

ALEX HALEY'S *ROOTS*: A TRUE STORY FROM HIS ANCESTERS

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TIRUCHIRAPALLI-22

Alex Haley, a famous biographer, script writer and novelist published his most famous and historical novel *Roots* in the year 1976. He did something no black person had been able to do before he got Americans to view history from a black perspective. The vehicle he used was '*Roots : The Saga of an American Family*' his 688 page fictional interpretation of the genealogy of his family beginning with a kidnapped African boy brought to the United States as a slave in the mid - 1700's. Alex Haley traced in it his ancestry back to Africa and covered seven American generations, starting from his African ancestors, Kunta Kinte. *Roots* touches the pulse that how alike we human beings are when we get down to the bottom beneath these man imposed differences. Thus *Roots* is an example of a man's sudden up rootedness from -his motherland, from his culture. The suffering, pain and agony that Haley goes through and it speaks about the untiring struggle for his existence.

The Saga of American Family', for its demonstrates that Alex Haley was trying to make a board statement about everyone' roots, not just those of African - Americans, and no doubt he struck a chord. As Alex haley once stated - " Roots is not just as a saga of my family. It is the symbolic saga of a people. *Roots* touches the pulse that how alike we human beings are when we get down to the bottom beneath these man- imposed differences. Haley emphasized on the point that in every place there lives three group of people ; first are those we could see walking around, eating, sleeping and working. Second are the ancestors -

" And third people - who are they?" asked Kunta. The third people, "said Omoro, " are those waiting to be born."

These lines clearly state the triumph of meaninglessness of existence by experiencing Kinte's recognition in the deep roots and bonds of culture and relationships.

Alex Haley work contributed to a resurgence in Americans of all ethnic origins seeking their family roots. According to writer James A. Hijiya, Haley's roots triggered an across - the board interest in family history among all American ethnic groupings. Hijiya argues that this interest in family history offers a challenge to true traditional American view of the self-made person, unfettered by one's background, free to pursue a private destiny. Haley was able to reconstructs his family history through birth records and slave rosters, as well as a pilgrimage to west Africa.

Haley argued that unless we know our ancestors, we can't know who we are. *Roots* derived from the tales told by his grandmother and aunts, and documented that oral tradition with slave and birth records as well as the stories of a Gambia griot, or story teller, who told Haley details about his ancestor Kunta Kinte, a proud leader in his native village, who was enslaved and brought to America, regularly resisting his bondage.

Throughout the 1970, interest in genealogy grew. American descendants of immigrants felt freer to embrace their old world ancestors in a way that previous generations, under the relentless push of assimilation, did not. Scholar K. Hareven argues, however, that the book's key message is not simply history but the story of resilience through generation in Haley's family. Haley's painstaking research was aided by the presence of family records. He was helped because his own family become relatively prosperous with one relative emerging from slavery as the owner of a lumber business, wiled to his grandfather by a white employer who died without heirs.

Roots is all about Alex Haley's struggle in search of his basis. His hunt and burrow through six generational takes him back to Africa which is the place of his origin. Lucid and severely poignant the book has beautifully woven the lives of six generation and their enduring hardship and labor for existence. The book begins in Africa and ironically it ends there as well as, after almost two centuries, where a young Kunta Kinte who is a carefree jaunty boy lives a contended and an untroubled life. After his manhood training the trainer, Kintago said to kunta-"When you return home, you well begin to serve Juffure as its eyes and ears."

Thus *Roots* is not only the sage of a single family but also a true tale of existence of a culture from generation to generation against all odds, that is very much evident when the readers are given a detailed descriptions of the young man's, Kunta Kinte's , life, family and tribe. Its no secret that he is captured, shipped to America and sold to a plantation owner but the truth remains that in spite of the harsh treatment, the racial perceptions, politics he made his roots, his culture exist .He endures a hard life as a slave, marries Bell, a slave cook and has a daughter Kizzy. At 16, Kizzy is sold to another slave owner and the story passes to her. She has a son from her new brutal owner and was named Chicken George. He now takes the responsibility to transfer Kunta's culture to Tom, Cynthia, Bertha until this family history reaches Alex Haley. And Kunta's culture was nurtured and finally enjoyed the triumph of existence.

After covering seven generations, the story did not stop here. Alex went two centuries back to find the trace of Kunta's existence and he did claim that his actual ancestor was identified as Kunta Kinte as per the Griot, the storyteller. Haley also claimed to have identified the specific slave ship and its specific voyage that transported Kunta Kinte from Africa to north America in 1767.Thus a search against all sort of up rootedness was finally achieved. This is what the existential philosophers call transcendence.

Haley died in 1992. He is buried on the grounds of the family's ancestral home in Henning, Tennessee, a fitting resting place for the writer celebrated for his roots.

Referencess

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