their identity in the society. Tashi who is the main protagonist of the novel will go through this circumcison to find her identity and she feels proud in starting when she had the operation done but later own she criticizes her culture in the later chapters as she loses her 'self', as she come into reality of

her culture and how the women's are the victim of this culture and to the male society and how they are subjugated in the society.

Chapter 2 will deal all with insanity and the archetypes of Carl Jung. This chapter will basically talk about what is insanity and how having the operation done first Tashi the main protagonist loses her 'self' first and after that she feels psychological disorders or suffers mental illness and goes insane with the time. The chapter will also focuses on factors that result in insanity of the protagonist and how she was treated by both the believers of both Freud and C.G. Jung. Tashi was also treated by Jung himself so to recover the ability to identify her own reality and to feel her 'self'.

This dissertation will focus on 'self' and 'insanity' with relation to Jacques Lacan psychoanalysis theory to state how Tashi loses her identity and goes mad. The thesis will include detail study from both primary and secondary sources.

## **CHAPTER 1**

## **Body, Self and Cultural Space in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy***

*Possessing the Secret of Joy* is an African novel which describes about African culture and the status of women in African society. In African culture women are subjugated in the society in the hands of the male dominant society. This chapter explores how a woman loses herself and her identity because of the cultural oppression and suppression. In this way, the protagonist of the novel Tashi suffers from trauma and psychological disorders.

Women are obliged to accept all the social conventions and cultural duties which are man-made and carried out since time immemorial. In a way they are culturally programmed to accept all roles assigned as per their gender. In one of the instance in the novel where she was leaving her village because of the missionaries and she fights with her good friend Olivia (sister of Adam also a missionaries) she says “all I care about now is my people. You are a foreigner” (21). Further Tashi says “who are you and your people never to accept us as we are? Never to imitate any of our ways? It is always we who have to change” (21). Tashi feels a self of relation with her people, her tribe and her country. As her tribe/ community people all goes against the whites, so she also walks with her and goes against her childhood friend, who was always there to help her. She feels a sense of belonging towards her culture. She very proudly says “here and there a defiant cheek bore the marks of our withered tribe. These marks gave me courage. I want such a mark for myself” (23). She wanted to be like her people, she wants to look like them, she wants those marks those visible as well that invisible mark. She want to be pure olinkan women.

Here we see that how much she wants of her ‘self’, she want to get identified in the society and want to be like her people. Self plays a very important part in one’s life. Self is

mainly how we see ourselves as an individual and as a whole. According to William James there are four constituent of self-i.e. firstly the material self, how we see ourselves in terms of our body, our dressing sense and the looks. Secondly, the social self- i.e. how others see us. One can have different type of selves relevant of the social group that the person is dealing with. Here in this novel Tashi suffers with the problem of identity (self) crisis. She wants to know who she is as she says “who am I, Tashi renamed in America ‘Evelyn,’ Johnson?”(36). Here throughout the novel Tashi struggles for her ‘self’ as she says “can you bear to know what I have lost?”(35). She says this when she was in the court room. She shout this at the judges and the lawyers who were sitting there. She want to mean that she has lost everything and have nothing to say.

Tashi was in the court room because she has murdered the famous idol figure of Africa i.e. M’Lissa. Tashi has moved on to America with Adam to marry him, to live with him but she finds herself isolated and alienated in America. She feels nostalgic and miss Africa, her people and her culture. She wants to carry on her African culture with her while living in America and that is why she goes back to Africa to know the roots of her culture. This is the point where everything changes in her life, leading her to depression, mental disability and the traumas of life. To feel ‘self’ and an pure olinkan women, Tashi moves to Mebel camp where she goes through operation, the culture of Female Genital Mutilation that make a women pure olinkan.

Adam goes to Africa in search of Tashi where he finds her in the Mebel camp and where he first time meets M’Lissa who explains him that “ the operation she’d done to herself joined her, she felt to these women, whom she envisioned as strong, invincible. Completely women, completely African, completely olinkan” (61). The other women in the camp according to M’Lissa had all been initiated at the proper age and now Tashi has done too and feels proud

inside. M'Lissa says" with a grimace of justification was the grownup daughter who had come to her, wanting the operation because she recognized it as the only remaining definitive stamp of olinkan tradition and of course Tashi would not have the shame of being unmarried"(60'61).

This is the status of women in African culture. To be an olinkan women they have to get the operation done, to get married this is what the kind of certification they have to go through and this is what their self is. Women are obliged to do is where as there is no circumcision for women. In one of the instance where Tashi was talking to Mrs. Raye another character in the novel who had also gone through the same thing explains "our leaders said we must keep ourselves clean and pure as we had been since time immemorial by cutting out 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" (112,113).

Here we can see that in olinkan culture women has to get circumcised just to please her husbands as well to get fit in the society, to relate herself with her people and other than this women has no identity. If women are not circumcised than no men "would even think of marrying a women who was not circumcised" (114). This are the rule that are made by the people and still these norms are followed without knowing the root cause and from where it started women have to just do it because men liked it tight so to get the pleasure and "women even today after giving birth they come back to the tsunga to be resewn tighter than before. Because if it is loose he won't receive enough pleasure" (207) and they come every time twice, thrice after giving birth because it is the duty of the women to satisfy her husband and be his slave.

Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney defines 'self' as "a warm sense or a warm feeling that something is "about me" or "about us." Reflecting on oneself is both a common activity and a mental feat. It requires that there is an "I" that can consider an object that is "me." The term self includes both the actor who thinks ("I am thinking") and the object of thinking ("about me"). Moreover, the actor both is able to think and is aware of doing so" as Tashi says "I felt I had been made into something other than myself"(230). After going through all this and listening to M'Lissa and becoming aware of what she has done to herself she feels that there is no more like her and I have become something that I was not and I have never expected to be, I am not me.

Freud says that our behavior develops with interactions. For this he has proposed as three vital assemblies of the human mind: the id, ego, and superego. When the conflicts arises between these structures and our efforts to find balance among what each of them "desires," governs how we behave and interact with others. And how we make the balance in the given situation regulates how we will resolve the struggle between these two predominant behavior inclinations: our biological violent and pleasure-seeking drives vs. our socialized internal control over those drives. In the novel when Tashi goes to America she thinks of herself in terms of her people her olinkan tribe and decides to keep her culture carry on with her so that she can find her identity as an olinkan woman and so she decides to have the operation done because she thinks that the women who is circumcised will only be acceptable in the society and that is her identity and here in the novel Tashi is treated with Freudian psychoanalysis and by Carl Jung.

Tashi never had this feeling of to become pure olinkan women before moving on to America. Her mother also never thought of to perform the ceremony of circumcision on Tashi and Tashi also have never paid any need of it. But it is only when her desires arises when she



move with Adam. So she decides to have the circumcision done and get the scars as other have in her tribe.

Tashi tries to find her identity in many ways and she cares for her culture and pledge to herself to carry on her culture even if she lives with Adam when she moves on to America. And to carry her culture she goes back to Africa to get the circumcision done or the ritual performed and she also gets marks on her cheeks as the sign of her culture. On the other hand while going through the novel, Tashi also fights with Olivia as she was a missionaries daughter and that she(Tashi) thinks that they have come here to rule over them and their society so she also join the other people of her society to rebel against the whites and it is here in the camp she gets the operation done but later with the time she comes to know that it is not their culture and that it is an ill practice that is imposed on women and they are harassed in the society and that this ritual is made their identity and that only then they will be considered as an Olinkan women.

Walker has put forth the certain cultural aspects of Olinkan community in Africa. In Olinkan culture the daughters are taught and prepared by their mothers as the transmitters of their cultural aspects. “They were always saying you mustn’t cry!”(15) As Tashi was told by other women not to mourn on the death of her sister as it will bring bad luck to them.

Niharika Joshi in her work “Cultural Context and Familial Relations in Select Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Alice Walker” writes: “An African woman, Tashi, is the protagonist of *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. The novel explores the complex web of relationships between pain (ritual) and womanhood (resistance) and shows how in the process of forging female selfhood, the struggle forces the need to change the ritual. Tashi wants to undergo the surgical procedure of genital mutilation and also have a scar (tribal sign) marked on her face. Both are painful, but

they are signifiers of the African identity - the only thing that Whites failed to erase in the Blacks. Walker talks about the traumatic condition of her protagonist who struggles to comprehend the impact of genital mutilation - physically, mentally and emotionally – and survives its consequences.

The novel explores the phallic control of women lives and the brainwashing of women to make the procedure a tradition, offering no option to the unsuspecting young women. Written from a womanist point of view, the novel also examines familial relationships. Tashi has never forgotten the way her favorite sister, Dura, died during this ritual, without even having the right to voice her agony since the dictum determines: “You mustn’t cry”. Tashi undergoes terrific dreams about her sister’s mutilation and her crying in pain, to get rid of the guilt of having been unable to help her. Tashi’s attempt to preserve through the ritual what is an African destroys her sexuality. She manages to preserve her racial identity at the expense of her gender identity. Ultimately, Tashi resists the ritual by killing the cause, M’Lissa, who was the oppressor. In this way, Tashi avenges her sister’s offender. However though murder is a negative version of liberation, Tashi shows her courage to change the situation that prevents the African women from blossoming into wholeness. Tashi’s murder of M’Lissa presents the case that women should not continue ‘destroying’ the joy and pride of womanhood in an attempt to serve the masculinity myth that sanctions lack of female-self empowerment”(19).

Janette Turner Hospital writes in the New York Times review on “What Did They Do to Tashi”. He writes: ““Possessing the Secret of Joy" is about the "telling" of suffering and the breaking of taboos. And when taboos are broken, new forms and modes of discourse must evolve to contain that which has previously been unspeakable. Predictable outrage -- moral, political, cultural and esthetic -- ensues, and the breakers of taboos are both vilified and deified. Alice

Walker tackles all these developments head-on in a work that is part myth, part polemic, part drama. It is a work that sits uneasily within the category of "the novel," though the breakers of taboos must always redefine the terms and the rules of the game. Indeed, Ms. Walker's book is a literary enterprise whose ancestry runs closer to the Greek chorus and the medieval miracle play than to the modern novel. Its subject matter is ritual clitoridectomy and the genital mutilation of young women”.

Henri Tajfel and John Turner in their “Social Identity Theory “explain that part of a person’s concept of self comes from the groups to which that person belongs. An individual does not just have a personal selfhood, but multiple selves and identities associated with their affiliated groups. A person might act differently in varying social contexts according to the groups they belong to, which might include a sports team they follow, their family, their country of nationality, and the neighborhood they live in, among many other possibilities.

When a person observes themselves as part of a group, which is an in group for them. Other comparable groups that person does not identify with are called out groups. We have an “us” vs. “them” mentality when it comes to our in groups and their respective out groups. As Tashi says that` to her friend Olivia “all I care now is the struggle for our people, I said. You are a foreigner. And day you like, you and your family can ship yourselves back home”. She criticizes Olivia because she was the daughter of a missionary “who are you and your people never to accept us as we are? Never to imitate any of our ways? It is always we who have to change” (21).

Tashi feels angry because of the wrongs that is done to her people that they have to leave their land and walk to the camp, she saw the children potbellied and with dying eyes, which

made them look very wise and she saw the old people laid out in the shade the rocks, barely moving on their piles of rags and she saw the women stew out of bones and she says “We had been stripped of everything but our black skins” (23) she sees herself with that of her community. She thinks of her tribe “My people had once been whole, pregnant with life” (23). Tashi cannot see her true self. In part2 as Tashi was standing in a court because of the murder she says while she was standing “My fantasy life. Without it I’m afraid to exist. Who am I, Tashi renamed in America ‘Evelyn,’ Johnson?”

“There were five small cuts on each side of her face, like the marks one makes to keep score while playing tic-tac-toe. Her legs, ashen and wasted, were bound”(43) says Adam. Finally she also gets the same marks as her tribe people have so to show that she is olinkan. She finds her ‘self’ in terms with her tribe. Why Tashi does this is because of desire. According to Jacques Lacan desire is the desire of others that means one does not desire to become someone like others but it is because of other that one desires to be like them as Tashi does, she also gets the same marks on her cheeks without feeling any pain.

Nako, Nontasso says “possessing the Voice of the other: African Women and the ‘Crisis of Representation’ in Alice Walker’s *Possessing the Secret of Joy*.” In *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*, edited by Oyèrónké Oyewùmí. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2003. Examines Walker’s text in relation to the feminist critique of representation and the relationship between self and other”. In the novel one finds that “The dual soul is a danger: a man should be male, and a women female. Circumcision and excision are... the remedy” (167).

In the novel it's not only Tashi the main protagonist who is struggling for self but others characters too. Mzee the uncle of Lisette who was treating Tashi was also struggling for his 'self' as he says in one of the letter to Lisette "No one called me Mzee since the natives of Kenya did so spontaneously over a quarter of a century ago. Even then my hair was graying, my back beginning to stoop. I wore glasses. And yet, somehow I felt it was something other than my age that they were nothing, when they called me 'The Old Man'" (80). The Africans chose names for us that were suggested to them by our behavior. 'Impatient' became the name of a colleague who was always hurrying. 'Eats a lot,' the name of the greediest of our crew. He says that 'their indescribable suffering, are bringing me home to something in myself. I am finding myself in them. A self I have often felt was only halfway at home on the European continent. In my European skin. An ancient kin. He sees himself with that of Tashi "A self that is horrified at what was done to Evelyn, but recognizes it as something that is also done to me. A truly universal self. That is the essence of my healing that in my European, 'professional' life I frequently lost" (81).

So here in this novel one or the other character is struggling with their 'self' which is very important part of one's life. Without 'self' there is nothing. One has to identify himself/herself in the society. In the novel one very important thing that one comes across that the Name of the protagonist 'Tashi-Evelyn'. In some of the chapters she is just referred as Tashi and Evelyn and in some of them with both the names. This also shows the concept of 'self' the identity.

Throughout the novel she searches for her identity and in the end she says "there is a roar as if the world cracked open and I flew inside. I am no more. And satisfied" (264). It is when she dies, she feels relieved when she dies and finds the internal solitude. Tashi has lost everything with her 'self' with the process of circumcision. She says "I am like a chicken bound for market.

The scars on my face are nearly healed but I must still fan the flies away” (44). She suffers with the pain and the scars that the culture had given her where she has lost her ‘self’ her life her everything as she says “I am weeping now, myself. For myself. For Adam. For our son. For the daughter I was forced to abort” (208). She has gone through a pain that no one can ever feel.

Walker has talked about susceptibility of black society and especially about women and how they are treated in the hands of the man. Walker talks about the taboos, the culture that are made by the society not the God. Society has restricted the freedom of the women and they have no identity of their own. They are treated as the object in the hands of the men, the society. Women have no right to speak in the society. Walker talks about the circumcision that is a ritual made by the society for the women. This ritual is performed to prepare the girls for the womankind for their future. This is done so that men can have the full pleasure. But walker shows the dark side of this taboo through this novel and through the story of Tashi who spoils her life in the hands of the ritual. Tashi, who is an African women suffers a lifelong trauma because of the culture in which she has blind faith. Because of this blind faith she loses her self her identity. When she moves to America she thinks that she should keep her culture with her and should not walk away from her culture. She done this ritual of circumcision on her so to become an olinkan women and this changes her life forever. She becomes aware of the reality when she loses her ‘self’. She becomes aware of the true side of her culture.

## Chapter II

### **Insanity and its Archetypes in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy***

According to Collins English Dictionary Insanity means, “relatively permanent disorder of the mind; state or condition of being insane, it also means a defect of reason as a result of mental illness, such that a defendant does not know what he or she is doing or that it is wrong. Insanity is a range of behaviors characterized by certain strange mental or behavioral patterns” (838). Insanity may manifest as violations of communal norms, including a person becoming a danger to themselves or others, though not all such acts are considered insanity; likewise, not all acts showing indifference toward communal norms are acts of insanity.

Why and how this madness arises in a person? There are many reasons for it- that can be hereditary, it can be because of some infections that lead to the damage of brain cells, brain injury or other factors such as poor nutrition, exposure to toxins etc. Mental illness also occurs from the interactions of multiple genes such as stress, abuse or some traumatic event in the past which influences or generate an illness in a person. Reasons for mental illness causes from different disorders or in other words can be defined as imbalance of archetypes; whereas Freud and Lacan tries to explores these disorders by integrating it to social taboos and sexual desires. Jung discards these primitive theories by stating that human mind is far development than this. He relates it with the consciousness. As he states “everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation and the personality to desires, to evolve out of its unconscious condition and to experience itself as a whole” (3).

According to Jung unconscious tries to manifest itself as a complete whole rather than putting only sexual desires at front. He called it archetypes. As he states “a collective unconscious structured by archetypes evolved through natural selection, just as did the instincts. It postulates, further that from this inherited unconscious present in all humans, unconscious arouse” (4).

In the novel Tashi is trapped into the archetypes of her unconsciousness; is unable to viscous circle of her desires, dreams, memories and social taboos. She tries to deflect all these antisocial desires but fails to achieve because she never understand collective unconsciousness. She tries to find solution of her problems in now and then, but her problems lies somewhere else.

In the novel Tashi the main protagonist suffers from a trauma i.e. the death of her lovely sister Daura who dies at a very early age which later results into her mantel illness. She also suffers mental illness because of the circumcison because she does it at very later stage which results into the damage of her brain cells. Madness also occurs when a person loses her identity, when a person is not able to find her existence and relate herself with other and to her ‘self’.

According to Liah Greenfeld-“madness” is a disease not of the brain but of the mind, of consciousness, which itself is a cultural phenomenon, the product of nationalism, a subject on which Greenfeld has now produced a trilogy. As the cultural framework of modernity, nationalism insists on the dignity, creativity, and equality of man, the value of each human life, and the right and capacity for all to construct their own destinies, to love, and to be happy. Psychotic disease, she argues, is fundamentally a malfunction of the “acting self,” experienced as a loss of the familiar self and as a loss of control over one’s physical and mental activity, a response to the cultural demands of selfhood”.



In the novel loss identity leads to the madness of the protagonist and the lifelong trauma which results in her death. Throughout the novel she fights and struggles with her existence and finding herself and that results into her madness. There are many reasons that results into women madness one of them is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The novel discusses about the Female Genital mutilation and about its harmful effects. This is curious to note that how this process leads to loss of one's identity (discussed in chapter 1) and which further leads in her insanity. FGM is a distressing experience that is likely to lead to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in victims and that same happens with Tashi. Tashi who goes through this process at a very later stage faceses post-traumatic stress disorder or mental disability.

Tashi as discussed earlier suffers from a lifelong trauma and where she loses her 'self' first and then this circumcision leads to a devastatic effect on her mental health. In the novel one comes across how Tashi's this decision lead her to psychological disorder. Psychological disorder broadly characterized as psychological dysfunction in a person that is related with suffering or weakening and an actions that is not culturally expected. In some disorders, distress may result directly from emotional dysfunction as in generalized anxiety disorder. Many disorders—eating disorders, personality disorders, mood disorders—entail emotional suffering with their symptoms. Here Tashi suffers from mood disorder. Her mood swings instantly. At one point of time she does one thing at other does some other thing. At one time she speaks at other she keeps quite.

Insanity as we can see in the case of Tashi is from the point when she decides to go under circumcision process after all when everyone tried to make her stop not to do but she does it and

that too at a very later stage. At a stage where she was enough mature to understand the world to think what is right or wrong but without thinking and giving it a second thought and without doing any research on it and she just think it's her culture and goes for it and which was wrong on her part and which was a big insane thing, "and anyway, she should have had when she was eleven, if she was going to have it. She's too old for it now" says Olivia. When a person starts going through the stage of mental illness then if even she hurts her then she will not feel any pain at all, and "Completely unaware of what she was doing, she said, and feeling nothing, she had sliced rings, bloody bracelets, or chain, around her ankles" (49) says Adam. This happens when one night he discovers that the end of his bed in blood when he woke up.

Mzee is the archetypes of wise old man. In archetypes theory wise old man is the symbol of wisdom and collective intellect. Jung states in his book "*Four Archetypes*" there are natural transformation process which simply happens to us whether we like it or not and whether we know it or not. These processes develop considerable psychic effect, which would be sufficient in themselves to make any thoughtful person ask himself what really happens to him. Like the old man in fairytale.

In the novel the protagonist, Tashi has been cured by Jung itself. She goes to Mzee, Lisette's uncle who cures her mental illness, she stays at his house for some time and after his death she is then referred to Mzee one of his friend Rye. While staying at Mzee (means old man) house she draws different things and first thing "I drew was the meeting of my mother and the leopard on her path. For this, after all, represented my birth. My entrance into reality. But I drew, then painted, a leopard with two legs. My terrified mother with four. Why is this? Asked the old man. I did not know" (52). When a person goes insane he/she does not know what is he/she

doing or why he/she is doing that thing and they just do it completely unaware of anything and without any reason as Tashi say in above line.

Insanity is doing same thing over and over as Tashi does -“I began to paint what became a rather extended series of ever larger and more fearsome fighting cocks” (69) and then one day she drew “a foot... sweating and shivering” as she say “ as I did so” and suddenly she realized that there was something, some small thing the foot was holding between its toes and it was for this small thing that the giant cock waited, crowing impatiently, extending its neck, ruffling its feathers and strutting about(69). She has gone insane while drawing as she says “there are no words to describe how sick she felt she painted.

Tashi has gone so much into that painting that is making her mad because she was not getting a proper place to paint down the whole thing that is there in her mind. As she says- “ as the cock continued to grow in size, and the bare foot with its little insignificant morsel approached steadily toward what I felt would be the crisis, the unbearable moment, for me. For, as I painted, perspiring, shivering, and moaning faintly, I felt that every system in my body, every connecting circuit in my brain, was making an effort to shut down. It was if as greater half of my being trying to murder the lesser half, and as I painted- by now directly onto the wall of the bedroom, because only there could I paint the cock as huge as it now appeared to be: it dwarfed me- I dragged the brush to paint each towering iridescent green feather, each baleful gold fleck in its colossal, red and menacing eye” (69, 70).

And when Mzee asked her is it man’s foot or women’s foot and Tashi got puzzled with the question she was not able to answer whose foot was that. There was just an image in her mind that she has painted unknowingly what exactly is it. She was getting so much involved in

that painting that she could not sleep at night as one day she finds herself painting at the middle of the night a design she called it “ crazy road” and that was a pattern of crisscrosses and dots that the women made with mud on the cotton cloth and they wove in the village when Tashi was a child and suddenly she realized that the foot she painted above before was the foot of a women and that she was painting the lower folds of one of M’Lissa’s tattered wraps.

She was redrawing her past as from her painting it is reflected, she was remembering the thing that has happened in her past and that was making her insane as she herself says in the following lines “ as I painted I remembered, as if a lid is lifted off my brain, the day I had crept, hidden in the elephant grass, to the isolated hut from which came howls of pain and terror”(70) and here she talks about the hut or a place where the operations take place, the operation of circumcision and where her own sisters death had taken place and she says she can see that underneath the tree that was outside of that hut lays dazed rows of little girls “though to me they seemed so little” and then she compares these girls and then starts thinking about her sister Dura. And then she says I can well imagine how her sister was tortured and struggled to death inside that hut and that chilled her heart.

It is said that when a person loses her identity and not able to find his/her existence then they starts thinking about those days or about someone because of whom they got hurt or their depressing days and something bad happened to their lives in past and which is not depressing them and leading into mental disorder. The same happens with Tashi when she had the operation done and when she starts suffering from the mental disorder she thinks about her sister Dura who died when she was so little and with whom she was so close to and who died because of the operation that she has done now to her.

She herself has cause trauma to her own life. And then she remembers of the picture she was drawing and it was the picture of M'Lissa and it was her foot "for it was so insignificant and unclean that she carried it not in her fingers but between her toes. A chicken-a hen, not a cock-was scratching futilely in the dirt between the hut and the tree where other girls, their own ordeal over, lay"(71) and M'Lissa lifted her sister's foot and flung this small object in the direction of the hen, and she, as if waiting for this movement that is referring to the hen as if she is waiting for the movement and in one quick movement of beak and neck gobbled it down and all this happens in front of Tashi's eyes when she was hiding behind the bushes to see what is happening and that small chicken refer to the clitoris which was kept by M'Lissa and thrown by her.

Here also in this novel the reason that result into Tashi's madness later on was her sister's death, and for whom she was weeping inside throughout her life, she has seen her sister dying and she was very close to her sister as she says " I remembered my sister Dura's... my sister Dura's... I could not go further. There was a boulder lodged in my throat. My heart surged pitifully. I knew what the boulder was; that it was a word; and that behind that word I would find my earliest emotions. Emotions that had frightened me insane" (78). Tashi can hear her sisters' voices "she has been screaming in my ears since it happened" (79) and that was making her mad. In the other instance we see that this madness was also leading in declining of her health she feels like " emaciated as a scarecrow" and this was also affecting her mental health, she does some act instantly without knowing what she is doing or why she is doing she was dying inside.

Tashi does things unexpectedly and without knowing why she is doing that. As in one of the incident where Tashi slaps a man unknowingly, who visit her house and as she herself says- "the week before someone introduced to me by Adam said, with a snigger: 'Ah, Adam and Evelyn. How cute!' And I slapped him" (136) as she felts "the violence rising inside me with

every encounter with the world outside my home” (136). And this was the anger that was buried there since she was a child since she has seen her dear sister’s death and which was killing her and making her mad and now it is the time for the volcano to erupt.

In another incident Tashi also hits her son Benny unknowingly and without thinking what she is doing and as she herself explains- “even inside it I frequently and with no little cause, no cause, boxed Benny’s ears” (136) and that made him squeal and cringe and he look with eyes gone grave with love and incomprehension and Tashi fancied as she felt relief. On the other hand she was also very angry since the time she came to know about Adam’s relationship and that he also has a son out of that and from that day she has begun collecting stones every day and now the day Pierre has come to her home after his mother’s death Tashi has collected pile of stones that were large oblong stones that she has collected from the road and also the stones from the riverbank which were heavy and flat and sharp jagged shale stones from the fields.

As Pierre thanked the driver and turned toward the house, he saw me and smiled. A large jagged stone, gray as grief, struck him just above the teeth. Blood spurted from his nose. I began to throw the stones as if, like kali I had a dozen arms, or as if my arms were a multiple catapult or a windmill. Stones rained upon him and upon the cab, which had started to pull off but screeched to stop as the driver realized Pierre was under attack and sinking to one knee. I did not let up but floated nearer cradling an armful of stones.(137)

She begins to laugh as the taxi disappeared into the street. At this time her anger grew so much because there was the boy standing in front her who was the son of Adam’s lover and whom

Tashi hates so much. And this is the time where she can show her anger on Pierre so to show how much she hates him and his mother.

Her madness grew so much with the time, the volcano was that was erupting inside her since she was a child and since she became aware of what has done to her she was looking forward the day she can kill M'Lissa who has done this to her and give her these scars and false identity on the basis of religion and the day has arrived where she kills M'Lissa. She kills M'Lissa in her furious anger and finally she feels relief and because M'Lissa was a godly figure Tashi was sentenced to death and she dies towards the ends of the novel.

The women in the African society are oppressed excessively that they are seldom given chance to express themselves verbally that they pent up all the emotions which gradually drives them insane. They suffers throughout their life under the patriarchal society which ultimately has an impact on their mentality caused due to extreme subjugation and oppression. Walker describes how the black women are subjugated in the society through this novel. She has discussed about various taboos. Tashi who suffers in the hands of the society suffers in her life and loses her identity. She is cured by Carl Jung as she suffers from psychological disorders. She suffers this psychological disorders because of the operation she has done on her so to become a real women. This operation changes her life as she does this at a very later stage. Walker has talked about this ritual of circumcision in detail and its dark side through the story of Tashi. Walker has shown how this circumcision harmful for the girls or the women. The writer has talked about many incidents that how girls are circumcised. Daura who is the lovely sister of Tashi dies due to excessive bleeding and this is what killing Tashi from inside. Tashi was very close to her sister and her death make a very big impact on her mind.

Somewhere in her mind there was anger growing inside. She feels depressed because of this. Later due to the circumcision she also suffers a lot. All this leads her to depression in mental disorder. She goes back into memory, the sad memory which is making her depressed as well as her anger was growing more and more and which leads her action of killing. Walker has shown that this circumcision can sometimes make a woman mental health as in the case of Tashi.



## Conclusion

The novel shows how the women are going mad because of the worst cultural practices that exists in the society which leads to identity crises among women as they are suppressed. Female Genital Mutilation is the process that cannot be discussed publicly as it is considered as taboo, but no one is aware of what are its dark or evil effects them on both physical and psychological level, As happens in the case of Tashi the protagonist of the novel. It can also leads to the death in some serious cases. They also have problems in their delivery as Tashi too has gone under C section and on the other hand she faced many problems to conceive. Tashi delivers a physically disable baby boy who suffers from serious mental issues such as hallucination. She too aborted her girl child which further adds to her pain.

On the other hand the novel also shows that the child that is born out of the circumcised women is not mentally stable. As in the case of Tashi, her son who is going through mental issues in the beginning further struggles in his life with a big head which make him look different than the other normal child. He is in the habit of forgetting things, no matter how hard he tries to remember and try not to forget something but every time he fails in doing so. This novel depicts the dark side of the African culture in a peculiar way where women are used in the hands of male dominant society. Walker has very firmly talked about the African culture and has shown its dark side in the best possible way without getting vicious towards any particular culture and society.

The novel discusses the element of self and insanity and studies about how these two things are embedded in the novel. Tashi, the protagonist of the novel suffers from these two factors and which later leads to her death. Tashi who has gone through the circumcision because

of her blind faith in her culture leads her to lose her identity. She can never imagine her existence without her society and such strong beliefs further puts her life in a constant flux where she fails to identify her own identity. When Tashi is struggling with her identity crises, it leads her into depression and which later results into her madness. Her madness takes away her life as she murders the Tsunga (M'Lissa) the idol figure in African culture who was the main reason behind Tashi's sufferings. This murder leads to Tashi's execution as she is held for the trial.

This thesis analysis the Archetypes of Carl Jung. The old man is one of the Archetype of Jung. Mzee is an old man, when Tashi is struggling from mental illness she visits to him and he cures her mental illness through the therapy which is proposed by Carl Jung. The archetypal patterns of Jung i.e. ego, the shadow, and the self in a psychological process helps Tashi to find individual harmony and realization of her 'self', self-knowledge and her wellbeing. The last chapter is told by Tashi's soul where it says in big block letters "RESISTANCE IS THE SECRET OF JOY!" It further adds a universal ideology which reveals the real truth of life when it says -"I am no more. And satisfied". With this single line Alice Walker concludes her novel where we come to know the importance of the word "self" and more than that the value of satisfaction which comes to us only when we find out the real meaning of our true identity. The pleasure of life can only be cherished when we are true to ourselves.

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