



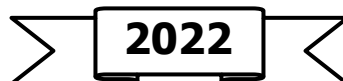
**Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta-577 451**

**“AFRO-AMERICAN NOVEL AS AN ARTISTIC FORM: AN
EXAMINATION OF ALICE WALKER’S FICTIONS”**

Thesis submitted to
Kuvempu University
for the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
ENGLISH

Submitted by
Veena J.
Research Scholar
Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri
Shankaraghatta - 577 451

Under the Guidance of
Prof. Namratha M.
Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shivamogga, Karnataka, INDIA





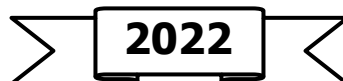
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Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shivamogga, Karnataka, INDIA



Veena J.

Research Scholar

Dept. of P.G. Studies and Research in English

Kuvempu University

Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta - 577 451

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled **“AFRO-AMERICAN NOVEL AS AN ARTISTIC FORM: AN EXAMINATION OF ALICE WALKER’S FICTIONS”** is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any diploma, degree, fellowship or other similar title. The work was carried out under the supervision and guidance of **Prof. Namratha M.**, Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta. I further declare that results presented in the thesis or any part thereof has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or diploma of similar title of any other University except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Place: Shankaraghatta

Date: 15-06-22


VEENA J.



Kuvempu University

Prof. Namratha M.

Department of P.G. Studies and
Research in English
Jnana Sahyadri
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shivamogga, Karnataka, INDIA

Certificate

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Place: Shankaraghatta

Date: 15-06-2022

Prof. NAMRATHA M.

Dr. NAMRATHA. M. MA., Ph.D.,

Professor

Dept. of P.G. Studies &
Research in English
Kuvempu University
Jnanasahyadri

SHANKARAGHATTA-577451



Kuvempu University

Dr. Nagya Naik
Professor and Chairperson

Department of P.G. Studies and
Research in English
Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta 577 451
Shivamogga Dist., Karnataka, INDIA

Certificate

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Place: Shankaraghatta

Date: 15-06-22

Nagya Naik 15.6.22

Dr. NAGYA NAIK B.H.

Chairperson

Dept. of P.G. Studies in English

Kuvempu University

Jnana Sahyadri, SHANKARAGHATTA-577 451

Shimoga Dist. Karnataka

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Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

Coverage of African American women's writing begins in the 18th century with narratives depicting slavery. It moves through and beyond the Harlem Renaissance and includes writers from the movements of 1960s, covering womanism, black feminism and related topics. Black women writers write about how various historical, economic and political conditions affect women and how they deal with slavery and colonialism; how race and class operate in a regional context and also the wide ranging roles of women as intellectuals, nation builders and influences of society as a whole. Further it would be interesting to find the reason regarding why the feminism practiced in one part of the world is not accepted by women in another region. Obviously, that's because of different cultures around the globe.

Some of the literatures around the world are mostly curious when it comes to their origin. Needless to say that kind of curiosity was also created by African slaves along with ex slaves who started to write in their masters language "English". This happened around mid-eighteenth century when slaves in England and United States attempted to write showing urge to be liberated and literate in the wake of European enlightenment's dream of reason and America's enlightenment dream about the civil liberty.

As we all know the fact that African American slaves actually, seemed to write out of slavery. Interestingly, they attempted writing by mastering the Anglo-American belletristic tradition. They did so to register a black voice in the mode of printed letters. Here, we get know that, the above said literary tradition was created long back that is two

centuries ago so that one can understand about African descent who had the necessary degrees of reasoning and fair amount of wit to create literature with rationality. Having said this, here, one can come across the fact that they wrote certain text which marked their voice talking “black” as well as “back” in their convenience. Some of them also made their presence felt in the republic of letters. Therefore, making the text to speak no doubt brought the process of writing became the major urge for some of the authors. It is quite inevitable to mention Phillis Wheatley over here, because of her being considered as the first to publish book of poetry in English. Wheatley was also a subject of such an experiment was doubtfully observed because it was quite a difficult thing for them to consider her poems of such accomplishment was written by her that sounds contentious and it happened in Boston around 1773.

In the recent past, we get to observe a kind of boosting factor when Toni Morrison was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. Her success is no doubt a part of larger phenomenon. African American literature, since then has been seeing a good days enjoying a kind of renaissance in all aspects. Even vaster than the new negro or Harlem, renaissance of the 1920’s, spurred onto a significant extent since 1970 by the writings of African American women such as Morrison, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Rita Dove, Gloria Naylor, Jamaica Kincaid and Terry McMillan, among the host of others (Gates McKay X111) the number of literary prizes own by black authors in the recent past, including reputed Pulitzer, National and American Book Awards, far exceeds the total number of such honors that are won by many African American during pervious hundreds of years for that matter. And as we could see since 1990, we could find three to four black American authors have simultaneously appeared on the best-seller list of the

famous New York Times. This is the evidence which denotes the blooming of African American literatures that actually crosses all racial boundaries, black reader have never been more numerous to show interest in reading but around June 1996 it seems according to The Times 160 million books were purchased by Black Audiences.

Interestingly, Black Literature courses were actually becoming a central part of the department of English and also in the department of American studies, and women studies was not left behind in respected universities. It is important to mention that when literary Gems like Maya Angelou, Rita Dove etc. were awarded as Poet Laureates of the United States and their presence during political ceremony shows their pervasive presence of African American literature in American society. Besides one can observe that rap poetry revitalized the “spoken word” movement in café’s it seems.

Further, studies do show the resistance to the literary merits of African American literature, as we could see that it is having its origin in the enlightenment and in peculiar kind of institution of slavery. The respected writers have always felt the burden of the social and political pressures. Like few of them standing for the sake of their ethnic whole and most of the time trying to show who the Negro was and what are their inherent qualities etc. It is understood that due to their precarious condition in American society, Afro American’s as individuals and their literature as said above no doubt has suffered under enormous extra literary burdens. Most of the African American writings are just like a celebration of blacks writing in English especially in United States. This factor has actually helped to know the defining traditions of African American literature with its interesting repetitions and tropes as well. Most importantly, African American literary traditions do exists as a formal entity for the reason that is historical practice many of

them have said that writings by African American do often extend their black tradition both in terms of themes and structure. Therefore, African American literature is dramatically flourishing. Besides, we get to observe greatest scope for academic studies. Not just that when it comes to oral expression and African American expressive cultural forms it emphasizes the vernacular tradition which is served as the very foundation of the written tradition. Further, studies shows that during the Stono Rebellion, both kinds of literacy like English letters and the black vernacular form had been very important to the slaves to rebel it seems.

Vernacular tradition in African American literature is having its own shape and integrity besides having its own distinct place in black literary canon. Studies do show that it is not just the body of quaint and folk always. It is also not a kind of exclusive province of male nor is it associated with particular historical period. But instead, the vernacular tradition consists energetic, vigorous moral force in their presentation of expressions. Not only has that, it almost appeared as the storehouse of values showing characteristics of black American life very much reflected in their usage of language that is energized as said above and eloquent in nature no doubt. We could see that writers like Morrison, Ellison, Alice Walker, etc. have argued about vernacular arts gives an account of Black Americans legacy of self-awareness and endurance. They have expressed their own ways of understanding meaning and seeing the world comprehensively. We come across reading Ellison in the *Anthology of African American Literature* in which, he do believe in saying that it comprises nothing less than another instance of humanity's triumph over chaos (4). Where one could find the mixture of past and present experiences that are evaluated. It is said through that, African Americans attempted to humanize this

harsh world with honesty and toughness. One cannot forget the fact that how The Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 70s reflected interesting convictions about the vernacular but that was also surrounded by certain controversies it seems. And this was the time of rediscovery of Hurston's importance and was highly celebrated by new group of feminist writers and some aesthetic groups it seems. No wonder that black vernacular literature appears to be progressive and therefore it survived on its own showcasing their overflowing black literature power and its magic. And this sustenance to African American literature seen as a dedication to human dignity and that sounds like it became synonymous with wholeness sometimes.

Objectives

The purpose of this research is to analyze how Alice Walker used her writing skills artistically in the enhanced organic form to portray and depict how women were able to overcome the struggles and challenges which were imposed upon them in the male dominating society. Further, this study delves into the way how they struggled to come out of series of oppressions choosing the path that enabled themselves to encourage other women to stop allowing themselves to be ill-treated by the men and society. Most importantly, in doing so, Walker's experiences and her didactic writing and theoretical approaches comes in handy. Her writing covers wide range of concepts which leads forward to "wholeness" especially the concept of womanism. That provides women to arise to stop what they do not want. Particularly to oppose whatever they seek to deny or deprive them of their rights. It further scrutinizes how her theoretical approaches in fictions impacts black women and society in general. Being social activist how her writing executes significant ideological and philosophical messages in her writing is

looked over. Whether her inclination towards her cultural heritage makes her writing artistic and organic or her realistic approach makes it more aesthetic with profound insight is to be known.

Scope of Research and Key Concepts

Alice Walker is best known as southern African American writer and the first black one to win Pulitzer for her first novel *The Color Purple*. Walker's focus on southern African American women's voices actually helped galvanize a kind of explosion of black woman's creative expression. It's important to mention that Alice Walker described the three types of black women characters which she felt that were missing from much of the American literature. Therefore, in relation to the above said, it is understood that we get to see the wide scope to explore and analyze the important key features. Hence, theoretical frame work is followed by Alice walker's inclination towards certain theories and her association with certain movements. Majorly, that is based on black feminism, womanism, Marxism, and realism including theoretical perspectives we find in her fictions.

Basically, to begin with, it is necessary to understand the convergence of "women's issues, race and also nationalist issues, and class issues in women's consciousness" (Trivedi 71-72). Feminism places a priority on women; nationalism or race consciousness, a priority on race. That's because they realized the need to get over the limitations of nomenclature that has actually has led many black women to choose and follow the term "womanist" therefore, it seems that, if things are analyzed with womanist lens then, we get the real picture of women's predicament. Next thing is we could see '*In Search of Mothers Gardens*' both Alice Walker and Chikwenye Okonjo

Ogunyemi have defined womanism as a consciousness that incorporates not only racial, cultural and sexual issues but along with that they bring in the national, economic and political considerations as well. As Ogunyemi explains, Black womanism is a kind of philosophical thought that concerns itself both with sexual evenness in the black community and with the world power structure that repress both blacks and women. It's ideal and it is for black concinnity where every black person has a little power that is desirable and somebody can be a "brother" or a 'sister' or a 'father' or a 'mother' to the other or anybody.... It simply concentrate on the potential of wholeness and self-healing" (Ogunyemi 63).

Idea surrounding womanism is not new thing but nomenclature appears as new whose major proponents are of course Walker and Ogunyemi. Actually, most of the black women at various points in history had clearly got in their mind that racial issues and women's issues were like inextricable knots linked together. Hence, women's struggle and racial issues could not get separated. We get to see that, Anna Julia Cooper, an early African American womanist, who during her speech addressed the holistic nature of the struggle. And that platform was to the World's Congress of Representative Women where she says:

Let woman's claim be as broad in the practical manner as in the outline. Women can of course take their stand on the solidarity of humanity and that is called as oneness of life. And the fact related to queerness and justice of all kind of special favoritisms, whether it is a matter of sex or race, along with the country, or any other persistent condition. If one link of that chain gets broken, the whole chain is broken.... We want, then, as toilers for the universal triumph of justice and human rights. To go to our homes

from this particular platform, demanding a passage not through a gateway for ourselves, nor their race, sex, not even the matter of sect, but they need a grand undaunted highway towards humanity. “The black woman feels that woman’s cause is same worldwide andrace, color, sex, and condition are seen as the accidents, and not the solidity of life;not till then is woman’s, nor the red woman’s but the cause of every man and of every woman who has writhed quietly under a mighty wrong. Woman’s unjust things are thus unable to destroy and therefore linked with all sorrows and distress that are not defended, and the acquirement of women’s “rights” will surely mean the final victory over great strength, and the ascendancy of moral forces of some reasons, justice and love in the respected government of the respected nations of earth” (Sewall 1893).

It is important to mention that, Maggie Lena Walker is the dominant one who has clearly articulated womanist consciousness and she was probably best known as the first woman bank president in the United States. She founded the Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank in Richmond, Virginia, in 1903. She argued that the only way in which “black women would be able to avoid the traps and snares of life would be to band themselves together, organize and to put their mites together, and also to put their hands and their brains together and make work and business for themselves” (Suggs 1985). Colored women were guided by a clearly understood and shared perspective concerning the relationship of black women to black men, to the black community, and to the larger society. This perspective gives us some insight to understand the relationship between women’s struggle and race struggle. Maggie Lena Walker affiliated with the National Association of Wage Earners (NAWE), a women’s organization that sought to pool the energies and resources of housewives, professionals, and managerial, domestic, and also industrial workers to shield so that they can swell the economic status of black women.

The next thing is, it is interesting to focus on family and therefore one could say that family is correlative metaphor for community. Therefore, family is community and community is family. What I mean to say is, all family members' resources were needed for the family to be well and strong. So they were needed for a healthy community and healthy family in the society. Race men were therefore defined not just by their actions on behalf of black rights but by their actions on behalf of women's rights. The two were inseparable. This was a collective effort in which black men and black women should be equally engaged. As we all are familiar with the fact that, sexism, class oppression are linked together and the same argument has been put forth by Black feminism. Angela Davies was one of the first people who articulated an argument centered on the intersection of race, gender, and class in her book, *Women, Race, and Class*. Womanism exposes the contrast between theory and action. There is an assumption that theory is to be found only in carefully articulated position statements.

Womanism flows from a worldview, a consciousness that allows for the resolution of seeming contradictions not through an either or negation but through the interaction and wholeness. The above said is what Ogunyemi refers to as the dynamism of wholeness. Most of the times womanism challenges the dichotomous thinking that underlines feminist theory and writing. Dichotomous thinking not only enables to see the lives of black women along with other women of color with the concept of wholeness, but, not to forget that out of ignorance sometimes we choose not to see white middle class women's predicaments. A careful and systematic search into the cognizance of black women and other women of color therefore should be a quintessential prototype for all women, including those who are not often tackled with the need of perceiving

themselves in these total terms. No doubt as we begin to confront the holistic nature of all women's lives, we will create a truly womanist study.

In Alice Walker's writing, she establishes a community of women within which her characters can survive, heal their physical and psychological and achieve selfhood. Following Hurston's footsteps, Walker's female characters provide vehicles by which Walker can expound her womanist views and rail against patriarchal oppression. For example, In *The Color Purple*, Celie provides a vehicle to argue against child abuse, incest, and marital abuse. Having established a context within which to discuss female sexuality, Walker broadens her frame of reference from Afro-American women to include African women as well and, ultimately, women worldwide. By modeling her life and her writing on her creative and literary ancestors, Walker has created a framework where by her readers and future writers may see her life and writing as a model for their own.

An act of Convergence

Alice Walker identifies herself primarily as an African American woman situated within African American culture, it is for this reason perhaps she chooses African American women as her main role models. Within the movement of the Harlem Renaissance, black women writers established a variety of alternative possibilities for the fictional representation of black female experience. "The Harlem Renaissance was so named because Harlem symbolized the central experience of American blacks in the early twentieth century the urbanization of black America" (Wintz 1988). The migration of so many African Americans to the localized area of Harlem resulted in a loose coalescence of talented artistic and creative African Americans who became now as the

“**Negro Intelligentsia**” and who produced much of the creative work of the early twentieth century within the African American community. This history of African American writers is one with which Alice Walker, a modern Afro-American writer, identifies.

One could see that Zora Neale Hurston represents black people as the rural folk in her works. That’s because, folks were represented as being both the fertile spring of Afro-American cultural and also linguistic forms and it’s the means for their continued existence. Hurston’s exploration of sexual and power relations were also embedded in this “folk” experience and that avoided the cultural changeover and confrontations of the urban shift. No doubt that contemporary black women writers consider Hurston as their foremother and the tendency of feminist literary criticism has been to enhance the validity of black women as “folk” heroines at the cost of certain texts which showed black female sexuality within the context of built-up social connections. A row of parentage is drawn from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to *The Color Purple*. Walker has turned to a black ascendant text to claim literary ancestry, or motherhood, not only for context but for structure. Walker’s representation of Celie’s writing in dialect echoes Hurston’s definition of an Oral hieroglyphic that means showing characters in form of symbols and images. One can observe her ironic use of speakerly language which a person can hardly speak, because it survives only in the written text. Walker, like Hurston, masters the illusion of the black vernacular by its writing, in a masterful exemplification of the black trope of styling out.

One could observe James Weldon Johnson’s view on the value of African American vernacular in African American writing further explicated and criticized in

Frantz Fanon's discussion of this cultural phenomenon in his classic text, *Black Skin White Mask*. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards, including, in particular, its language conversely, other African American artists, among them Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker, chose to claim the African American vernacular as a vital part of African American culture and expression. Continuing along the same lines regarding the development of an African American aesthetic, Langston Hughes, a prominent African American poet, declared in 1926 that the drive behind the "Harlem Renaissance was the determination of African American artists to express our individual dark skinned selves without fear or shame" (Andrews 1981). Although Walker identifies herself most closely with African American cultures and African American women, Walker envisions the body of literature as one immense story written from multitude of perspectives by writers from just as many different cultures. Walker often expresses admiration for writers from cultures other than her own.

On the other hand, Nella Larsen offers through her writing a more intricate dissection of the rural and urban confrontation. She also reproduces in her novel the dilemma of a black woman who tries to counter the dominant white cultural definitions of her sexuality: ideologies that define black female sexuality as a primitive and exotic. Her novel *Quicksand* is symbolic of the tension in nineteenth and early twentieth century black women's fiction in which black female sexuality was frequently displaced onto the terrain of the political responsibility of the black woman. The duty of the black heroine toward the black community was made coterminous with her desire as a woman; a desire

to female duty enabled the negotiation of racist constructions of black female sexuality but denied sensuality and in this denial lays the class character of its cultural politics.

The literary risk taken by African American authors are very commendable. As a result of that “we get to see their confidence to create their authentic creative selves that has actually led to the dawn of the novel out of slave narratives it seems” (Andrews 1981). Walker’s literary history is grounded in the history of slave literature, in the writings of both African slaves and emancipated African American. The literature celebrates the attainment of personal, physical and intellectual freedom of the African and African American individual. Further, we witness the psychological development of the self-inspired, an equally important generic evolution from the slave narrative black American autobiography, that’s a kind of genre which has allowed African American writers to promote and to consider the nature of the Afro-American search for selfhood it seems.

I think, autobiographical impulse in the black novel is of greater significance. The thought of continuous need to explain and **addressing the self** in a world which, as a matter of fact, historically denied the very existence of that self that has given both focus and also intensity to write a story about blacks and their lives. While examining the Afro-American novels, it is quite necessary to understand its paradoxical nature. Perhaps it grants the African American author the freedom to create a sustained visionary aspect in a world characterized by a series of counter-freedoms and conflicting visions. Probably that allows for the humanistic formation of cultural memory. At the same time it gives particularity to something that is often a fluctuating collection of insightful perceptions and abstractions.

Confronting Past and Creative Conceptualization

The act of creative writing, for Walker, is part of a larger process of cultural revisionism. In the process of redefining history and historical memory, and of confronting the historical past in an innovative and provocative ways. Those things are intentionally self-reflexive. Walker's novels continue to serve both as an ideological and for social purpose; she had affirmed the need to reflect the lived reality across the class and gender lines within the society. Attending to its own extemporization nature, while embracing their past and showcasing resistance towards that. It is important to deepen our sense of understanding who and what it exactly means to be a black in the postmodern as well as postcolonial world, and demanding all the while to be considered as an art.

Selfhood no longer held the traditional meaning of physical freedom from the bonds of slavery; rather, the definition of selfhood comes to mean a spiritual knowledge of self as well. For example, Henry Bibb's *Narrative* (1849) and Samuel Ringgold Word's *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro* (1855) explore the struggle for freedom on a physical as well as psychological level. Expanding on the theme of freedom, Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) is the first autobiography which we find a black man's experience as a slave and a freeman into a unified earlier pattern. There is a significant element of psychological exploration which has lead Douglass towards a liberating self and a better understanding of social awareness.

While early African American authors were keen to develop themselves individually and self-consciously. They were also aware of their bond to the African American community, the African American autobiography and Bildungsroman which means frauenroman that was grounded in a sustaining cultural tradition that sees self-

discovery and self-expression leading to a nurturing community identification and ultimately a hopeful conclusion to the black quest in America(Andrew 1981).No doubt that Afro-American novel stands at the cross roads of the picaresque novel, the sentimental and also the slave narrative but I strongly feel that the Bildungsroman offers interesting “plot” of an apprenticeship of the concurrent mutual shaping of the protagonist’s psyche. That helps his/her integration into society at a larger scale. This intends to lead the reader to greater personal enrichment as the protagonist journeys from youth to psychological or emotional maturity concentrating on the development or education of a central character undergoing all the stages of crises to find the best place to use their unique talents.

The American Bildungsroman follows the pattern of moral growth for the protagonist discovering their identity in conflict with social norms. I feel Alice Walker’s novels are a kind of Erziehungsroman means, “novel of education”, and this variation is a more pedagogic form of the bildungsroman intending to teach lessons about values to the reader along with the protagonist. For example, most importantly *Meridian*, and *The Color Purple*, also *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* Where I could see that bildungsromane explore the difficulties of growing up as a member of a minority. The above mentioned novels also presents womanist ethics through the characters’ self-discovery, spirituality, relation to nature and ancestors as well as involvement in the struggle for social and economic justice. She stands within the womanist literary tradition transmitted by the oral mode from one generation to the next pointing towards her mother as a source of the artistic spirit in her aligning herself with the living creativity to attest to Afro-American women’s talent.

It seems that this method also helps in considering and acknowledging the African presence in African American culture, which also insists on the certain patterns preserved in the Black vernacular oral tradition. She gives importance to the spiritual victory of her protagonists. Her art is like a liberation. It seems that, the quest in African American literature for physical and spiritual freedom takes us full circle to Alice Walker's assertion that African American writers expect to gain a larger freedom. It seems as a result of their moral as well as physical struggle. This is perhaps the reason it is felt that Walker is an aesthetic in life.

Once discovered and reclaimed by feminist critics, it became apparent that the writings of African American women were similar to those of African American men. Like their male counterparts, African American women often had a political agenda and wrote with the goal of achieving equality with whites and of having their own spiritual, physical and intellectual freedoms recognized. "African American women's texts are clearly involved with issues of social justice: the rape of black women, the lynching of black men, slavery and reconstruction, class distinctions among blacks, and all forms of discrimination against black people" (Washington 1987).

African American women writers also recognized and challenged their marginalized position within the African American community where they were treated as the mules of the world. As Cheryl Wall notices "mules" refers to the black labor exploitation, not to black women. In Walker's writing, the mule becomes a metaphor for the female condition, and in Walker's writing shows the burdens that are not only those which are imposed by physical labor, but sexist attitudes also matters. Her focus on general African American history has been secondary, she has learned the importance of

diving through politics and social forecasts to dig into the essential spirit of individual persons, a lesson consistent with the difference between African American men and women's literature.

It's a known fact that African American women's writings are a testament to women's ability to resist and overcome the attacks, criticism and silencing of their works by both African male writers and critics. I feel it is worth to focus on blues as well because it's a known fact that Afro-American culture is a complex, and reflexive project which has found finds its proper figuration in blues that has been conceived as a matrix. Further, the matrix is a point of ceaseless input and output, just like a web of intersecting, crisscrossing instinctive motive always in productive passage. Afro-American blues constitute such a vibrant network radically conditioning Afro-America's cultural significance. The blues are a synthesis. Where one can see the confluence of work songs, group seculars, field hollers, sacred harmonies, proverbial wisdom, folk philosophy, political commentary, ribald humor, elegiac lament, and much more, they all seems to be taken for more consideration in America. They have always presented uniquely, shaping, transforming, and displacing the peculiar experiences of Africans in the New World. Therefore, the blues comprise a meditational site where familiar antimonies are resolved in the office of adequate cultural understanding.

Within black culture the figure of the female blues singer has been reconstructed in poetry, drama, fiction, and art used to meditate upon conventional and unconventional sexuality. Several kind of narratives, both fictional and biographical, have mythologized the woman blues singer. These mythologies later became texts about sexuality it seems. Women blues singers frequently appear as luminal figures that play out and explore the

various possibilities of a sexual existence; they are representations of women who attempt to manipulate and control their construction as sexual subjects. For example, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Ethel Waters etc. The blues were certainly a communal expression of black experience which had developed out of call and response patterns. Similarly, the same elements are found in Walker's poetry as well. I feel that blues is the framework to interpret not just women blues singers but also the whole black community and their social relations.

The figure of the woman blues singer has become a culture embodiment of social and sexual conflict from Gayl Jones's novel *Corregidora* to Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The women blues singers have occupied a privileged space. They had broken the boundaries of the home and undauntedly taken both sensuality and sexuality out of the private sphere into the public sphere. It seems that, *Young Woman's Blues* joins together many of the issues related to sexuality and power. They sought possibilities that arose from women being on the move and confidently asserting their Sexual desirability. No doubt they have become cultural icons of sexual power. This is also one among the reasons that African American women's literature goes on documenting their various insightful thoughts, expressive words, intense feelings and deeds of black women, and their harsh experiences usually make the realities of being black in America.

An Act of Obligation

Female relationships are of course very essential aspect of self-definition for women. All the relationships are vital to their growth. African American women writers have always stood by the long tradition of protest literature by including gender protest and they were always against economic slavery. Their writing is a testament to women's

ability to resist and overcome the attacks and criticism. Walker's focus on General African American history has been secondary, no doubt that, she has learned about the "importance of diving through politics and social forecasts to dig into the essential spirit of individual persons, a lesson that is consistent with the sort of difference between African American men and women's literature this is what we get to see in *In Search of Mothers' Gardens*" (Walker 1983). Her dedication to the work of recovering and telling the stories and the lives of African American women has resulted in the rediscovery and recovery of the two important artists in Walker's life and undoubtedly it is her mother and Zora Neale Hurston.

Walker is empowered to narrate the stories of black Women who are past or present creators of black female culture. She feels it has her responsibility to enable her women. Despite the fact that African American women often had to sacrifice taking care of their own families to the degree they would have liked to be "**mammy**" to the slave owner's children, African American women strived to raise and educate their children, and to pass African American traditions and culture learned from their mother on to next generation. These traditions included storytelling, root working, conjuring, quilting and gardening among others. All these activities fed the spiritual "springs of creativity" a kind of spirituality which is so intense and deep but they were unaware of this rich tradition.

Her discovery or rediscovery of her mother's artistic and creative work, one realizes that, although the creative impulse has at times been repressed, African American women have always found an artistic outlet. She also recalls that, as a child, she heard stories which her mother narrated as naturally as breathing. In addition to hard labor in the field as a sharecropper, Walker's mother still found time to relate these stories to her

children, passing on the African American cultural tradition of oral story telling. Walker has realized very early the importance of having a creative outlet observing her mother noticing more than the art. Walker did not inherit a talent for gardening necessarily to that extent, the legacy which walker has inherited from her mother is a talent for story-telling that could be said as the “**creative spark**”.

Walker’s transcription of oral literature, claimed a space in which African American women could express themselves. There is a kind of urgency in her writing to complete her mother’s incomplete stories. This is heightened in light of walker’s desire to find “wholeness” through her writing because she feels that everything is deliberately split up around her, even history and literature along with people who are split up too.

Walker identifies herself with African American culture and chooses women from that community as her primary role models. It is by acknowledging her community and her ancestor, both literary and genealogical, that she is able to connect with the past and is able to carry the past into the future with her own writing. Walker’s sense of feeling different was exacerbated by the recent historical past in the racist southern system. Walker’s wound forced walker to recognize at an early age the transitory and elusive value of beauty as a means of defining the self; she was forced to discover other innate qualities by which she could define **herself**.

Herself as a medium through which her characters, whose lives, are grounded in actual African American history, can speak through Her connection with her literary and genealogical ancestors is so strong that she sees those characters, Walker is able to speak for the myriad numbers of African Americans whose historical, social and political position as slaves and as the oppressed prevented them from expressing themselves both

creatively and otherwise. It is understood that black writers are involved in a moral and physical struggle, the result of which is expected to be some kind of great extent of freedom.

Literature Review

This section shows formal assessment of the existing vast body of knowledge by analytical evaluation. Works discussed over here has helped to understand specific body of literature meticulously.

To begin with the first book, that is, *The African American Novel and its Tradition* by Bernard W. Bell. As the title suggests, this text book is a standard addition to the growing body of scholarly analysis which actually gives an account of the Afro-American contribution in this domain. The book seems to be as a sociopsychological and sociocultural interpretation of the history of Afro-American novels. It describes and analyzes the dominant themes, stylistic and structural aspects dropping the hint of certain African-American experiences and also literary traditions. It is somewhat like written in a grand manner and has homogenized the whole thing. Most of the novels discussed in the book are of aesthetically important. Critics have felt that analysis is quite superficial. No doubt it is very informative especially “The Roots of the Early Afro-American Novel”. This book is instructive in a way because the author views black fiction as a socially symbolic act, understanding the survival strategies that had developed from black’s experiences of double consciousness. One more interesting fact is author has managed to mix and match the artistic and political dimensions of Afro- American literature. The book is revealing and definitional.

The Contemporary African American Novel: Its Folk Roots and Modern Literary Branches. Again by Bernard W. Bell and this one appears as a sequel to his first book brought out in 1987. Here, he has examined the writing and traditions of wide range of important black novelists. We get to see his extension of interpretation model for reading texts and that is very much based on the vernacular forms of expressions following literary theories of Ralph Ellison and also on Du Bois Double Consciousness. Author's approaches like socio historical and sociocultural to literature is quite interesting the way he applies to the numerous black novelists in particular. He covers most of the genres even detective and gay novels.

An essay entitled "History and Genealogy in Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and Meridianin" the text book named *Race, Gender and Desire: Narrative Strategies in the Fiction of Toni Cade Bambara and Alice Walker* by Evans Elliot Butler. We could see the comprehensive interpretative strategies influenced from semiotics, narratology, feminist theory and also ideological analyses. Author has showed the manner in which the politics of race and gender determines the narrative structures of the fictions of above mentioned writers. Further, we come across the argument that their writing is often the sight of violence, ruptures that sounds a kind of disagreement. Black women novelists do suggests the ideological duality. We could identify nationalist aspect along with black aesthetic factor and black feminist discourse. And that is found in Walker's writing and also in the works of other two. Evans, actually tries to put forward the argument between the gender and racial concerned ideologies. Next, author interestingly discusses writers' use of post-modern narrative strategies that might have enabled them as a black feminist ideological position in their fictions during the time of 1980's. We do get brilliant analysis of Walker as a prolific writer. This book actually

offers a much needed study that undauntedly asserts the allocation of post structuralist and that is also Afrocentric in nature and gives the feminist literary analysis.

Renaissance brought significant changes in the African American literature. A book named *Wild Women in the Whirling: Afro-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance* is one which looks like a tribute to the African-American new renaissance. Collections of essays in this book actually explore the literary and multicultural traditions of black American women across genres. One can see the wide context discussing cultural aspects along with literary experience. Further, we can see Walker's novel's analysis in Rudolph P. Byrd's essay "spirituality in the Novels of Alice Walker: Models, Healing, and Transformations, or When the Spirit Moves So Do We". Next we see Barbara Smith who discusses black lesbian characters in the fiction and also analyzes a kind of fable elements in *The Color Purple*. Some of the articles do go along with Smith's definition of feminism and that says, the political theory and practice that struggles to free all the women of color, old, disabled, lesbian and working class women not to forget white women, who are economically down and also one who is privileged. Anything which is less than what is said above of total freedom is not kind of feminism but that would be self-upliftment or elevation (219). It's a sort of an attempt to give a voice and the book is designed to fill the visible cleft in the current black feminist scholarship. As we can observe that Audre Lorde says that there is actually a need for black woman to examine reasons why the real facts about them and their lives and their writing are still invisible.

African American literature owes to its oral tradition and *The African-American Grain: The Pursuit of Voice in Twentieth Century Black Fiction* is a book that enlightens about the impact of African-American oral storytelling techniques. Author shows keenly

about reading literature in the call-and-response tradition. Writers like Hurston, Walker and her contemporaries have used this interesting forms. Literary forms of this kind of distinctive participatory discourse is used to establish a strong and potential relationship between story teller and audience but that also talks about a strong chances for a change. John Callahan's essay in this book "The Hoop of Language Politics and the Restoration of Voice in Meridian" throws light upon many such things. Author tries to place African American literary traditions in the context of ancient oral traditions as well as in relation to democratic process. It's just like discussing both fiction and the concept of democracy. Not just that, but it also depicts the feeling of social responsibility that is associated with the sense of belonging to a community.

Focus is more on African American writer's attention to voice out in their literary works. He further argues that in the body of literary works the relationship between writer and reader is necessarily more in the remote sense it seems than in the oral form. No doubt that African American writers use the act of voice as a metaphor for the entire process of change that occurs in the oral tradition and call-and-response method as well. It is said that in their hand this call-and-response evolves as a literary device. This actually encourages readers or people to become symbolic and then may be as a real participants in the whole process of storytelling.

Black Images in American Literature by Joan Cannady is quite important book because its collection of works discusses the interesting images of black people's life and also it examines the importance of images and its relation with tension about blacks and whites in American society. Writer has described very well about the black experience. It is in fact interesting to read as it throws more light upon those oppressed people's lived experiences that too by the writer who isn't black.

The book which is so helpful to understand Alice Walker's works is Harold Bloom's *Alice Walker-New Edition*. This actually helps readers to analyze Walker's writing and also her persona as an African American Author. She is just like a medium for blacks in American society because she is seen as a representative of her community. One can see her comprehensive understanding of the "spirit of the age". Being in a second position in American society, one should require intense innate qualities than the first positioned people while overcoming all the odd struggles. Only then, black women writers or any other would assert their existence unless that happens it would be difficult to stand by one's own self-evaluation. Not only that but we also come across the fact that Walker's writing novels like *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, *The Color Purple*, *Meridian* have been entered into contest with Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* which was not at all intended by Alice Walker.

Bloom points out that in *The Color Purple*, Walker talks about revision of certain moment that could also be found in the Hurston's text. She has created a character whom we find as if she is literally writing for herself concerning her being or her existence in a way. That becomes more interesting when she writes in language that is almost imitating which is already spoken by writer like Janie and Hurston etc. There is a kind of reversal of position. Bloom asks the question whether Walker has subverted by imitating a revisionist movement which she has not originated. But answer is still awaited I guess. Next thing is, in the Louis H. Pratt's chapter, he mentions about Walker's 1973 interview, in which she talks about her interest in analyzing social relationships. Not only that, Walker says, she likes to challenge the double standards also and therefore, all her novels and short stories do reflect her particular view.

Next book is written by Barbara Christian entitled *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976*. We get to see author examines the vitality of the black women's images in the black fiction comparing past and present. We can understand the problems overcome by black women writers especially novelists who are discussed over here. In the second part, we could find authors like Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Paul Marshall, etc. In Walker's Essay *The Novels for Everyday Use: The Novels of Alice Walker* is intellectually encouraging and no doubt that it helps to track down the African American literature background. Besides, it also helps the way writers did away with the framework of stereotype and how they began to write about women as an emerging character.

Barbara Christian's analysis of Alice Walker's usage of black speech is discussed in *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation* which is edited by Mari Evans. The essays are titled as "Alice Walker: Writing the Color Purple" and "Alice Walker: The Black Women artist as wayward". Both the chapters show us about the best usage of black speech as a distinctive aesthetic tool. She tells that Walker have tried to save black females disposition from the mayhem of racist thoughts and sexist society for better (236).

Michelle Collins writing *The Color Purple: What Feminism can Learn from a Southern Tradition* is from the book *Southern Literature and Literary Theory* edited by Jefferson Humphries helps us to know that, the study of African-American history, literature, and culture got nourished during 1960s and 1970s. The importance of the black writer in the field of literature belonging to the southern part that had gone through set of reevaluation. Not just that, further it suggests diversity of some critical methods that could be used to explore the literature along with the significance of particular culture.

Regarding the above said, that particular essay shows the warm and supportive and interdependent community presented at the end of the story, novel *The Color Purple* seems like Utopia. But at the same time question do arise what exactly contemporary feminist got to learn from the southern tradition. In the folklore, black women were called the mules of the world because they thought that consideration suitable depending on the circumstances. That became their identification and status in the society. One thing is Walker has created her protagonist voice allowing her to speak directly to readers is very appreciating.

Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities is a book which addresses the lack of consideration of mothers and so does the particular essay by Brenda O Dale that is entitled “ Teaching Alice Walker’s Meridian: Civil Rights According to Mothers. This is all about their thoughts desires, and active subjects instead of consideration of desirable objects and concerns. In the fiction, we could see certain debates on ethnicity, class and sexuality never lags behind. Whereas, it suggests that mothers should always be adoptive. Finally this is all about giving voice to black women and women empowerment allowed by importance for dual consciousness, and the dialogic type or negotiative process of self-acceptance. Mothers and women in literature, fiction and women authors, besides history and criticism not just that one can understand the vitality of motherhood in literature.

Plenty of works have been done on Walker’s writing, southern women writers and also about southern renaissance. *Women Writers of the Contemporary South* is an interesting book with collections of essay by various contemporary writers shows the evidence of the notable fiction writers of the southern region obviously women writers

obviously new generation of writers following the southern renaissance where one is not restricted by the sense of regionalism. Collection of essays over here throws light into writers' southern identity and attempts to examine their fictions observing their style and subject of discussion that are of interest in recent southern fictions.

The particular essay by Thodious M. Davies Alice Walker's Celebration of the Self in Southern Generations, discusses the unmitigated abuse of children and celebration of self. Walker believes in the power of individuality its beauty inside out. Further, Collective performance is appreciated besides Walker's willingness to take chance on different ways of articulating or exhibiting her vision which is very unique in that sense. She is also criticized for her bold opinions and not successful all the time but she likes to experiment with her stories.

We are always enchanted by recurring themes in the African American novels and *The Afro-American novel since 1960* is such informative book that examines the interesting forms and themes showcasing the ideological concerns of contemporary black fictions of the leading dominant novelists. Essay by Klaus Ensslen titled Collective experience and Individual Responsibility: Alice Walker's the Third Life of Grange Copeland, throws light upon all the above said besides analyzing the integrity of women and their feminine search for the selfhood besides focusing on the narrative strategies.

Next book is *Contemporary American Women Writers: Narrative Strategies* which revises the literary tradition in a way to include female experiences with their insightful visions and expression. Writers like Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and may others have mostly concentrated on the narrative management. Grace Paley and Anne Redmon others depend upon gaps created during narration and that silence is something

which indicates the depth that might be missing from the modern experience. Whereas for Walker, she is more towards verbal assertiveness and focuses upon executing deliberate emancipation and empowerment of her protagonists who are made to realize their existence and importance of speaking. And therefore, Elizabeth Fifer's essay "Alice Walker: The Dialect and the Letters of the *The Color Purple*" does show the above said points, Alice Walker's narrative management is flexible sometime it is personalized helping free flow of thoughts in the novel, especially *The Color Purple*.

Further, Ozick and Tyler disrupt expectations of the conventional type of readers regarding the concept of antinovel and the family novel type. Next Toni Morrison and Marge Piercy and fictions actually shows that how traditional narrative forms like bildungsroman are convenient to meet the feminist purposes. Writers of this book enlighten readers about literary history and black women's voices are intensely reshaping the African-American literary tradition. In the chapter discussed above, one can observe that there is a gradual development concerned to feminist consciousness in Celie and her sister Nettie. It appears that their life is like mosaic (156).

The most important text book is *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* is an interesting text which lets us know all about blues and vernacular tradition and verbal play of the usage of using capital "S" to the word Signifying and lower case to white. This book shows how the theory has been applied to the texts of writers like Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker. Their essays are the closing chapters in this text. According to Henry Louis Gates Jr. concept of signifying and intertextuality is not restricted to the criticism of only Afro-American literature but this will be useful to other literatures as well to know the proper configuration of their

writing text of their tradition. This book is informative and important contribution to African American literature and also to the literary theory. One can sense that writer has given black literature enough room to breathe. That helps readers to experience profound black writing. This text still retains its relevance and it seems apt to quote Wole Soyinka that this book still continues to signify.

It's a known fact that woman talents were not valued but ignored by patriarchal mindset. But things have changed for the good. Followed by that, *Tradition and Talents of Women* is one more text where we can see women writing has been acknowledged and given significance. This is what we get to see in the essay of E. Hedges and that is titled as *The Needle or the Pen: The Literary Rediscovery of Women's Textile Work*. Significance is given considering that talent of writing is one among a literary heritage and the other one as a cultural heritage. This book not just celebrate writers like Alice Walker but also lets us to know how women writers have come together supporting each other from so many generations.

Specifying: Black Women Writing the American Experience is an interesting book which enlightens discussing fictions of major black women writers. Interestingly, with Marxist approach, the writer analyzes the work of Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Barbara etc. including historical perspective culture and politics. When it is placed in critical context, literary theory never lags behind in comparison to others. Essays in this collection appear to be provocative but they are informative about contemporary fiction, African American culture and also political theory. Further, Writer throws light upon the possible literary consequences of certain themes found throughout in the dominant writers' body of work. Madison prefer to show past and present moving to future of

course, then girlhood to maturity that is womanhood. She focuses more on literary modes, narrative forms and metaphor that emphasizes the lived experiences. Susan Willis essay titled *Alice Walker's Women*, does deal with the same thing as said above. Further, she considers novelists as historians and also visionaries who not only record the on goings of capitalist society but they are someone who imagine better alternative things or modes of working through characters that readers may look at the new approach concerning future.

Donna Haisty Winchell's book *Alice Walker* gives the complete understanding of Alice Walker's writing. Her being a prolific writer, she writes about American black women and their inner selves. Discovering of selves has strengthened them to survive in harsh conditions. Drawing from her own experiences Walker has given voice and courage to women who were pushed to passivity. It is quite understood that the overwhelming themes of Walker's work is associated with Survival and also self and that is the matter of concern. Besides Winchell highlights upon the concept of inner peace with the help of self-knowledge. Due to walker's background, one can see her fictions are rooted in southern tradition as found in other texts. Most significant thing is looking for the divinity in one's personality inside and out not just that but in everything towards wholeness. Therefore, Winchell's text is most helpful since it is very comprehensive work.

Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation by Mari Evans again provides the each writers critical perspectives. Betteye J. Smith, Parker's essay named "Alice Walker's Women in Search of some Peace of Mind" is a reflection on her. Next book is quite interesting by Marjorie Pryre and Hortense J Spiller titled *Conjuring: Black*

Women, Fiction and Literary Tradition. So the text again shows the significance of Black women's writing within the whole American literary tradition. Her essay which is named as Introduction: Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker and the Ancient power of Black women, has addressed how this particular tradition which has recovered from so many obstacles has re-shaped understandably African American writing within American literature. All the essays in this text continues to highlights the magic of African American women's writing that appears to be of great inspiration.

Gloria Wade Gayles's book named *No Crystal Stair: visions of Race and Sex in Black Women's Fiction* throws light upon portrayal of black women in the novels following World War II and themes used then. Besides we can see the narrow space of race and black women position in America and their hardships and their predicaments being mothers and wives facing everyday challenges and contradictions looking forward in search of wholeness.

One more book by her is *Southern Women Writers: The New Generation* which assess the literary works of third generation women writers belonging to southern region. This book also highlights the renaissance initiated by new generation of writers in which men were also among leading members like William Faulkner. We could also see writers of Flanner O Connor who belongs to that particular region. This book also helps to understand third generation writers published around 50s. Every essay gives an account of writer's career and their accomplishments besides their strong confluence with southern literary tradition

David Bradley's article named Novelist Alice Walker: Telling Black Women's story, is all about her collection of stories *In Love and Trouble*. That is written in the

form of feminist standard. This gives proper understanding of narrative techniques concerned to emotions, plot along with political concerns. There was no flaw in her technique and her images were perfect so that people can see the things properly to understand. This article is elaborate and discusses collection of poems too from *Revolutionary Petunias* which gives hint of precise keeping her images clear, simple and with light irony. All her novels are appealing and compelling. This article gives brief understanding of all uncompromising feminist thought to heal oneself and strongly believes over that.

Deborah G. Plant's *Alice Walker: A Woman of Our Times* is a book that explores the philosophical thought which reforms Alice Walker activist life and work with attention from Georgia to New York other places like Mississippi, Gaza to East Africa that impacted her intellectual works and philosophical growth. As per the title the question arises what exactly is to be a woman in modern times. Interestingly, Walker has gone through Civil Right Movement's era and the Black Art Movement to the present is very much viewed as an outcast because of the subjects she has selected to write and people to write about whom she loves and care for.

Further, we come across her body of works and her activism more in a form of intersection of many things like, creativity, concepts of peace and spirituality in order to bring positive change in the society. After going through the works, one will surely feel that walker is such a profound voice that is really needed even today in the present society. She is loud with a voice of encouragement and that is quite visible in all her collection of poems, stories, articles and also novels. Therefore, she is considered as strong voice for human rights and we could see her love for all the living creatures and

mother earth. She has considered speechlessness as a kind of healing sometimes. She has been a woman of courage. She knows very well how to honor the difficult time. Her work teaches everyone to brave the harsh realities of life courageously. Her, being a woman of our times, one can see through her visions. Undauntedly she says that we are in the condition of peril and everywhere there is a lack of leadership with no proper vision. Her participation in the political and cultural movements has changed the matters noticeably. And has made the difference in the society. Being activist her life and her fictions enlighten readers about her conventions. She believes that practical philosophy is essential for a meaningful life. Writer also shows Walker's personal political side and philosophy. That helps us to understand how to become empowered to live righteous life on one's own and facilitated by an honest philosophical approach to life. This piece of work on Alice Walker and all other works surely places her readers in the circle of healing reminding good times and connection with nature and also with one another. Most importantly through her works she makes us recognize the power within ourselves that might enlighten our path way.

Walker's inclination towards Marxism to certain extent is felt while analyzing her characters in some of her fictions. In the wake of that we could find reason in the text book which is titled as *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* penned by Cedre J. Robinson is an intellectual outline of the Marxism and Black radicalism. It's important to discuss because writer inquires both Marxism and also black radicalism simultaneously. Firstly, Marxism because of its adherents that have come across difficulties to recognize its intense and also ambiguous feeling of owing gratitude to western civilization. Secondly, we see Black radicalism because undoubtedly one feels

that it has been the very circumstance of its appearance and sometimes it is misinterpreted and diminished. Further, we see that this book throws light on the displacement of history by the theory and self-serving legend. However, it would be fair to say not to base anything at its epistemological framework that Marxism is a western construction. One can come across recurring ideas when it comes to social ideological radicalism and it has persisting consequences. One can also observe the formulation of racial sensibility and its ideological consequences where we can find the history of the emergence of racial order in feudal Europe and the impact on the organization of labor and capitalism.

This section shows that Alice Walker is a prolific writer and wide range of concepts have been discussed and written on her body of works. As a result of that I have tried to bring in all the major factors related to her fictions collectively so that it shall look like organic unity. In a way this literature survey has helped to emphasize essentiality of wider literary concepts, theories, approaches and multiple perspectives to understand Walker's creative ability. Though numerous works have been done on Alice Walker's fictions, I believe that my research topic is still different since it has been analyzed through womanist lens that collective factors and optimistic connectivity gives it aesthetic touch and looks like "**artistic wholeness**".

Research Methodology and Purpose

Methodology followed in this research primarily starts with textual analysis. It's a known fact that interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge. According to Catherine Belsey, textual knowledge is general. Some constitutes a culture, some of it is personal, or biography and some of it is derived from secondary sources (160). This will

soon make the things clear because it considers the analogues. This helps to bring in distinctive facts about the text in comparison to other texts. Textual analysis is always comfortable carry on literature search and anthologies do help in that way. It provides coherent information and rhetorically persuasive arguments.

No text can ever force reader to view it in a particular way and hence we get multiple ways to interpret. Because, textual analysis depends on a grasp of how meaning works. If meaning is acquired from language, we can make words up, but they will become meaningful only if other people understand them. Textual analysis is carried out at a particular historical moment and from within a specific culture. It doesn't go to the level of exhaust. It is able to be new by unearthing information some text is made up of multiple writings and helps to understand the cultural criticism exploring possible avenues. This methodology is based on content analysis. Hence, this helps to understand the usage of language and images. Being flexible in nature, it leads research for the deeper examination of recurring themes of African American literature. When it is concerned to fiction, usage of language matters. Methodology is further extended towards **"discourse analysis"** helping to make out the production of meaning and its readability. This method is convenient to analyze the past and present whether it is theoretical perspectives or recurring themes.

Most importantly feminist theory is used as an extensive tool to examine and assess the ideas of gender and consequences of sexuality. Alice Walker's writing throws challenge to the male hegemony questioning ideology. I have combined other theoretical models such as Marxism, Black Feminist thought and womanism which are the key elements in the fictions of Walker. The above said theoretical models helps to examine

the influential role of gender. These theoretical aspects have been instrumental in interpreting and analyzing fictions besides providing them wide public exposure. Through this, various ways of representation of women in the field of literature is highlighted.

Marxism and Realism

Marxist theory determines who has the power. Through Marxism we get to understand how men become the main beneficiaries within family and even in the society. Therefore, men's power over women ensures continuity of controlling power. Hence we can see the unequal power distribution and unequal relationship between men and women which starts within the family. Where, women are seen as dependent over men socially, psychologically and most importantly economic dependence is observed. For example, Grange Copeland's domination over his wife and son Brownfield shows how men power specifically manipulated women within domestic sphere.

Being Aesthetic in her life, Walker shows how to employ that in routine life as well. **Realism** is flexible in nature and equivocal as well. Therefore, realism provides framework to analyze her fictions. As said above, day to day experiences are depicted in the stories. These experiences are the direct consequences of the political, social and economic situation of the characters. Most probably the marginalized and working class people are focused hence we get glance into black life. This shows the tragic life of blacks in American society. Marxist critic George Lukacs represents the political orthodoxy. He considered that the nineteenth century realist fiction as a model and believed that a realist work must reveal the underlying pattern of contradictions in a social order. Through Marxism we can understand political as well as ideological

orientation over here. One can understand the naturalistic vision and realism as a unifying theme. It is important to note that principles of socialist realism is quite visible in Walker's writing that gives the picture of social order as well. They are like, commitment to the oppressed class and writers commitment to the class interests. This is not to say of particular allegiance but her inherent ability to showcase or portray the social transformation in the society.

This is how we can understand the impact of certain ideologies which helps to realize women their standpoint. The above said theories helped to explore different conceptualization and that is seen as a pedagogic task. Besides, it throws light upon the nature of language which sometimes shows the tendency of changing especially usage of Black English in Walker's stories. And this shows the impact of African oral tradition on writer as well as on African American Literature. Walker's stories are loaded with folk traditions. For example, Female Genital mutilation is such practice which is performed by a woman. This is barbaric but their traditional culture it seems. Because of extensive use of oral tradition we could see that things get repeated for example, stock characters which are based on social prejudices are dynamic and flat in nature and stereotypical. Their nature of behavior is predictable and therefore one can see the foreseeable consequences. Even characters do get repeated in Walker's Stories for example Tashi from *The Color Purple* to *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Celie has come alive in the story because of realistic approach to her character. She is seen as loyal in all her relationships that's stereotypical of her character. She is dynamic in nature and therefore she has undergone positive transformation.

Black Feminist thought and Womanism

Studies show that black feminist movement was result of women's movement and the black liberation movement. The reason behind this is to tackle the oppressive racist society of discrimination. They wanted their problems to be addressed with a new critical thinking in order to bring positive change in the society. Alice walker's fictions bring in the principles of feminist agency that includes freedom, empowerment and meaning full engagement. Obviously feminist and women's rights notions helpful understand and support the related programs and to address the deep routed reasons of gender inequality, besides getting to know the discriminatory social norms the will only value men's domination over women. Further we could see how language and also concepts overlap and that's needs to be focused. Still we could see that though the world "Feminist" is acknowledge, the language used in this approach is not yet accessible to everyone it seems. Strong black feminist approach, strong leadership and highest level of accountability is needed which is found in Alice Walker's literary text which are committed to social change.

Black feminist approach is the most important as it is know that there has been long struggle for recognition within their community and outside. They had also struggled with white feminist. We cannot do away with the fact of **intersectionality** here. For example, if we talk about black women's liberation then obviously it entails freedom not only for women but all people and that requires eradication of harsh practices of racism, sexism and also class oppression. Because their problems are interconnected to one another no doubt this particular approach shows the divorce picture of American society. Intersectionality affects individual's personal life. This is actually a theoretical

frame work to analyze the aspects of an individual's life and socio-political identity. This approach shows how black women struggled to overcome invisibility and realized the need for black women's representation.

Many writers have given definitions of the black feminist movement but most significant one seems to be Alice Walker's term "Womanist". Which has widen the scope of women's individual boundaries. Therefore, her fictions analyze the complex social issues faced by black people generally and women significantly. The aim of womanism was to integrate and to build the cooperation amongst themselves which of course has already influence the American culture significantly. All these principles has helped blacks to reform and also to recover the identity in their truest form. Therefore, it is quite visible that the Self becomes inevitable discussion point throughout this thesis. **Self-assertion, Self-reflectivity, Self-referentiality, Self-realization** are key features found plenty in the walker's fiction which are the consequences of womanist attitude. Earlier black women movements did not benefit black women with what they expected. Hence, they started their own, the Black Feminist Movement.

History has always progressed through the class struggle. This struggle is originated by the exploitation of one class by another class this fact is evident throughout history. Black culture appears to be multicultural. For being black, in America is like a process of adopting and moving through various distinctive cultures. It seems that there are many ways to be black as there are plenty of black people. Black historical consciousness seems has an effort to teach black histories and to identify black people's humanity. Besides it emphasizes pedagogical practices which seek to reimagine the legitimacy and interpretation of historical sources. By now through walker's fiction it is

understood that black histories consists of multiple identity that informs blackness and look at each positionality has important in gaining a total understanding of black history. It is understood that Harlem renaissance was an outburst of black cultural consciousness that found its voice in various artistic expressions such as literature, music, theatre, painting and sculpture. Black art work was an image of the write or wrong actions of man and offered a critical movement in black aesthetic history. The 1960's was a period of political and civil disorder in America which is depicted in the novel *Meridian*. Black Americans were not only in search of civil rights and freedom but also they were a need of an identity that was autonomous of main stream perceptions and ideologies.

Alice Walker's fictions have shown that black feminist perspectives actually broaden the black aesthetic project. It has created an alternative language that has reshaped the politics and tools which are used to perpetuate racism, classism and particularly patriarchy and the way people think about such ideas as social justices. Black Art Movement demands the transformation for freedom and a higher level of life of African Americans. This movement is an urge for social purpose to respond positively to the reality of revolution. Walker's fiction let us to know that are place a vital role for social renovation. Besides above discussed theoretical models as methods, one can see historical contexts and cultural contexts which are interlinked. The Former is abundantly found in walker's fiction. But historical context entwines with its social context it seems. Because underline norms and convention are historically specific. Through this context we get to see major changes between times past and present. And Latter is interlinked with social, historical and ideological context making in contactual. This is quite visible in *Possessing in the Secret of Joy*, *The Temple of my familiar*, *The color purple*,

Meridian, Everyday use etc....Walker has showcase the particular way of African life by including folk actors in order preserve Africanness.

Introduction of Chapters

Depending on the above methodology my research content is divided into five chapters. First chapter is **Introduction** followed by three chapters and last one is towards conclusion. We get to see the close examination of major fictions in every chapter along with interesting approaches. Introduction contours the background of African American history and literature. Further, covering racial and gender issues which are obviously central part of this research work. Black feminism and womanist point of view is the theoretical concern for this work. This chapter highlights the impact of Harlem Renaissance, Black Arts Movement and Civil Rights Movement on African American writers and their literary works.

The second chapter is titled **Walker's Engagement with Marxist Philosophy and Visionary Theorization**. This chapter is an attempt to understand her inclination towards Marxist thoughts. We could see that dominantly in her much talked about short fiction *Everyday Use* from *Love and Trouble: stories of Black Women in 1973* and other works. I have selected this story because it is much closer to the novelist own life and her African American experiences and her celebration of Southern womanhood in confluence with cultural roots and also past. Characters in this story are in conflict with each other regarding free will and determinism. We could see in this story, that Marxist thought acts as a socio-economic inquiry into life of characters where one could hold modernity over traditionalistic thought.

This chapter shows that the touch of Marxist perspective upholds the firm belief in the social change and so does walker's political orientation. It's a known fact that Alice Walker's novels are political in nature. Protagonist's emancipation in the novels could be seen through Marxist point of view. This chapter also focus on the effect of the Civil Rights Movement and it's in the novel *Meridian* its impact upon society and Alice Walker herself.

Third chapter is titled as **Elements of Realism and Validity of Language in Walker's Fictions**. Artistic use of language conveys different mode of expressions. Walker's Realism is almost like an ideology and philosophy. It helps to emphasize the literary works which opened the door of progressive path. Her fictions over here are self-explanatory and her work looks like tragic realism sometimes with realistic elements. This element provides theoretical framework to understand novels using black images and also double consciousness. This chapter focus on the use of vernacular language and certain African American speech patterns in Black English to restore the black identity. Vernacular expressions usually is a style of storytelling in African American culture. Novels discussed over here are full of blues devices in language and structure. Because it sounds courageous, signifying and poetic in order to reveal black expressive wholeness as an aesthetic quality.

A language is not just a word play but it is a complex system which is interconnected with physical world only then it gets through artistic excellence. Novels being political also reflects the social and psychological condition of Blacks hence writing is therapeutic. It helps to converse with our own thoughts more than anything else female bonding is upheld through the use of black folk English especially in the

Possessing the Secret of Joy and *The Color Purple* holds special place because of its simple Black English. Novelist's usage of language actually invites us to journey through language, culture and history of African American society. Feminine Language is mind altering in her novels and narrates to express “**self-identity**” and also brings out the socio cultural truth.

Fourth chapter describes the shifting aesthetics, critical comparison of black women's literary tradition. This chapter is titled as **Distinctive Ideas of Black Feminist Thinking and Critical Comparison of Black Female Tradition**. We all know that black feminist criticism can overturn the past in order high light the new dimension. One can observe the Black English elegance not just in the novels of Alice Walker but her contemporaries like Toni Morrison etc. this chapter discusses past and present simultaneously. This chapter discusses comparison of contemporary writers with the past writers who has laid a strong foundation to this stream of writing. Besides showing importance of black aesthetics, black feminist scholarship which is more practical than being theoretical. In their set tradition, we could see recurring thematic concerns. It is hard to avoid the repetition of concepts and themes because of African American history of slavery and related issue.

This chapter further look towards black feminist critics in order to identify the similarities. This also shows the intricacies of cultural matrix and racial uplift. One could observe the representation of slavery as a genre. Black women's writing denies idealized fantasies but assert only black-self with deep insight into the critical practice of black feminist thought followed by womanist views. These thoughts help to check the political ideologies besides keeping up aesthetic and artistic deliverance.

Fifth and final chapter is **Conclusion** which suggests that black women have acquired distinctive vantage point to bring out the truth of racial oppression. We also learn the fact that Black arts Movement has always been useful in creating Black Literary Theory. African American fictions are highly didactic in nature and also inclusive because of Womanist stand point. That is the reason behind African American literature's wide range of concepts and perspectives. Hence, the outcome of this research shows the broader experience of "larger form of emancipation and its deliverance" that is the hopeful outcome of African American literature of which Walker speaks is both a physical and a spiritual freedom. In her writing and in her life, one of walker's main preoccupations and interests has been the connection between violence, female sexuality and patriarchal efforts to subordinate and control women.

Walker continues to examine and develop the themes like patriarchal oppression of women, escape from and healing of these abuses and also the achievement of selfhood with the goal of universal healing and escape from oppression in mind, as seen in *The Color Purple* and *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *Meridian* etc., as well as her writing. One can observe the rise of feminism because Walker's heroines gain a "consciousness" about that. One more interesting thing is about novels predictable cycle of birth and all kind of relationships along with loss and redemption. Her narrative strategies are quite effective in *The Color Purple* and there is a kind of intellectual deviation and we see the experimental juxtaposition in the narrative of *Meridian*. She identifies herself as an artist within the African American literary tradition and, as such, asserts that it is the artist's responsibility to speak for those oppressed women, both African as well as African American. Her philosophy can help readers or anyone to access fortitude to confront the

society. It strengthens one's mind to face challenges and in overcoming crisis. No doubt that philosophy teaches us to face fear of death also which obviously comes in a different ways. Alice Walker might not be perfect in all ways but her thoughts are full of wisdom and this is enough to understand her as a woman of substance in modern times and her fictions preaches same things.

Chapter-2

WALKER'S ENGAGEMENT WITH MARXIST PHILOSOPHY AND VISIONARY THEORIZATION

Every person has his or her own inclination towards certain ideologies and that is observed in their deeds and its absorption is quite visible especially if an individual is writer or an activist. Similarly, one can find such political orientation in the writings of Alice walker too. Therefore, here I have come across few points which could support the above said and also we get to understand her philosophical stand. I shall begin with Marxist Theory and that determines who has the most power and how we are educated, it also influences our religious beliefs, and together controls how we perceive ourselves and our world. It becomes important to observe that in literature, how oppressive socioeconomic ideologies influence the character's behavior and also whether literary work combats those ideologies by clearly illustrating the damage they do.

As a political philosophy, this is a method which undergoes socioeconomic analyses using the so called materialist interpretation of not just society but also historical development. This perspective further helps to the better understanding of class relations besides observing social conflict helping to view social transformation through dialectical perspective. Walker's fictions provides glimpses of Marxism because it is also a political as well as economic theory where one can see the possibility of society where there would be no place for class issues. Those who are having thoughts for common good just like Alice Walker, there exists society of justice driving away class struggle theoretically.

I shall begin with the Marxist critical approach to *Everyday Use* which is a short story in Walker's collection *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* in 1973.

It seems that in this story Walker illuminates her life-long celebrations of southern black womanhood connecting with one's roots and one's past. It seems that, *Everyday Use* is actually narrated by the black rural women in her unrefined voice. I feel that it is an attempt to give a voice to a traditionally disenfranchised segment of the population. This story contains several important parallels to the author's own life as well. So it is quite natural to observe that Walker's art has shed new light on various aspects of African American experiences, particularly the trials and tribulations of black women.

Walker's modern classic *Everyday Use* tells the story of a mother and her two daughters Dee and Maggie with their conflicting ideas regarding their identities and ancestry. The two daughters have taken diverging paths. Maggie, who had a little access to education. Dee on the other hand, was always been over ambitious and ascertain mind set. From her girlhood days she always yearned to move ahead. When Dee arrives back, she tells her mother that Dee is dead, and her new name is Wanger Lewanika Kemanju. Further, she claims that it is difficult for her to tolerate being named after some people who are the very reason to oppression. She reveals her true intentions in visiting to collect objects for her home that she can use to display her heritage. She starts searching for objects for her collection and latches on the quilts that had been made by her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

By changing her real name Dee has denied her real heritage, in which she was named for her aunt. The name which was passed down through four generations, she believes that as she was named after oppressors shows a critical lack of understanding and new name Wangero sounds very strong. This shows her confused attitude in understanding her own rich heritage. This renaming is a way of connecting to the past

and an indication of the fluid nature of identity. Similarly her boyfriend also embraces Muslim ideas and also new name for him. I mean it is as if attempt of leaving behind their true selves embracing new identity. She just wants to display to her mother's possessions in her home as examples of folk art, but refuses to recognize their greater value to her mother and sister as objects of everyday use which they still make use.

Double consciousness is the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures. Dee lifted herself above her family by going to college and joining a higher class people. She, in turn, lets her family know that she is better than them because of her education, forgetting that they helped her financially through college, church and also the entire town. Dee's arrogant personality is due to her double consciousness. Dee has the American dream which is defined as a capitalist ideology associated specifically with American history and culture. American dream and rugged individualism are the two aspects of Marxist theory that are omnipresent in *Everyday Use*. Dee rose up above the normal standards of her family and community by going to college, she no doubt considers herself as a part of the American dream. She no longer belongs to that poor family in which she was born and raised. This is a quintessential example of rugged individualism.

Lois Tyson is a professor, who points out that the American dream leads us to believe that poor people who are unable to significantly improve their financial status must be shiftless and lazy or in some other way undeserving of decent living conditions. Through her personality one can understand her ideologies regarding family and how that's been treated. Consequently, Dee believes that, her sister Maggie does not deserve the quilts her mother gave her which were important to the family because they had patches of clothing in the form of memory from the family tracing back decades. When

it comes to quilts each and every piece of fabric is a story teller. Each piece of cloth is a document that chronicles the different generations of lives and also the trials including war related tales and poverty etc. It is understood that mama can't do away with her personal history. She considers that as a precious treasure. She inherited that quilt from her ancestors instead of money or property. Because, she had great respect for family quilts that narrates various lived experiences of elders and ancestors. Dee fails to understand her mother's intention and care for preserving quilts. For her it is just an object of attraction.

Everyday Use focuses on the bonds between women of different generations along with their enduring legacy as symbolized in quilts. No doubt this connection between generations is strong. Dee's arrival and lack of understanding of her history shows that those bonds vulnerable as well. Dee has done away with her own heritage and she has very much to find in a new heritage created for herself. Constructing a new heritage for newly found "self" ignoring the fact that one cannot deny the past nor reject. She fails to see the family legacy of her given name and she keeps new name Wagner because she believes more accurately that she is representing her African heritage. No doubt she is having less understanding of Africa; she considers her true heritage is actually empty and false. It is strange that Dee views her real heritage as dead, something of the past, rather than as living, ongoing creation. She just sees the quilts as artifacts of a lost time suitable for display but not for actual, practical use. Dee wishes to keep out of her own past rejecting real facts just to favor constructed artificial heritage.

We can easily make out the differences in the family. Everybody seems to be struggling to understand and appreciate family values and the present situations in life in relation to the culture and family convictions. Alice Walker, in this story upholds the

factors which contribute to the context and values of the heritage of a family illustrating the fact that appreciation of family values or possession of objects is the attitude and lifestyle of an individual that creates the need for appreciating one's own culture with deep sense.

One thing is important to note in the story that it is ironical. Dee is apprehensive of her own culture at the same time she is enthusiastic about her learning of the African American culture. Walker is of the opinion that quilts should be given to Maggie since she appreciates their culture and it also marks their continuation from generation to generation. Significance of quilts may be lost if it is given to Dee. Maggie has also suffered just like her mother and grandmother and always flaunted with tough childhood days. She never got the things easily as Dee. She is already having a great gift of education and quilt is just a thing to her whereas for Maggie it contains valuable memories of her ancestors along with cultural history and for her it is as important as reading and writing would be to Dee. So in this way Maggie represents many black women who suffer.

When I focus on the above points what I feel is that Dee is overly materialistic and carries mean mentality which creates an emotional detachment from her family. Similar situations are there which create distance between her and the family members. One more reason is that the family members fail to understand Dee's aesthetic opinions especially for the quilts. The opinion of Dee may be to have the quilts for sale so that she shall have a classy life. This obviously is contrary to the opinion of her family who are so emotionally attached to the quilts regardless of their lean economic situation.

With the passing time there was a turn in viewing or observing the traditional American culture. Mama felt that giving quilt to Dee was like losing a cultural identity

with American ties. It was not enough for mama and Maggie to have their precious quilts circulating in an economical ways which could trigger no emotions and memories to those who used them. It is also ironical that this family could have earned better money from that art of making quilt which they mastered but they were careless about the economic value of the commodity because of lack of education and awareness they just loved it dearly.

Dee's family had its misgiving regarding the communization of the quilt as Dee would have opted given her little concern about the quilts. This makes mama to snatch the quilts from Dee's arms and throws them to Maggie. This is how she saves quilts from circulating beyond the family generation in economies far away from home knowing that with Maggie, there will be a preservation of generational ties held by the quilts. Maggie knows how to quilt that becomes her sense of the knowledge production. Mama and Maggie represent ordinary people who keep things at home without putting them into any unique use whereas Dee is a contributor to the value and aesthetics of items. She views the quilt as a commodity that can circulate. Mama's opinion about the quilt is that it is a process and she kept them without putting them to everyday use, which in Marxist opinion may symbolize the opinion of the quilts having no value. But I would see it also as a way of life representing culture.

Marxist theory actually rejects the idea that the social class into which we are born determines our superiority or inferiority as human beings. Class standing determines whether we'll be socially advantaged or disadvantaged. Dee carries certain amount of capitalist ideologies. As we know that capitalism believes that competition among individuals who are most capable, most intelligent people will rise to top.

In the capital system of America's, most of the power belongs to those who control all the money. So here, the word capital means money. According to Marxist theory, however, the socioeconomic system in which we live does much more than determine who has the most power. At the same time it also determines, among other things like education and it also influences religious beliefs as said earlier.

The survival of American capitalism depends on its citizens who are convinced of natural superiority. And they manage to rise from the very bottom plane to the top position of financial overflow. It is education and religious beliefs that do much of the convincing by determining how they perceive themselves in the world. For example, America was founded on the basis of puritan religion and their belief is that some of them are specially blessed and chosen by God before the birth it seems. So, no wonder why American monetary success is most considerable with its association with moral virtuousness.

The above said belief also persists in the American Dream, which celebrates as a virtue the individual's rise to the highest position of financial achievement of which he or she is capable. No doubt both America's educational philosophy and religious history foster the spirit of individual competition and the desire for financial prosperity that is the basis of its socioeconomic system. Marxism therefore, is concerned with how the socioeconomic system in which personal identities are shaped. It also points out that, our belief in the American Dream blinds us to the reality that a vast number of people have not had. Because of discriminatory factors like gender issues, racial issues and sexual orientation people could not get equal opportunities to access education, nor, job opportunities and not even proper housing facilities. Weaker section are always at the

receiving end of exploitation. Walker has placed all the above capitalist notions in Dee's character. These points play a positive role in the characters' lives, the story is procapitalist. In Marxist terms story promotes the capitalist oppression no doubt.

Everyday Use was set in an era when groups of all ideologies-some peaceful, some militant-emerged. The Black Muslims and Black Panthers were groups created to resist what they saw as a white dominated society. Dee is possibly emulating the cultural Nationalists, artist and writers who wore flowing robes and sandals and emphasized the development of black culture as a means of promoting freedom and equality. This story is a critique of individuals who misapplied or misunderstood some of the ideals that black consciousness groups promoted during that time. I could observe that these ideologies play a negative role in the characters' lives. The story reveals the evils of capitalism. There is a lot of competition between Dee her mother and sister Maggie. In this story human relationships have always been dynamic.

The setting of the story also shows a tumultuous time when many African Americans were struggling to redefine and seize control of their social, cultural, and political identity. There was also a greater attempt everywhere to recognize the contributions that African Americans had already made in America's long history. During this time along with scholars even common people became interested in unearthing and reexamining the African American past. These people were interested in the aspects of their African culture and heritage that had survived centuries of slavery and were still present in African American culture. This was the particular time where we could observe that many blacks sought to establish themselves as a visible and unified group and take control of how their group was named. Most of the black people

uninspired by a bleak history of slavery in North America, looked to their African roots in an effort to reconnect with their past.

Important thing to note in the story is Dee's priority towards social status. Which I feel it as pseudo status where she is flaunting with false prestigiousness. Dee tries to commodify everything and each and every one in a superficial manner. Because of this reason Dee has damaged her relationship with her family. Dee has the kind of strong mindset who cares for none. And that has helped her to accomplish the American Dream. She is satisfied after achieving financial success because we all know that every individual status depends upon one's own economic stability. Hence, she has attained that status which has enabled her to assert her achievement. When we focus on Mama and Maggie's sympathetic characters it becomes necessary to see the story as anti-capitalist.

The story invites readers to reject the capitalist ideologies which according to Marxist perspective is a very good thing. Marxist theory doesn't want the poor to be content with their poverty as we observe in the character of mama and Maggie. Marxism wants the poor to work against their own victimization since it is always towards progress and equality in the society. In every society, education is a symbol of great success being also a symbol for social class, status and power. Effects of classism can be easily identified in *Everyday Use*. The story shows Dee to be very fortunate she fails to associate herself with family because of their lack of social status forgetting her sister's and mother's sacrifices. She appears selfish and no doubt ungrateful also. Dee represents a misconception of heritage material. We could also observe that during her visit to mama and Maggie, the contrast of the characters becomes a conflict because Dee misplaces the significance of heritage in her desire for racial heritage.

In the mid-to-late 19th century, the intellectual tenets of Marxism was inspired by two German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxist analysis and methodologies have influenced multiple political ideologies and social movements throughout history. No doubt Marxism encompasses economic theory, social theory, a philosophical method and a revolutionary view of social change. Concerned to literature Marxist literary criticism is a loose term describing literary criticism based on socialist and dialectic theories. Studies show that, Marxist criticism considers literary works as the contemplation of the social institutions from which they have come into existence. According to Marxists, literature is also a social institution and has a specific ideological function based on the background and ideological of the author as well. I would also say that it is a critique of the development of capitalism.

Further, Conflict of “**determinism**” and freewill becomes very important over here that is obviously apparent in the novel *The Color Purple* where we could witness the mistreatment of black women which is led by the male belief that women are worthless and inferior. Therefore, it could be seen that Marxism: the idea that social circumstances determine much and the supremacy of a certain social order puts fear and deficient self-confidence into the mind of Celie, Nettie and most of the women characters in the novel. This is why I feel that Marxism is a socio-economic inquiry and certainly a kind of world view.

Coming back to author, Walker’s main writing power seems to be description and imagery along with a little flash back every now and then. Dee keeps her rebellion thoughts above everything. Because of that her personality is contrast compared to her family members. Next she illustrates that, significance of living and understanding the

present life while comparing that to their ancestor's traditional culture and that shows novelist adherence to certain values. Using careful descriptions and attitudes, Walker also demonstrates the factors which contribute to the values of one's own heritage and culture. Walker illustrates that possessing the desired object just to exhibit or keeping it for name sake is not important. One should realize its significance and acknowledge their understanding of their possession through attitude and life style that really matters. No doubt we can observe the way she has personified the different angles of culture and heritage in the characters of Dee and the mother who narrates this story.

Dee can be seen as modern women representing a materialistic, complex and modern way of life, where culture and heritage are to be valued for certain reasons and not only for the "trendy-ness" and aesthetic appeal. In her mother I could observe lot of simplicity representing content way of life where culture and heritage are valued for both its usefulness as well as its personal significance. Marxist theory is primarily shown through Dee's education opportunities as discussed in the beginning of this chapter. It seems that her learning has turned out to be divisive in her case rather than benefiting her cordial relationship with her own family. Education also separated Dee from her true sense of self. I could feel that Civil rights, a kind of greater visibility and zero tolerance for inequality in society becomes the characteristics of Dee. However I feel that *Everyday Use* is quintessential example of more subtle Marxism shown through just one family. After Dee starts attending the school it is very clear that she starts looking down upon her own family by saying things like Maggie can't appreciate these artistic quilts and fails to understand it's cultural significance. She would probably be backward enough to put them all into everyday use and it's really a new era for all of us. She disapproves mama

and Maggie's way of living their lives with ignorance instead of appreciating the new ways of life (Walker 1973).

Dee's sister is a reclusive home-body who as a child was injured badly in a fire. As already discussed earlier when Dee comes to visit her family and claims quilt for her own, situation becomes critical for a mother because it becomes must for to make a choice between both of her daughters. Mother also thinks about Dee's desire for quilts as valuable art piece and also Maggie's "everyday Use" for them. This story is widely recognized as one of Walker's very best and it appears in the *Norton Anthology of African American literature*. It's a known fact that Black women has been tormented by the history of discrimination. She has struggled hard to overcome the series of oppression and also humiliation. As a result, it is the survival mission of African-Americana that Walker's stories are mostly written as a matter of communal survival. She is very much aware of the history of oppression of her own people and she also recognizes the importance of constructing a cultural heritage to help African-American thrive (McMillan 107).

Next thing is, we have studied that quilting has been considered as a significant part of their culture from centuries back. Perhaps the most resonant quality of quilt making is the promise of creating unity amongst disparate elements, of establishing connections in the midst of fragmentation. It seems that Walker has included quilt in the story to explain African-American heritage and the creativity of African-Americans. I'm not saying that she is the first to introduce the importance of quilt making as African-Americans tradition but it seems that she is the first to articulate the value of quilting and its aesthetic significance.

During the Black Power Movement around 1960, African-Americans were trying to reach equality in American society. This is also the time when their literature started dealing with the problematic issues of integration, separation and the redefinition of the African-American heritage. I could see that author portrays the quilt as the use and misuse of the cultural heritage and also peoples different attitudes towards it. The redefinition of the African heritage led to conflict within their own society. Naturally, one could understand the new view held by the educated members with African-American origin which collides with the traditional rural view, which represents the position of the older African-American members.

As per my understanding of Marxism, many intellectuals, revolutionaries and regimes claim a link to Marxism as basis for their politics. It could also be considered also as an important ideology to struggle against culturalist hegemony. The premises within which Marxism works are concurrent with those in which resistance literature and minority literature works. "Literature finds itself positively charged with the vital part and function of collaborative and indeed revolutionary, enunciation" (Deleuze 2000). Major themes share a similar point of view regarding Marxist ideology or theory perhaps political orientation.. Most of the times that sounds very much like a philosophy. And therefore, it is based on social relations, deep understanding of history. Scientific relevance and radical assessment or critique of society is important. Besides, providing enough sources to peasants and working class could help them to prosper and build their own society. Important thing is to have a healthy prosperous society hence the abolition of classes and the call for a classless society which could be achieved through class struggle and the rejection of religion as a determining factor in people's lives (Wesson 1976).

Dee could be seen as an emergent woman in the *Everyday Use*. Whatever it is, indulgence of Marxist touch in the treatment of post history, the concept of Walker's Emergent women have been emphasized. Because, without that it would have not achieved newly accomplished space without inclining on and learning from past or ancestors culture. Further, as a school upon which activists build the principles for their struggle, necessitates the preclusion of religion as I have discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

It might also be possible to argue that walker's attack on God is also widened to include the image of the patriarchal male in the familial context for e.g., in *Everyday Use*, *The Child Who Favored Daughter*. Hence, the male who oppresses the female and the God who does not answer her calls and not do the justice to her become one and the same. For e.g. In *The Color Purple*, Celie stops sending letters to God explaining her miseries after she receives no replies. This theme of God's indifference to the suffering of black women is a common one in Walker's fictions and it also exemplifies the overlap between her short stories and novels.

Marxist doctrines in the struggle against the different kinds of oppression black women suffer; rejection of religion is at work in *Her Sweet Jerome* and in other stories of black women, the call for action to attain social change is eminent. Nothing exaggerating but Walker's literary works tackles the themes which affected her ancestors' lives and their community. Focus is on the oppression and violence which have been inflicted on black women. No doubt we could see both the failures and successes of the lives of black women and their struggle to achieve their rights. All the blacks should work for the better

future that the author has envisioned and I would say that some of the women in *You Can't Keep Good Women Down* have really achieved that objective.

The miserable issues that certain characters in the story tackles are ones that have affected both themselves and their progenitor and the stories work to collectively raise the consciousness of the present generation of black women. It seems that Walker has considered Richard Wright's advice intensely. "Wright urged Negro writers to develop a collective voice of social consciousness, both nationalist and Marxist" (Johnson 1990). It seems Marxism has provided an important platform that has allowed to show the predicament of the oppressed people. It is of course most important theoretical background for that matter. As discussed earlier, most revolutionary movements all over the world claim a link to Marxism. That is because Marxist ideologies form a suitable background dogma for the people's struggle.

As discussed elsewhere Walker's reading of Fidel Castro's defense of the revolution *History Will Absolve Me* has helped to frame his understanding of the political roots of the uprising in Cuba and provided an overview of Marxist ideology. She was also very much inspired by Russian revolution when she visited over there and also Lenin's tomb. It is said that she also enrolled in a class to know more about the revolution. It can be easily claimed that these visits and her readings has helped her to understand the Marxist theory and this has paved the way for Marxist features to be implemented and discussed in her literary works.

Interestingly, we come across Barbara Christian's opinion in *Novels for Everyday Use* and that says, "the political movements affect personal lives and Walker's fiction shows how personal lives are the marrow of political movements" (Christian 1993). No

doubt her fictions in such a context is of great political significance. From the above chapter what I get to understand is that, the treatment of history and the past should be preserved and the present should be studied only for the sake of opening the gates for the future. The way to achieve that kind of change is a revolutionary one. This is very much evident in the *Everyday Use* through the characters of Dee, Maggie and their mama and also the importance of quilt which are pieces of living history, documents in fabric that chronicles the lives of the various generations serving the testament of family's history of pride and struggle.

The oppressions from which African-American suffered also include economic oppression. Authors parents were sharecroppers and so she herself lived that experience. This kind of economic exploitation and understanding the labor of the proletariat is at the core of Marxist ideology which urges the exploited to revolt and struggle for their own rights. Author's presentation of blacks and especially her female characters as a source of cheap labor, the issue of who should control and benefit from the wrath produced by blacks, the rejection of religion as an inhibiting factor in the lives of African-Americans, the use of religion as an imperialist tool and questioning the concept of God are also considered as Marxist perspective.

Other things which I have observed primarily, is that, a kind of strong foundation has been built for the next generation. A ray of hope is very much apparent in the younger generation's ability to change the present miserable conditions of their people. Secondly, Author's fictions pass on the history, culture, Struggles and norms of the past and the new generation's task is to learn from their history and work on achieving the change required emphasizing on African-American women first and in a narrower frame

targeting the issues influencing the lives of all African Americans. I could also see that there is concentration more on the new forms of oppression and there is indirect implied reference to the early stages of slavery in the African American situation. *Everyday Use*, with the touch of Marxist perspective shares a firm belief in social and political change.

My further understanding is that the above story focuses on restoring the identity, culture and values of the black people by its attempts at encouraging people to return to their culture. If I'm not wrong then I could see that Walker's post-slavery fictions could be divided into two sections. The first section concentrating on the oppressions practiced against all the blacks by the whites like, racism, segregation, sexual, political and economic oppressions and marginalization. The second section would focus on the oppressions practiced on black women by black men like incest, negligence and bad treatment. That means it is understood that, while white master tries to destroy the identity of the black people in general, the black male tries to destroy the identity of the black female.

Generally, as the materialistic thinking in society developed step by step with the advancement of science and the other means of productive system. Following that we could observe various changes taking place within our social system that got enriched with the aggregation of knowledge especially of human history. Further, on the basis of certain general truth we get to see that Marxism or dialectical materialism came into existence. Marxism or dialectical materialism came into being on the basis of certain general truths. At the same time, we could observe Gareth and James's words concerned to Marxism in their book and that has been criticized for its intense concentration upon economic relationships and its tendency to overlook other forms of non-economic

conflicts (Griffith and Scott 2005). Feminists, for example argue that the conflicts between male and female relations are not necessarily related to economics but it is patriarchal.

I also came to know that Walker's version of Marxism is a narrow one as it mainly focuses on the economic oppression of black women. Marxism's ability to adapt according to the needs of every society, its ability to voice African-American concerns and the revolutionary nature embedded in its doctrines make it a possible answer to different problems in different part of the world as "Marx's message of salvation is universal"(Marx 1969).

Marxist Perception and Effects of Civil Rights Movement

In the novel *Meridian* Alice Walker shows that society is very much a construction of people's relationships with each other. Relationships are necessary in a society to survive humanly. This helps human beings to create certain values generally. It is well understood that society is beyond individual and it is having its own structure. Walker's concern towards society compels us to consider her rationality. *Meridian* is her second novel which surrounds the protagonist Meridian Hill who partakes in the Civil Rights Movement. Besides this novel is loaded with plenty of things which signifies the "Africanness" in American society amidst their social conflicts and their predicaments as blacks irrespective of gender.

Meridian is all about racial complications highlighting poor people's poverty and their predicaments. The protagonist stood by their side always ready to suffer along with them unlike others. As the novel begins one can easily make out the novelist concern towards women and femininity. She also concentrates on the fact that how black woman

struggled and exercised her sexuality in such a society. She has her own way to exercise her sexuality. She hated that whole thing after being objectified molested. So she thinks as a means or a tool of violence and oppression. Truman who is the love interest of Meridian in the story is entirely a different person with different attitude towards female sexuality. It seems that being a politically aware person he had a double standard. As already mentioned above that the story is set during the Civil Rights Movement, obviously there is a lot of politics over there. The remarkable thing in the protagonist is that she treats everyone as equal hinting that she carries humanistic ideals, believing in empathizing rather than showing sympathy. In this case when we compare Truman's character with Meridian one could see to the fact that he fails over here focusing very much over his uniqueness to sacrifice himself for the good of his community. Further as the story unfolds we get to see that, an awareness of death first fastened during her experience at the sacred serpent and it is termed as the very first step towards her realization or else it was enlightenment. During the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr. she realizes the fact that long-suffering communities have a more realistic relationship with death.

When it comes to religion Meridian hill is not so traditional minded in comparison with her religious minded mother. But she is always having a spiritual side a strong will that has guided her throughout her life no doubt. Whereas we find that her friend Anne-Marion is against religious beliefs she talks harshly about such things showing her anti-religion attitude. It is believed that sometimes their upbringing also matters a lot. One could say that her attitude was the reaction to her own strict upbringing. There are many kinds of contradictions in the society, which is very much

based on class and caste disparity followed by religion, nationality and gender not lagging behind.

Meridian is blamed for giving away her child to have her own freedom when she was in her teens. We could see that she suffered with guilt when she was in Saxon college. This college is the symbol of stringent regulations. She used to feel that she was torn apart between her independence and her motherhood. Individuals are expected to abide by certain disciplined social organization being conscious of their roles in the society which later on becomes social necessity. There are many problems in the society based on lines of gender issue and also nationality. This fact is much evident in African American society which is highlighted by all most all black writers. The above content indicates all kind of struggles related to religion, nationality, gender etc.

In *The color purple* protagonist Celie's emancipation could be seen with the Marxist point of view. Protagonist shows her strong determination in strengthening her struggle to fight patriarchy and also social values in the novel. Sometimes we may feel that it is necessary to fight against poverty, unemployment, rather than sexual choice but gender oppression can't be ignored in the present society: at the same time we could see the traces of capitalism depending upon the nature of the civil society. One has to remember the fact that problem of sexuality is difficult to solve in the society.

In many of the revolutionary movements we have read about male chauvinism to the greater extent. Women's participation has always been dominated by men. The same thing has happened at the time of Black Arts Movement and Civil Rights Movement. Earlier art and literature was also dominated by masculine writing with certain attitude. During Harlem Renaissance things were changing there was migration all over America.

Blacks were claiming their rights vociferously. Writers with humanistic ideology came to the front row. They started their publication house and of course women too upheld their point of view through the medium of literature as if they are talking to society, clamoring for equal rights and consideration in the patriarchal society. But the fact is patriarchy itself is the by-product of property issues which is overlooked by the radical feminists it seems. I feel that writers like Alice Walker along with others who occasionally incline towards Marxist thoughts and those who think of socialist revolution would prefer to march on the right progressive path coming out of existing discrimination in the society like caste, class, male chauvinism etc. rather than wasting time. Such writers are considered as social activist. The above said is witnessed in the writings of Alice Walker and she is well known activist. In literary studies we have come across the fact that Marxism and feminism sometimes need each other and this proves to be true when we remember the famous statement of awareness written in *The second Sex*, “one is not born a woman, one becomes one” (DeBeauvoir 1972). There is a belief that this statement is the junction point for Marxism, Feminism and also psychoanalytic criticism which of course are instrumental in analyzing women’s sufferings and their traits in the society.

In *The Color Purple* Celie’s character gives an account of life under exploitation through capitalism. Also that’s because of economic inequality, dependence, political condition leads to confusion and also social unrest. As a result of that no doubt we get to see unhealthy society where relationships sour between men and women.

Private property issues are also major root cause to create a difference of opinion in any relationships not only men and women. Earlier in the tribal societies men and

women both used to share equal responsibilities in the family, it seems even they never hesitated to look after children. But when they found private property issues women were compelled to stay and look after children and men concentrated on rest of the things. This is how women became confined in domestic sphere as a result of capitalism in one or the other way. It was triggered further because of their illiteracy, lack of awareness etc. we could relate Sofia's incident which throws light on how the capitalist notions or in general rich elites humiliate poor black woman. They never left any opportunity of subordinating people forcefully. For example, when the mayor's wife named Miss Millie happens to meet Sofia, she was beseeched to work as her maid servant. Sofia rejects offer replying "Hell no". She was a woman of certain strength, no doubt. Soon after that she was slapped by the mayor. Sofia was sent to jail. She was punished for twelve years as the maid servant in mayor's house. It is not just an incident from the story but Alice Walker has tried to show that how this capitalism dismantles the social construction besides focusing on the problem of domestic labor under capitalism. Through the above fact I could recall that, Colonialist, they did not just colonized territories for trade besides that, they also brought capitalism with them.

Further, feminist view that gender discrimination contributes to class division in the society charging against Marxist because they deny rather than explaining. They also charge against Marxist that Marxism is a theory in the interest of men within certain mind set. I mean something concerned to matter and mind. It is very much clear that there is always a relationship between gender, class, language, culture and socio-political system.

Class divisions are always gender specific and vice versa. This fact sometimes gives rise to politics in socio-economic terms So, Alice Walker, in her fictions talks about

collective performance to certain extent to propagate humanity. No doubt it is very thoughtful because being a social activist she inspires everyone to become rationale and to move on progressive path questioning disparities acknowledging ones knowledge. I do feel that Alice Walker, being contemporary writer, she gives more importance to culture, community, and present society. Earlier also, we could see that there was economic competition for jobs. Under capitalism, regardless of class, race and gender every worker has suffered and still suffering. They might be having same kind of experiences but education, awareness and realization helps to overcome all the predicaments.

In *The Color Purple*, At last we see Celie's emancipation through her interest in sewing braving all the obstacles. She was happy with her earnings and felt relieved with mental and emotional stress. We could see that needle and the pen was almost like a weapon or a tool in the way of gaining individuality to liberate herself. Through writing letters to God Almighty and her beloved sister Nettie, she has gathered her will to be strong. Through this fact one could understand that communication is very important. Naturally, we come across some or the other problems in the general communication. We witness this in the character of Celie. There is a sort of failed communication between men and women in the novel and it continues between Blacks and Whites in American society no doubt further it has extended between Africans and American Blacks.

Nettie plays an important role in the realization of Celie's comprehensive sense of "self". Sometimes we observe in the novel that Celie lacks self-understanding. Process of writing letter has helped her to strengthen not only her voice but also her "Self" which she recognizes later. The story is very self-reflective. And that could also be considered as a kind of strategy to combat all such complexities that pushed them to corner her "self"

but after getting awareness in the company of Shug and seeing Sofia's courage she somehow learned the fact that she still exists. After all she was filled with so much of patience and love. When Shug saw Celie first time, she told her that she is ugly. She also compared her to color of earth. Initially, Shug disliked her but later after getting to know her they became good friends. After moving to Tennessee with Shug, Celie spends most of her time designing and sewing individually tailored pairs of pants. She has transformed herself as a seamstress eventually turning her hobby into an earning business. Somehow she has managed to realize and believe her ability in her innate qualities. Celie becomes independent financially, spiritually and emotionally, Sofia is back from her service six months early. She too joins with Celie in her clothing business.

A person is emancipated only when his/her mind is free to think about changes whatever he/she comes across. Hobby of stitching has helped Celie to transform that into a business is a major accomplishment towards her liberation and realization of "herself". Not only that, her confidence is high and she realizes the fact that she is empowered by her financial security. This was a kind of awakening and therefore, Alice Walker enlightens women coming collectively for the good cause. That had definitely changed the society. As we see in *The Color Purple* when Sofia, Celie, Shug get together sharing and caring each other we could see a kind of sisterhood. Similarly, when women comes collectively they can try to come out of their passivity. For example, Sofia's tight-knit relationships with her five strong sister lets us to know that deep ties with proper understanding among women are a powerful means to combat sexism and abuse. They become assertive and start feeling independent. Alice Walker feels that when woman finds someone to listen and respond patiently to it she feels it as a crucial step toward self-empowerment and autonomy.

One more significant thing is about Nettie's experience seeing free blacks who are prospering in the North America especially in the Harlem. Even the idea of Blacks economic success and independence is very astonishing factor in the South America that too for women like Celie, Nettie and Sofia who are used to denial and subservience in the white society and also at the hands of black men. Further, the way Nettie describes about Harlem, empower Celie and that factor played important role in her achievement of economic independence. When she gets her family property she becomes independent, an autonomous woman. Education, Money, job security, and good friends circle is more than enough to be emancipated.

Meridian Hill experienced the joy of earning money as a school teacher. Besides getting to know freedom of thinking out the possibilities of her life (Walker 40). She was expecting more of life to happen to her. She earned both money and respect. This mattered a lot to her (41). She also looks for her "Self". In *Meridian* protagonist kept herself moving from North to South finding jobs good or worse, to support herself. She also did this to be closer with people to understand them and herself to some extent. She earned respect and peoples love in return they also cared for her during Civil rights Movement and other riot.

Meridian Hill is different in comparison to her friends Anne-Marion and Truman Held. We will realize this when we come across Anne-Marion's angry voice, her contempt when she said, "Yes, I will kill for the Revolution" (14). Whereas Meridian shows tenderness. She always felt herself to be, not holding on to something from the past but held by something in the past (14). Meridian always tried to hold on something that others had let go easily. This actually has made her mind and soul stronger which is

evident in the story especially being an activist of such a serious movement. She was praised by majority of black towns people were sympathetic to the movement from the first, and told Meridian she was doing a good thing. She used to type, she used to teach illiterates how to read and write. She demonstrated against separate discriminatory facilities keeping the Movement house going on. When the other workers were returning to school. But Meridian Hill's mother was not at all sympathetic and it is quite shocking to observe (82). As a student she was bright with IQ of 140 which was high for high school student. She was expected to set a high moral standard when she was offered a chance to complete her education.

There was an Atlanta Movement, which was part of Civil Rights Movement in which Trueman has already been involved. Meridian and Trueman used to see each other at that time (84). Atlanta Movement was concerned to students between February and March 1960. It is all about to put an end to the unjust system of racial segregation that was present in every aspect of their society. Students like Truman, Anne-Marion and Meridian felt that this was the right time for change. Meridian was quite confident in changing people. This shows her optimistic side. Her marital life was not satisfactory with Eddie. She felt she lacked courage, she couldn't know what exactly her mind was seeking. But somehow she managed to get into the Saxon college realizing the importance of education.

Being black woman, Meridian Hill had captured most of the distinctive qualities to herself (112). She got along with Anne-Marion, she had moved with Meridian. They would talk and chat sitting together, reading books about Socialism. This might have helped her to understand society much better and to cope up with certain things. But we

notice that with the passing time her thoughts got changed about existing milieu. She started realizing injustice and inequality and unequal distribution of income, existence of blacks in American society and their position, etc. hinting her inclined thoughts towards Marxism as per my understanding. There was a different kind of understanding between two regarding capitalism. Anne-Marion wanted equal opportunities to make money as the whites but Meridian wanted destruction of the rich as a class and the eradication of all personal economic preserves (122). Anne-Marion felt really thought provoking while tracing Meridian's great grandmother's history we will get to know that how able they were to get back their freedom by their hard working, wasting not even a minute in plantation, woods, etc. They also earned money with the help of their innate qualities like paintings, decorations on barn, sewing work, gardening etc. It seems that their qualities have helped black women to overcome defenseless life in order to fight the masculine bias in the society.

Further, we can read in the text named *Philosophy in the Feminine*, in which writer argues that "under patriarchy, women, treated as commodities, are valued according to an exterior system of value" (Irigaray 1991). For example, women as a consumer of commodities in the market whatever the product is but she is hired in the advertisements for some or the other purpose to sell the goods. Women are always identified in relation to others specifically like, her relationship with father, as a daughter, in relation to husband, as a wife etc. they are pushed to the second place. She is hesitant even to express her feelings in the domestic space which is loaded with responsibilities. Besides this she must fulfill her duty of being reservoir of culture, tradition etc., she is the one who should set all the values in the family.

Women are forced to bear the burden of being “ideal” sometimes willingly or unwillingly. Because men work outside. Their point of view is entirely different regarding women’s domestic sphere. They must earn to feed their family and it’s very clear that money and power lies with them. African society is slightly different because men and women used to equally sweat in the plantations earlier but there was unequal distribution of wages among men and women. We could see in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* the life of share croppers. The way they used to lead their life working in the farms rural south. There was no proper shelter, no sufficient food, education was lagging far behind. Beyond this they were ill-treated beaten for no reason they were pushed under the burden of never ending debts which passed from generation to generation. Characters in this novel dream about the North, thinking about getting prospered somehow. Whereas Copeland family knew that was illusion. Besides all this, women’s struggle inside and outside was so challenging as if they are always under the hawk eye abused and exploited in all ways. “This exposes the way in which patterns of oppression are masked by ideology of patriarchal capitalism and represented as immutable facts about the “natural world” (Fiddler xi-xii).

In a way patriarchy and capitalism are as if in partnership, it reveals that “patriarchy is based on the exchange of women, and in its aesthetic it illustrates the need to subvert and change the symbolic order” (Haines 1997). Margaret is a submissive wife. Grange, her husband was not good to her it seems that once he tried to sell her. He directs his anger towards wife and his older son Brownfield because of his frustration over white landlord. He escapes to the North leaving his family. Later on, Brownfield also decides not to work over there thinking there was no end to this segregation. As we see in the

novel that he was afraid of his father and his attitude. He wanted to be on his own rather than being like his father. He elopes from Green County and gets shelter in Josie's place. There he meets Mem, niece of Josie. She is learned and sensible person. Brownfield realizes that he loves Mem and marries her. She was just an extended figure of his mother Margaret. She was also victimized by husband. Same thing is repeated in Brownfield's life after choosing to work as a sharecropper. He had an experience of working as a child labor with his father instead of going to school. He used to go for scrapping cotton as it was called so. Many such incidents we come across in this first novel of Walker where she focuses on the issues of blacks exploitation, child labor, followed by disturbed relationships in the family clearly we come across infidelity and also forbidden relationships etc. all these things are the consequences of being docile, lack of awareness and illiteracy.

In all the ways women struggled for their survival and hence they were forced to endure the load of moral responsibility. Women were victimized inside and outside under the compulsion of patriarchy and capitalism. Not only has that gone to the extent of alienating from themselves, from their desires and not just that even from the so called symbolic orders. That was not taken into account by the mechanism of capitalism. But that could be explained also in terms of Women's status. It seems that was reduced to commodities very conveniently within a patriarchal economy. This might take beyond Marxist analysis.

Walker simply suggests that women's liberation might start with the financial independence, awareness and employment. She also lets us to know the functioning of capitalism and exposes the harmful effects of patriarchy and capitalist ideology through

her characters. Coming back to Meridian Hill, she always believed in teaching. She said “I respect it, when it’s done right. After all, people want to be taught how to live....” During the Civil Rights movement, we see her as an undaunted woman, fearless attitude in the struggle is much more evident towards radicalism. We notice this kind of behavior when the child’s body was so ravaged, so grotesque, so disgusting to behold, his mother had taken one look and refused to touch him. The vision is catchy when Meridian Hill was followed by people. It looked as if she was carrying a large bouquet of roses along with her (209). Further, one can see there is a kind of healing power in Alice Walker’s writing. That is noticeable in the lines Meridian Hill for example: She wrote there is water in the world for us which was brought by our own friends though the rock of mother and also god Vanishes into sand, And we, cast out alone. To heal, And re-create Ourselves (236).

As the story develops it seems a new Meridian had grown out of the old, though, and that was reassuring (241) accepting true self, Walker brings so many things together in one story with such an intense reality showcasing her humanistic ideals and visionary mind set. As I have mentioned already about Meridians involvement in the movement I would further discuss about her inner sense that always vociferously cried for revolution. Deeper analysis of her every situation she confronts in the society indicates the above factor.

Effects of Civil Rights Movement

Walker makes it clear in her womanist prose *In search of Our Mother’s Gardens* that “Civil Rights Movement will never be over as long as her skin is black. It also will never be over for twenty million others with the same “affliction”, for whom the

Movement was tried to kill by the partisan media and press. It was believed that as long as one black American survives in the movement, struggle for the equality continues and other Americans should also survive” (Walker 1983). Further, they used to speak of ghetto riots and of the survey showed that most of the policemen were having the notion of anti-negro. And therefore, they never did the fair job of honesty but never failed to show the discriminatory attitudes instead of delivering their duties effectively.

Further, most of them speak about every area which has been touched by the Civil Rights Movement and there was no such place left which was not influenced by the movement. But sadly some other places were falling into pieces (120). She says that only Negroes know what they felt about that Movement than whites. Wherever there was some unrest police suspected blacks and used to rush to ghettos. Though the movement was dead, question do arise what they gained in the Civil Rights Movement and they never stopped thinking why white man is preferred everywhere may be radio, television even newspaper so how can one say that movement is dead for Blacks. Besides they also feared of getting shot dead by fellow beings if they claim such things.

The Movement was of course dead for whites perhaps they lost interest. It became uninteresting for them because they did not suffer as Blacks. They did not live with it or by it. They could take rest from all the news of death, beatings, burnings etc. but Negroes were always a target. They could not escape the injustice which plague them (121). To a certain extent the Civil Rights Movement helped large numbers of individuals and gave them a certain ray of hope to live life. At least it provided some comforts to them if not everything.

The movement actually raised a lot of questions regarding certain promises. How it benefits their society in general and Blacks in specific. This becomes necessary because it should not deny what it had promised once awakening possibilities of life. That itself is the ray of hope. Meridian Hill and Celie both realized the truth about their life rather than living superficially and they stepped forward with determined mind to brave the situation. That realization was a sort of awakening for both of them. They could place themselves as liberated “woman”. Realizing one’s existence is very important. For blacks it was somewhat difficult because their color denied them from getting access to certain things in the white world. Before existing in others mind one should always feel existence of their own. When we get awareness from education we could be real than a shadow.

According to Alice Walker, she says that “Black was not a color on my mother; it was a shield that made her invisible” (Walker 124). Deeper understanding of existence means trying to know the difference between one’s existences now and then. As we see in Meridian Hill’s character and also Celie’s after realizing their potential. It means caring for their true self and their loved ones considering as a part of world Community. And our awareness should keep us alert because to know oneself is itself existing to be involved. The Civil Rights Movement has enabled blacks to see the world with their own eyes. Further, effects of the movement is followed by speaking about changes in their personal lives because of the movement’s influence. They just saw the general failure and appreciated few individual gains if there were any.

The Civil rights Movement brought lot of changes in Alice Walker too it seems and that is quite evident in *Meridian*. She says that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the first black face she saw on her new television. She was very much influenced by his

speech and her soul stirred by getting to know about his mission. It seems she fell in love with that particular line “we shall overcome” (124). Dr. King was beyond himself because of his strength the way he took all the pain and suffered for his people keeping belief in nonviolence, love and brotherhood sincerely. He never expected luxuries of life for Blacks but only freedom. He wanted his people to walk with courage and determination without feeling shame. He always boosted confidence saying that blacks should become whatever they wanted to become instead of choosing to become like white Americans replica.

The Civil Rights Movement has influenced some liberal senators to pressurize government so that poor and needy people could get food. We also get to see that many were disappointed by the fact when there was cutting of price of food stamp. But still they were assertive and did not give up. Blacks felt that one’s living is the rights left to every individual when they have enough options to choose. They might consider that The Civil Rights Movement was dead, but it brought Blacks together to certain extent. As said above it gave at least bread and shelter to a few. It gave purpose for living breaking servitude in America. Alice Walker is of the opinion that This Movement gave blacks history and selfless men of courage. For her the movement was alive because it gave life to blacks it taught them to face the society undauntedly looking forward for hopeful tomorrow (128-129).

As the Atlanta Movement was part of the Civil Rights Movement, we get to see Meridian partakes with positive mindset. She joined the Atlanta Movement during her second year of college along with Truman. The administration neither restricted nor discouraged their participation realizing the fact that students’ involvement could not be

stopped. Teachers also co-operated as much as possible on their risk for the good reason when they were imprisoned. They would lie for the sake of students that they were on a field trip etc.

Meridian Hill and other students actually felt that they had two enemies, Saxon, which wanted them to become something like formal woman that was already so outdated, and the other one is larger, more deadly enemy like and that was of course white racist society (95) they treated girl students as if they are thirteen years. Saxon's administration conditioned, expected girls to be virgin. Disparities do start like this set of regulations are imposed in this way; but on the contrary, Meridian was already married and a mother of child. This indicates her rebellious attitude. Besides that, she was capable of an inner gaiety, a sense of freedom. Truman and Meridian were influenced by *The Souls of Black Folk* by Du Bois. Meridian was also reading F. Scott Fitzgerald. When Meridian and Truman along with Lynne, his wife, visited Mrs. Turner's house asking to register to vote, but to their shock she refused to do so because she didn't believe in voting. She said that the good lord will take care of most of her problems. This is evident to know how much she had faith in God. She is a spiritual lady who believes that God heals the sick and raise the dead, comfort the uncomfortable and blesses the meek (102). Convincing people for registering to vote was very hard task.

Truman Held, Meridian Hill many others who participated in the movement were called as Civil Rights Movement workers. They used to take up midnight march, with candles in protest against the town's segregated hospital facilities and also to release earlier demonstrators from the jail (80). Trueman meant lot to her. They were together in the movement i.e. when both were put to jail dragged and beaten she never cried

screaming but her mind called his name intensely it seems. This actually suggests that they were absolutely together in one place, particular time and in history. She was appreciated for doing good job by many black town people. They were sympathetic since beginning. She used to type and teach illiterates to read and write, demonstrated against segregated facilities and keeping the movement house open for the people when most of the participants attended the school.

Meridian's life is shaped by all these moments working silently with dedication to serve her people, though she was rejected by the cadre for remaining silent, failing to give public speech which was assigned to her. We can witness her complete transformation from docile to rebellious attitude almost as personal transformation. The movement has boosted her confidence to gain self-development through liberating herself from all the confinements. Now she is having courage to face society with strong determination not only for herself but for her people. We can imagine through the character of Meridian that what sort of difficulties Walker might have confronted during this movement as she was also active participant in Civil Rights Movement though she was not ready to kill people in the name of revolution. The thing is, Meridian grows as an individual with intense feeling of serving people. Through the medium of her characters we observe Walker's convergence with her community. This movement was like a ray of hope to blacks in general but when it comes to women then obviously it was chauvinistic. But see characters like Lynne and others along with Meridian partake for the sake of betterment of people, trying to eradicate all kind of divisions which created cleft along class lines in civil society.

When we look at the things with Marxist lens then it is very clear that it's all about material comforts associated with money and its unequal income distribution which is the root cause of social inequality. When it comes to women, then, there are certain strategies of subordination that is very much evident in the society as well as walker's fictions which gives an account of woman's predicament in the existing society.

While examining her novels we come across the fact that she deals with the ground reality rather than imaginations whatever it is whether politics, work, problems of distribution of wages between men and women, even sexuality. When it comes to measure, all these, it is possible probably with the Marxist method of Class, values, production etc. based on concrete evidence we collect from the analysis of situations, conflicts raised and not just analyzing superficially loose factors, following some or the other complaints or grievances. It is very challenging to probe the socio economic conditions of blacks in general and black women in specific though it is based on clear realistic factors it would be wrong if something is judged by just analyzing with external factors because it is a matter of woman who are vulnerable, incompetent, cornered in domestic sphere as if she is made for caring only besides shouldering male assertions and their dimensions. If they succeed then they are praised and considered as role models. This happens only with awareness and that obviously comes from the literacy and education.

Further, we could see the other significant reason for the divisions in the society no doubt that would be classicism. Fair amount of classicism is available in the above discussed fictions. Especially to talk about Walker's intense short story *Everyday Use*. Needless to say how it shatters the society destroying the foundation of harmony and

power and comforts of life rests which with the richest. Marxists have always tried to vanish the effects of this. People were affected by American Dream as well. I have mentioned all about this in the beginning of this chapter itself. For example, Dee who always hoped for better whereas Maggie remained as mama's favorite. But one should always remember that everybody won't get equal opportunities. Dee got that opportunity Maggie didn't get that. Instead of them Dee criticizes her family and feels ashamed of her family for not trying to fit into the new era forgetting the very fact that from where she has come from and it is a result of double consciousness as mentioned already.

Finally, to overcome all kinds of exploitation people who belong to lower class or working class should gain power in order to eradicate class divisions and try to bring social revolution. In case of Celie, one should appreciate her determinism to fight their inferior status. Not being educated she works in the farm and also for Mr____, which indicates that she is earning which later gives her economic independence and Marxist theory encourages this fact because women are also major contributors in the society. Celie's sewing pants was also a significant factor because she is contributing to the economy of the society. They definitely appreciate this since it could bring some amount of equality for the sake of better. But it is somewhat critical because Celie becomes entrepreneur on the contrary one can appreciate Sofie for being so courageous for fighting against power yearning for equality as already mentioned in this chapter. *Meridian* showcases power, politics, oppression, class discrimination, economic conditions above all the Civil Rights Movement and its effects clamoring for the end of segregation, equality those of whites, equal opportunities in everything, i.e. voting and access to every other things.

Walker's Novels gives an account of all her characters the way they overcome oppression besides it interests readers with Marxist theory as well. Her fictions are stuffed with so many elements which helps to analyze the socio-economic conditions and political conflicts followed by class division, class struggle, and oppression. All these things obviously are the concerns of Marxists which are plenty in her fictions.

Chapter-3

ELEMENTS OF REALISM AND VITALITY OF LANGUAGE IN WALKER'S FICTIONS

This chapter throws light on Walker's employment of Realistic elements. We are going to observe the reality truthfully in terms of color. Her fictions offer some very realistic, true-to-life pictures of black experience in detail. Black reality, in America, it is seen against the background of White Milieu. The term realism seems to be self-explanatory at the same time it is a difficult literary concept. So, I would like to take the help of mirror as an image to discuss not just the reality but also the ugly facets of black community. I feel that, the image of **Mirror** could be considered as an important among other black images to explain the related factors of the above said.

Formally, I shall begin with the actual meaning of the term "realism". According to dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, Realism is: An exceptionally elastic critical term, often ambivalent and equivocal, which has acquired far too many qualifying adjectives and is a term which many now feel we could do without.

When we glance through Walker's Works, we are going to discover that she has subscribed to a kind of **tragic realism**. But I feel she is not confined only to that but also the other kinds of images and concepts could be observed in her literary works. Very truthfully we could witness the glimpses of black life and its activities as they are apprehended by the senses. Hence, in the context of her work, "realism is a representation of observable habits and activities and situations in the gruesome and tragic life of the black community in America" (Murugan 2008).

Along with the realism I would also discuss the usage of Black English to observe how the dialect strikes intensely Walker's realistic descriptions and characterization. It is very natural and just like a mirror or a glass which is very clear. This factor itself makes her work authentic and lead readers to the basic modes of the African-American ideologies. Walker's opinion about her work is: "The intense faith I have in people's capability to understand anything that makes sense has always been justified through their behavior. In my literary work and in myself I have reflected black people, both women and men, I reflect others. One fine day even the most self-protective individual will look into the mirror I have provided and they won't be afraid" (Martz 414).

Realism also provides a useful theoretical framework for the study of her stories. Everyday experiences are depicted in realist literature. They are usually those that are the direct result of the political, social and economic situation of the characters. The political episodes that affect the life of a certain class of people, probably the oppressed and the marginalized and mostly the working class. This is the rich field from which much of the realist literature treasures its narrative sources. In addition to that, as Gates Jr. points out, many black writer have conceived their task to be the creation of an art that reports and directly reflects brute, irreducible, and ineffable "black reality" (Gates 1989). Her very first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* discusses the above said factors.

In an interview with Claudia Tate, Walker said about her first novel like this: Walker's first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is quite a realistic in nature. She says that, "I wanted it to be absolutely visual. I wanted the reader to be able to sit down, pick up that book and see a little of Georgia from the early twenties through the sixties – the trees, the hills, the dirt, the sky to feel it, to feel the pain and the struggle of the

family, and the growth of the little girl Ruth. I wanted all of that to be very authentic” (Walker 176).

This is how the novel depicts matter of fact associated with Southern landscape: Baker County, the cotton fields, the ramshackle houses in a deep misery. The political realities faced by Walker’s character are evident in most of her stories. In her realistic description of black homes, Walker makes the living quarter of black sharecropper an emblem of his domination by Southern agricultural capitalism and an indication of his continued slavery. I feel that *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* reproduces DuBois’s depiction of black houses.

Brownfield turned from watching the road and looked with hateful scrutiny at the house they lived in. House had a two tiny rooms that looked like a small cabin and that had a brick chimney too on the other end. The roof was of rotting gray wood shingles; the sides of the house were gray vertical slabs, the whole aspect of the house way grey. It was lower and strange in the middle than compared to at its ends, and that resembled a dipped animal turned out to a grazing field. A stone-based wooden bucket dangling above it from some rusty chain and frazzled lengths of rope. Where water was dashed behind the well, wild morning glories bloomed, their tendrils reaching as far as the woodpile, which was a litter of tree trunks, silvers of carcass bones deposited by the dog and discarded braces and bits that had pained the jaws and teeth of many a hard-driven mule (Walker 16).

The above description is so real with all the minute details and particularities of a sharecropper’s house that we guess Walker might have actually lived in that cabin. In this kind of descriptions we could see that Walker creates a sense of realism in her readers

mind unfolding each and every scene with a sense of admiration. Her description of a typical Southern black locality complete with detailed minutes is proof of her artistic ability to represent the reality of the recent past. Walker's characters are very powerful. As I said earlier political realities faced by her characters are evident in most of the stories.

The historical references to the Depression year, the Black revolution and revenge and also the Civil Rights Movement give her stories as if being there I mean collective live experiences of things which gives a forceful reason for narrating the real. A very good example would be *Meridian* which brings alive the various facets of the violent, turbulent movement launched by black civil activists for equal civil rights. In this novel we can easily trace the autobiographical factors. She also brings alive the era of the American Sixties very intensely. The group of revolutionaries turns hostile toward *Meridian* and finally excludes her since she refuses to kill for the movement. We also find even nature mirroring the massacre of blacks during this period. The land grieves as humankind refuses to acknowledge its wisdom and continues to corrupt the natural order by holding on to blacks.

Furthermore, these historical movements act as a general framework for the characters actions and the readers' burden of the historical knowledge demanded of him/her works as a necessary factor in realist literature. She is not just a transcriber of history but also a re-creator and tries to re-tell the history not as it was but how it could have been. Walker's stories are clearly political. Her political activism struggles for the rights of the African-American: the right to education, to vote, to end the segregation and to be treated as human beings and as citizens.

We know the fact that politics alters the lives of the individuals in one or the other way. And the main thing is literature helps people to find their convenient way out of certain circumstances by presenting types which others could and should follow in order to achieve the freedom they all seek. A collective value also focuses on enhancing and preserving the national identity of the people and setting them face to face with the oppressor. No doubt that literature raises the national consciousness of the people and to help them to emancipate and free themselves from the bonds of oppression, slavery and colonization.

Walker holds the artistic mirror to life and what it reflects is a history of black domestic violence. Black violence is also glaringly manifest in the sexual violence and incest common among them. Almost every black writer has touched the issue of sexual violence and incest in some or the other way. Violence against women has been an inseparable part of the black life for example, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* we come across the fact that, the children-there were two living, three had died already. They did not get anything during Christmas. On that special eve, they sat around and watched him. Later, he ran out of the house expecting Josie would give him money for a drink. When he got home he woke up the children and cried over them, but when he saw they were afraid of him he blamed Mem. When she tried to defend herself by telling him the children were just frightened of him because he was drunk. He beat her senseless that was the first time knocked out a tooth. He knocked out one and loosened one or two more (83). This was the extent of domestic violence found evidently.

Walker uses violence to stress the depth of the problems she explores and to illustrate the extent of the despair that comes from the deep-seated, unfulfilled desires of

her black heroines. She has immersed herself deeply in her fiction and writes with a strong sense of place just like Faulkner and Flanner O'Connor. She takes up potentially bucolic rural settings and encodes them with images of despair and decay. For example the everyday life expressed in the monotony of the first Copeland house combines with the repeated images of decay and also unavoidable condition of marginalization and sense of hopelessness. Further, her concern with land and identity appears in her choice of characters and the events that shape their lives.

Grange's condition is portrayed very realistically. Mr. Shipley, who literally owns him in the new system of slavery euphemistically called it as a "sharecropping", controls his life. Grange Copeland is tied to the land in many ways even by his name. A 'Grange' is a farmhouse or a country house. His poverty prevents from owning land, so he copes by sharecropping. This is how the American agricultural system of sharecropping is exercised by the white males crushing and emasculating the black man. The color of their skin renders blacks liable to discrimination and cruelty. Unequal norms are applied and hence, the relationship between them gets distorted. This system has actually turned the black man into beast, suppressing his human qualities and accenting his animal like tendencies. This conduct is reflected in violent relation with the white landowner and obviously his wife and children. He fails to take his anger on sharecropping system but he takes it out on his family members who always remain loyal and submissive to him.

Walker's naturalistic vision appears as a unifying theme in all her stories along with the realism. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* sheds new light on the condition of blacks in America under both systems of racism and slavery. African-American literary tradition that is distinctive for both its lucid criticism of modern life and its special ability

to recover human values making more affirmations. Contemporary African-American novelist affirms the values of survival and triumph found in black experience and repudiates the inhumanity that so often threatens it.

Walker's use of Vernacular Language

Along with the discussion of realism with concerned to Walker's First novel, I would also like to include the discussion of her use of Black English and also observe how she employs the dialect strikingly to give such a realistic description and characterization naturally. Moving to discuss her use of language in presenting the important and critical issues I could see every day spoken language in narrating the struggles of ordinary peoples. In some of her stories language is a mixture of prose and poetry. She herself remarks that: "I like those of my short stories that show the plastic shaping almost painting quality of words. In *Roselily* and *The Child Who Favors Daughter* the prose is poetry or prose and poetry run together to add a new dimension to the language" (Walker 1973). This method of reinventing the "Vernacular" as a literary language is a part of a process through which black identity can be restored.

As per my understanding I could see that she uses short sentences as a technique which aims to convey its message effectively and rapidly. Barbara Christian is of the opinion that "she is like a quilter, she is economical; her stories are thrifty; there are no bulges or long starches of the same material, no waste" (Christian 1993). One more important thing to note over here is her usage of simple opposites as a stylistic technique. As said above, the following paragraph emphasize Walker's use of simple language with short sentences and also the use of opposites: She has searched *high* and she searched for *low*. She looked in *hotels* and she also looked into the *churches*. Not only that, she even

looked in the school as well where he worked. Next, “she visited to *whorehouses* and to *prayer meetings* never lagged behind. Then through parks and outside the city limits, all the while purchasing weapons like *axes* and *pistols* and *knives* of all the interesting descriptions” (Walker 1995).

There is a distinctively “African American” patterns of speech that serve to reflect more closely the African-American experiences and convey the realities of their oppressive conditions. For example. In *Strong Horse Tea* we come across sentence like “we going to have a us a doctor”. And one more example is, “They gotta come see bout this body” and also this sentence, “O my lawd” etc., Walker’s use of such a simple everyday spoken language communicates the expressions of their lived experiences and the stories and struggles of her black women characters in their very own possessed voices.

Further, it is evident that her commitment to southern folk culture has enhanced her black vernacular language and it seems like author is attempting to re-appropriate the mainstream language for black culture. I also feel that she has “**de-territorialized**” the English language by re-inventing the black vernacular. In her case, as she was born and lives in the land of the “oppressor”, in the land of majority culture, and her choice of English is in a sense of obligatory.

In a resistance narrative, there is always a collective nature. Since it is concerned with documenting the lives of people and calling for a better future for the people living under certain circumstances of colonization and oppression. It addresses the whole group of people whose land has been colonized or whose lives have been altered by the various kinds of domination inflicted upon them. When it comes to the matter of oppression, that

actually does not choose an individual as a victim but it pours out its malediction on every people of the society. Hence, the individual lives of the protagonists are not only individuals but they also stand for the lives of most of the people who live within the milieu of the protagonists. This is how Walker educates her people understanding the circumstantial facts and also calling for a collective action in order to achieve the political, social and economic changes it struggles for. She has spent several years in 1960's working as civil rights activist and therefore her involvement with the Civil Rights Movement played a vital role in being a writer.

History of Black English

Concerned to language, in the past, Black English was looked upon as a lesser kind of English. It has been told that, earlier in the school, black children struggled very much from verbal dispossessions it seems. With the passing time we could see drastic changes in American education system. Now black children live in a rich verbal culture in which linguistic ability is highly prized and in which many opportunities are offered for skillful competition. In fact, Black English is quite remarkable in many ways For example, linguists have described this distinctive speech pattern having noticed it's uniformity in certain respects. In other words, blacks who live in New York City, Chicago, Detroit and Seattle speak very much alike. Whereas the same cannot be said of non-blacks who live in same cities.

Educators prefer Standard English, although it is yet another dialect of English it seems. Originally, Standard English was used as a local dialect in central midland region of the London. And it is believed that it happened to be in the right place in the accurate time. But still Black English has yet to be fully explored and recognized by the people

because, not all African Americans speak African American English (AAE), and not all speakers of AAE are African Americans. As I said in the earlier paragraph that some African American may speak mainstream (standard) American English, and some non-African Americans may choose to incorporate the above said features into their speech.

Theories suggest that when slaves of different language backgrounds were transported from Africa to America, then they developed a pidgin a simplified version of a language used for communication between people who do not speak common language. Later pidgin was developed into Creole language. It is also believed that the Gullah spoken on the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia closely resembles the language used by slaves on plantations. It is understood that slaves were not taught English and they were not allowed to only limited contact with masters. Naturally, Creole features were passed from many generations and these features have survived post-slavery because as African American English developed, it became more than a language medium. It has become a source of solidarity among people who use it.

Black English is characterized by pronunciations and syntactic patterns I mean phonology and grammar along with morphological features or inflections and these things may occur in other varieties of English. Some of the lexicon points are no doubt clearly, belongs to West African region it seems. We also come across the Ebonics issue which is a central point to discuss about the social and political position of African American English. This term also describes the language of African ancestry along with Black North America emphasizing African roots folk culture. Ebonics is considered as the true language of black peoples. I would like to mention that the linguist John Baugh claims that the term Ebonics is used in different ways by its Afro-centric supporters,

among which are references to English: one is the equivalent of black English and is considered to be a dialect of English, and another one is the antonym of Black English and is considered to be a language other than English. It became widely popular in America around 1996 when the Oakland School Board recognized the primary language of many African American Pupils, to help in the teaching of Standard English. This is how Ebonics has become an alternative term for African American Vernacular English, emphasizing its African roots and its independence from English.

I would like to elaborate on the major features of African American English. I have already mentioned its main features in the above paragraph. I would begin with **phonology**, where “r” is not used and there will be frequent deletions finally with auxiliaries for example ‘he’ll be back home’ and they might use to say this as ‘hi bi ho:m’. Further, there will be reduction of last letters that is, for example, ‘tooked’, they might pronounce it as ‘tuk’, then for walked they could use ‘Wa:k’. It seems that potent and initial emphasized accentuation is always found with the words or phrases of two syllables. It seems that Black English is very informal but they use it according to their convenience. I believe that use of dialect depends on the linguist’s interpretation. Since a dialect, for a linguist, is represented by two mutually intelligible language varieties, belonging to the same language. In morphology, the third person singular has no obligatory morphological ending in Black English. Sometimes Black English uses ain’t as a past tense marker for example, He ain’t go home.

They usually drop using ‘g’ at the end of –ing forms, as in gettin, fishin etc. African American English speakers often tend to drop the second or third consonant sound in a string of consonants occurring at the end of the words common example

would be' mist' that may be pronounced as' mis'. 'Missed 'is also pronounced exactly as' mis' thus giving the illusion that it is a present tense verb instead of a past tense verb. Further, I would be discussing elaborately Alice Walker's simple style of using language artistically.

Importance of Language

“As life is a character of events in a peculiar condition of organization, and ‘feeling’ is a quality of life forms marked by complexly mobile and discriminating responses, so ‘mind’ is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches the organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication” (Dewey 1925). Language is a medium in which the writer's fertile imagination becomes successful. Literary expression usually forces the writer to broaden the limits of style beyond the surface level of explanation. It helps in attaining the new level of utilization that suggests the essence of literary work in a possible way. The style or technique employed by the writer can be defined in terms of its **diction** the way it is constructed and related, followed by the characteristic use of **tropes, phonology** and are considerable in a particular literary text. The above said properties are also known as ‘stylistic features’ and the artistic use of languages in folk literature and also in modern literature serve as a vehicle for literary expressions. A literary work becomes artful if varieties of techniques are applied to analyze the genres and the employed styles are culturally defined. According to Houston A. Baker Jr, he envisioned language (the code) “speaking” the subject and the subject is “decentered”. He also discovered that the symbolic antithesis-practical reason, or the material-is as necessary for understanding Afro-American discourse as the cultural-in-itself. Further he goes to the extent of saying

that vernacular indicates “arts native or peculiar to a particular country or locale.” The material conditions of slavery in the United States and the rhythms of Afro-American **blues** combined and emerged from materialistic perspective as an ancestral matrix that has produced a forceful and indigenous American creativity. Afro-American culture is a complex, reflexive enterprise which finds its proper figuration in blues conceived as a **matrix**. The matrix is a point of ceaseless input and output, and a web of intersecting, one can find a crisscrossing impulses always in a productive passage to pass through. Afro-American blues constitute such a vibrant network. Therefore, they comprise a mediational site where familiar antimonies are resolved in the office of adequate cultural understanding. Rough and racist times prevented genuine artistry. Generally the blues texts serves as a codifiers, absorbing and transforming discontinuous experience into formal expressive instances that bear only the trace of origins, refusing to be pinned down to any final, dualistic significance suggesting change, movement, actions, continuance, unlimited and unending possibility. No doubt the blue matrix is a “cultural invention.”

This chapter is an attempt to discuss about the importance of language and Afro-American vernacular features in Walker’s fictions especially with reference to *The Color Purple* which is also acclaimed as a **blues novel**. I shall begin highlighting upon blues tradition and ideology in the black novels before discussing the *The Color Purple*. The term “blues” refers to an emotion, a technique, a musical form, and a song lyric. As an emotion it is associated with **sadness** crucially related to African American experience besides being a creative celebration of not just their hardship but of the nature of human existence in an imperfect world.

The novel may refer to the color blue or use it as an image pattern to evoke some kind of emotion or tradition. A novelist makes use of language associated with the blues in the language of the narrator or characters as observed in the Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and it is quintessential African American blues novel, rooted not only in the blues but in the female blues tradition. The blues is often described as originating in the lowlands, the bottoms, the muck, down home. That means, it is very clear that embracing blues is to embrace the wellspring of honesty, directness, and creativity and to cherish one's own origins. No doubt that, I could observe the emergence of woman's voice, discovering and expressing herself in a convenient language that is drawn on the traditions of the community particularly in looking for transcendence by transforming hardship into personal as well as artistic victory. This is possible only when novelists employ various blues devices in language, structure, imagery, voice, and philosophy to portray the triumph of a black woman. It is believed that a woman in turn learns from the African American vernacular tradition to love and elevate herself to the idealistic and high-minded position. A restless search for the "better times" is central to the blues.

Vernacular expression, especially in African American culture, focuses on the process more than product, especially in the walker's fictions. It is the style of storytelling, sermonizing, or blues singing that is crucial, in part because the content is already known to the audience for example: *Everyday Use*. Other novelists might use blues singers as characters or utilize selections from the songs or performances including lyrics musical notations, and audience reactions, as observed in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The traditional subject of the blues deals usually with personal relationships

between men and women, homosexuality, common emotions such as isolation, frustration, sexual desire, the blues lyric, with call-and-response structure finds expression in the novel.

The language of the blues is frequently frank, creative, signifying, and poetic, as is the language of the narrator and other characters. For example, Shug Avery, she is blues singer in *The Color Purple* who teaches Celie about the sweetness of her own body and the value of embracing her convention-defying sexual orientation. This novel returns to the earliest instance of the English novelistic tradition, the epistolary novel, and then reminds the prominence of the motif of letter writing in the blues tradition. An artistic writer will, and hopefully, continue to find creative and meaningful ways to syncretize the oral blues and written novel traditions. The blues have adapted African modalities to European and American traditions to some extent to create something new and wonderful on American soil. “Blues” frequently stands for “downhome” tradition, the wisdom of ancestors made manifest in the contemporary world, still operational and functional. This connection of “down home” makes it an obvious and valuable resource for African-American novelists seeking to appropriate and personalize the novelistic tradition for themselves and African-Americans.

In the earlier chapter I have already mentioned about the Walker’s use of Black English but further I would discuss how language has been effectively used in **style**, **diction** and also **tone** in constructing emotions signifying the milieu of American South-Georgia which is steeped in history. History has always been substance for literature. Susan Willis is of the opinion that black women’s relation to history is “a relationship to mother and grandmother” followed by their geographical migration in the past. Black

foremothers are producers and their representation enables black women writers to reconstruct history. Walker steers away the readers from touristy landmarks with the southern locals, to tell the readers about their terrible experience. The fictional representation of the geographical spaces across which migration has occurred as the means for conceptualizing history considering it as a narrative journey.

On the basis of blues or vernacular figurations in Afro-American expressive culture, one assumes Stephen Henderson and Robert Stepto that the theme of black liberation manifests itself in any authentically creative Afro-American literary work of art. Further on the basis of practical, critical and ideological insights, classic works of Afro-American expressive culture will reveal a black expressive wholeness. The role of recommending or commending works of literary art is thus historically situated. It is believed that history relies for social efficacy and traditional historical grounding of a human community is based on ordinary language.

A work of art is not produced in a vacuum. It is the product of a search for cultural history, it must be examined within artistic field, involving in the exploration of meanings in context, traditions, cultural and ritual movements, philosophical thinking, political and social climate. In the analysis of Afro-American or African texts, attention must be paid to indigenous African point-of-view, an understanding of history, structure (**organic unity**), intense thematic contents, black aesthetic qualities, metrical phonology and imageries. Utmost importance is given to the inclusive metaphors and figures of speech like satire, irony never fails to give the real picture of the society. Besides, symbolism, allusion, allegory, plot, and other similar concerns are also brought to the forefront.

Black women writers' texts are embodiments of their communities' relationship to history which is contradictory and complex because of their metaphoric structures found condensed as in Freudian theories. In the case of marginal, protagonists like Alice Walker's Meridian Hill, Toni Morrison's Sula, Paula Marshall's Selina move beyond the limitations of George Lukacs theories and they embody both the history and the future of the American experience. One should not forget that the culture of a previous generation is recovered in the journey that reconstruct the history of black people in the New World. I could see that Walker as a spokesperson for black women because she believes in listening to black women.

I would formally begin by quoting Cheung, as he observes, "some of these women are, moreover, thrice muted on account of sexism, racism and a 'tonguelessness' that results from prohibitions or language barriers" (Cheung 162). No doubt that Walker questions the patriarchal and sexist society. Therefore, *The Color Purple* is a liberative text that forces black people to situate themselves within the world. Erin Huskey, is of the opinion that, through the form, language and content of the novel, Walker has transformed historically oppressive dominant literary forms. "She asserts the voice as represented by the tangible object of the novel that compels everyone to listen. This is an object or text that symbolizes Walker's personal transformation and envisions the possibility of transformation in the reader" (Huskey 95). Her writing enjoy a large audience that comprises of a heterogeneous readership of both Blacks and Whites, women and men.

Dynamics of Language

A language is not merely a corpus of vocabularies devoid of thematic material and a synthesis of realities, rather, it is a social product and treasured possession of the

living characters in which words, phrases and sentences are systematically interconnected to describe the physical world. The literary text is a complex system of human relationships that has been established through language and is defined within the scope of aesthetic effect. Each literary constituent is interdependent and interconnections of components and relations of characters constitute **organic cohesion** or **unity**. Any literary work needs to be united as one entity only then, the text appeals to the readers and gains **artistic** excellence.

The text becomes a self-conscious attempt at recovering and interpreting critically, memory. Interestingly, the text uses memory but not to celebrate its existence, but to question its own existence. Verbal art is seen as the full power of continuous memory at work. Verbal art is in the process of dealing with the account of events, situations, the transmission of cultural tradition and certain norms. Text has a profoundly critical function. Modern text assumes that in order to be authentic, unpleasant truths ought to be shared with the reader. The reading and writing, thus, is a kind of asocial act. An act, sometimes we are bound to carry on such responsibilities when it is certain to happen in relation to our own community.

Derrida points out that a speech act in ordinary discourse is only possible through reliance on already extant conventions of language. Hence, he says, such an act is both a function of “writing” and repeatable. The performance-an act in which speaker, intention, and voice all seem to be unequivocally present, determinate, and historically situated is, in fact, a parasitic act upon a conventional script.

Most important thing is, some people write because they have a problem within their communities which they want to sort out in solitudes. Walker write it in the way it

happened, because language and literary art deliver not the event itself but also a **vision** of that event. Such microscopic linguistic choices render an event in short and simple sentences, or short vowels and long consonants alters the reader's experience of the event. Further, the language of politics can easily go unexamined, and remain sedimented with theoretical presuppositions about experiences and its concepts are often in violation of direct intuition. Generally, the heart of memorable and enduring fiction is imaginative storytelling reinforced by massive technique and one among is intertextuality.

There is a strong element of inter-textuality in the literary works. Inter-textuality of course does not mean the movement of text from one to another. But it suggests the journey from cultural to literary and also towards political texts. Intertextuality also challenges the relationship between reader and text, within the history of discourses and cultural conventions. Kristeva's thoughts focus on the problem of the relationship between language and bodily experience by proposing the fact through the semiotic element. Bodily expressions manifest themselves in language. In a simplified words, the semiotic is defined as the maternal aspect of language that presents the writer's insight that drives their strong whim. The style of language employed in *The Color Purple* is heavily influenced by the novel's formal structure. They are thoroughly connected to on-going cultural and social process.

Walker's enquiries into literary, cultural and political issues are heavily interrelated resonating all the complexities built into Afro-American social and cultural life. In *The Color Purple* she designates a range of liberties such as sexual, financial, social and even religious freedom in spite of being in patriarchal rule governed by society. Intertextuality is in different modes like historical and political insight and also

epistolary form showing that a woman's identity can be strengthened through effective communication and that is possible only by the usage of effective language. The mastery of language is crucial for female development.

Alice Walker's larger social and political concerns have very strong socialist influences which have always been central to her culture and her literary works. One can see the wide ramifications of a socialist perspective underlining her notions of Afro-American literature which is produced in the Black English. I also feel that it is virtually impossible to separate the organic relationship that exists between literature, politics and also culture. After all literary tradition is the product of culture and it may be perceived as a mirror through which the entire image of human relations is projected.

Walker's novels specifically display a tremendous interplay of language, followed by power and also gender. As I have discussed previously *In the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, that she uses rural African slang producing a new kind of narrative technique, consciously creating an intimate impact on her readers with her characters who use their dialect. Women characters are created with ability to use speech variant or code switching reflecting the social values of time. One can realize the power and beauty of non-standard English language through the character of Mem, a former teacher. She speaks a dialect of people residing in the North. This language presents the social and cultural values of Afro-Americans. Other characters like Margaret, Ruth and other women also speak the same language indicative of public voice to connect between language and their identity. Her use of Black English shows her concern about her cultural heritage clearly indicating her hold of black identity through the language they all use.

In this novel, the literal and metaphysical dimensions are sensitively examined by Walker. Her novels have managed to speak across communities even as they speak only about one community: the African-American community. She ought to be speaking a very convincing language through her novels if one were to consider the fact that her novels are also read by the white community. She uses such a powerful language that communicates to communities with different and even opposing predilections. It seems hardly possible for the new generations to grasp the valuable accomplishments of their great ancestor and trace back their collective selves. Unless the body of knowledge is understood as a continuing hunt for the meaning that causes the miracle of passing over and coming back to one's own culture with new perceptivity and unique cultural lifestyles.

As an individual goes through the passages in a life process and is challenged by transitional experiences. And so too oral narrative tradition. It is through this challenge the verbal literature gains sustainable social value ensuring its growth. Readers value words for their meaningful appeal to mortal senses and compassion. In feminist works use of language and its adequacy are carefully scrutinized. One who knows the taste of humiliation and frustration yearns more for the freedom of speech and expression.

In *The Temple of My familiar*, each and every major movement has substantiated a traditional convention of language. Especially the art of conversation raised to a ritual of phatic communion or dialogic act of sharing. Every movement exposes individual character's sharing his or her compassionate thoughts followed by cherishable memories. Interestingly recollection of such thoughts is also a way of communication. But more importantly this idea is a means of establishing an atmosphere of sociability and rapport,

of strengthening a sense of the unified whole and sympathetic relatedness. Arveyda's and Zede's use of Spanish sentences, their expressions, situate their individual utterances within milieu of cultural continuity. Walker's aim is not so much to articulate her characters uniqueness, but it is to demonstrate their kinship with their community in which they were born and bred that is, with community linguistic ethos.

In *Meridian*, she manifests the educational level which blacks had received in those days and most of the women forced to get marry in their tender age instead of being at school and most of the men were needed to work. Walker has showed that through her dialogues written in the position of uneducated persons who are trying to speak English. Most of the sentences appear in wrong spelling along with grammatical errors. Walker has artistically employed the black slangs. Besides that, Walker has put Standard English language into the mouth of Meridian to relate her to the American culture and so, Meridian Hill and other characters speak Standard English that prevails in American culture. But one thing should be noted that, she is overtly silenced in the novel. Barbara Christian observes in this novel, that Walker enacts a literary analysis of the interaction between media and the public as dramatized through the character of Meridian Hill. Development of the whole individual is related to the expression of language in not just the portions of *Meridian* but also in the short stories like *Everyday Use*.

The Color Purple is a text that manifests itself as an artistic production in which language is essential to the shaping of vision. This novel shows language as power and has also demonstrated that, what should be the nature of black woman's discourse. Since a discourse is an enunciation that requires a speaker or narrator, and a listener or reader, the use of epistolary form is more effective. The protagonist Celie writes to Nettie and

eventually comprise an emerging black woman's text containing within it several voice. Through the letters, the text displays the weaving of more than one woman's voice and demonstrates the means by which women have been silenced and their linguistic powers appropriated.

In *The Color Purple* the entire focus is on the protagonist named Celie who is struggling to define herself, and that was possible through the use of language. This novel, I believe, is a representation of woman's struggling towards linguistic self-definition in a world of disrupted signs. "Celie is imprisoned, alienated, sexually abused and driven into semiotic collapse" (Abbandoanto106). Celie was not able to communicate with other characters, so she vocalizes her miseries when she starts feeling secure within the bond of sisterhood. As she was forbidden to talk about her miseries to others she uses letters to express **herself**. In the series of letters, she starts to express her horrible life. This is how Walker enables her readers to enter into the private life, private thoughts and emotional state of mind.

Letter writing reveals the thinking process of the characters and it has the potential of making the letter as a means of expressing their own voices too. No doubt this also helps in reconstructing of the self, **women-self**. So it is said that letter-writing as a literary form in fiction is a powerful genre for women writers those who are interested in using novel to examine modern contemporary society critically.

Alice Walker, through her use of language, describes the character in one stroke. We get different linguistic experience and wide range of themes exhibiting new strategies in the narration of stories. Celie's character is chaotic and her language too. But while discussing about her sister Nettie, Alice Walker brings in the use of educated English,

though black. Black English around 1960 was a quite distinct dialect which was of course widely and consistently used. The reason behind using dialect is for its sound system, structural system and vocabulary system. We also come across “**eye dialect**” used as another kind of language system. In support of the above line, I would like to quote Hsiao, who points out, “Walker’s use of “**eyedialect**”, demonstrates the fact that Celie’s letters cling to the oral culture of her own people (Hsiao 93-120). Eye dialect is a kind of literary use. A use of incorrect spellings that have purpose to express a person someone who speaks regarding his/her lack of education and use of sense of good mood with the trait of appreciating formal system of reasoning and dialectical pronunciations but that actually no more than respellings of standard pronunciation, like wimmin for “women”, wuz for “was”, and peepul for “people” etc. This signifies the fact that Celie wants to stay with her oral tradition. Celie has her own grammatical rules.

We come across errors with recurring patterns. No doubt her language speaks for characters. For example, “But I don’t never get used to it”, the use of double negation expresses her inability to comply with the situation. In order to come out of loneliness, she starts writing letters addressed to God. The following lines illustrate her use of dialect: I’m gitting tired of Harpo, she say. All he think about since as married is how to make me mind. Harpo don’t want a wife, maybe he needs a dog. “He your husband, I say. Got to stay with him. Else, what you gone do? My sister’s husband is caught in the deaft, she say. They don’t have no children, but Odessa love children it seems. He left her on a little farm. Me and my children, go to Oddessa to stay for a while. Celie says, I think bout my sister Nettie. Her thoughts so sharp and feeling of missing her brings pain. It seem too sweet to tolerate” (Walker 67).

One more thing is regardless of their marital status, the female characters are addressed with the title “Miss” along with their first names like Miss Celie, Miss Sofia, Miss Nettie etc. Such a way of addressing is common across the American South and they express distance. The formal use of language certainly shows extreme politeness.

I could observe that what Walker is doing is to trace the rough paths black women have had to follow in the journey to liberation and self-actualization pointing the way forward for the liberated woman and of course asserting for an education because that is very vital which brings them an economic emancipation. She got that through sewing business. Through this kind of awareness only Celie has achieved a certain level of equality with Mr.____ Albert. Mr.____ acknowledges his faults and accepts the blame for his mistakes. They try to maintain a cordial relation which gives them opportunity to re-assess their past and project for the future. When there is a proper dialogue between black men and black women they can be mutually benefited being integrated instead of getting separated. Thus, in spite of manifestations of female oppression, black female writers are optimistic as their narratives conclude on a positive reconstruction of the female self within the structure of the family and community.

As I have already mentioned that Walker introduces readers to the conventional and educated language of Nettie which is very much contrast to Celie’s uneducated language. Her letters are more like a text books whereas, Celie’s letters are very personal and emotional. Language plays a vital role in shaping the self-confidence of Celie showing the process of growth from nothing to achieving some position in the society. Characters in the novel not just write, but they speak more. Due to patriarchal powers and cultural politics women were prevented from getting educated. There is no part of the

world that is not being threatened by violence of all forms and Walker's works are evidence that there are indeed sane voices striving to save human kind from extinction. Using language as a mirror Walker has exposed the discrimination and also growing images of her women characters besides mirroring their predicaments.

This novel appears to be a patterned quilt because of its epistolary form adding realism in a narrative enabling reader to come across various viewpoints. This gives the real experience and story gets a touch of vissimilitude and also new dimension. In this novel, all the character's words are controlled by Celie's supravoice having her, in this way, the power of manipulating their speeches. The only sentence that seems not to be under Celie's control is the very first sentence in the novel: said "by Mr ____ that you better never tell anybody but God. I'd kill your mammy" (Walker 11) it is exactly the above textual sentence which sounds threatening and has forced her to remain silent forever. Here, we get to observe the fact that she finds new voice through the medium of writing to express and assert her pain.

Celie finds her subjectivity through the process of writing. This is how the novel is structured as a series of letters addressed, firstly, to God, almost 56 letters which can be considered as "an extensive interior monologue" according to Butler Evans and, then, to Nettie its 14 letters, Nettie has written 22 letters to Celie. Additionally, Shug has also written letter to Celie. Letters are written without mentioning date and year except for Celie's time in Memphis and Nettie's letters from England. Her letters to God can be assumed as writing of inner speech and even inner dialogue to herself which reflects in the letters to find her identity. Letter 76 is important because she is moving to Memphis and owns her own business, signs her letter with full confidence. The signature suggests

Celie's assurance about her personal identity, financial security, and her social participation.

Distinguishing factor in Celie's letter is the spoken form of her language which becomes more effective, expressive and creative. That kind of letter writing has set the stage for intentional and radical shock while setting up the stringent conditions under which Celie struggles deliberately to exist. By making the act of writing a key element in the process of Celie's redemption, underlines the importance of literacy referring to the slave experience and also its consequences that is oppressive illiteracy. The act of writing also sustains the link between the sisters. The power of language is in its real folk form. For example: Celie's letter to Nettie, written in folk language and it records her traits. Further, in one of the letter we get to see her complaints about her suffering which is addressed to god. "Dear God, He beat me today cause he say, I winked at a boy inside the church, I may have got something In my eye. But I didn't wink, I don't even look at men's" (Walker 15).

In the above letter we can observe how author has used uneducated grammar to help the reader to know the pain of the protagonist experiences. I have already mentioned about Nettie's use of formal language. "A deep analysis says that Walker seems to be exhibiting a variety of voice, a special kind of voice which identifies its folk tradition and culture in the language used by the protagonist. We also come across lot of conversations rather than the narration of events and they are reported through the medium of Celie as observed by Sara Mills" (51-52). Walker has used language as a weapon besides using it as a symbol to reflect the growth of her protagonists from subjugation to emergence. In all her fictions we get to see that Walker's language plays a dynamic role in setting the rhythm and also the themes.

The achievement of this novel remains valid till today, because Walker has taken Celie through a process of utter hopelessness to full recognition and equality. Not just protagonist, along with Celie, other characters such as Shug Avrey, Mary Agnes and Sofia, Walker has shown that women can rewrite their history. Thus I could say that this novel has awakened the female consciousness serving as a vehicle for conscious raising for many women. Novelist's attempt to embody her own particular vision of **black feminism** is very much evident over here. Indeed, I would say that, black female novelists have made various responses to the initial and present situation of the Black women in America.

It is understood by now that, women should learn to revolt if they intend to have pleasure, to achieve happiness by confronting hurdles, restriction, authority, or law that could allow women to understand themselves as "self-reliant and liberated" (Kristeva 2000). She intends to say that the revolt transforms **invisible** Celie into **visible** one. So this novel is considered as a model for the reconstruction of a black feminist literary tradition besides dealing with Celie's fight for **progress** and **individuality**.

Classical literature and history, into I could observe that how author puts black invisible women, who are absent from the spotlight and permits them to speak and take action. She is a vibrant living symbol that promises the welfare of the entire universe. In this novel it is very clear that language is in the hands of men and they dominate women by its usage. To some extent, they force women not to use language as speaking helps them to gain knowledge and also to realize their **self- i.e. sense of identity**. As the story opens we learn that Celie is obliged to remain silent, but she feels the urge to tell someone; there, she starts writing letters to God explaining miseries imposed upon her

besides seeking her social rights. Walker intends to highlight women's predicament besides suggesting how to get rid of the misrepresentations by proving their creative abilities. It's a known fact that women have been ignored, misrepresented and mistreated in literature and also in history. One of the central issues in African American literature is the use of language whether it is debate or conflict or any celebration, this surrounds the use of language in African American literary art.

In *The Color Purple*, author draws several parallels between colonialism and masculinity. Further, the image of black victim of the white colonizer is turned upside down. Both Celie and Nettie suffer in the shadow of white colonialism. First one is the embodiment of slavery. She liberates herself when she gains the ability to speak out louder. Earlier, the things she could previously only write. And the second fact is a missionary in Africa who discovers that she is powerless to stop the forces exploiting the continent and the people who live over there. Celie never pays much attention to the politics behind the language she uses. Her voice is empowered at the expense of the Standard English. She has written in black vernacular language. We all know that to happily adopt the language of the colonizer is to implicitly admit that our own (mother tongue, regional language) language is not good enough. Darlene believes that Celie's language which helped to liberate by enabling her individuality, is inferior because it is black, and not an imitation of white, which means it is not Standard English.

It seems that Celie has empowered herself by taking control over English language and molding it according to her convenient, her own preference. Whereas we could see that Nettie has submitted to the standardized language and also the system that has exploited Africans. She conforms to them as she keeps account of her service to the

colonial system that novel attacks. One thing should be noticed that Nettie's narrative is subordinate to Celie's narrative because if Celie's story did not exist then we wouldn't have heard to Nettie's story. Celie maintains a dialect that marks her race and also her social status. Celie's narrative and her language rejects the epistolary form as it was established by white, British writers of the seventeenth century, in contrast to Celie's, Nettie's letters submit to the idea of epistolary mode, letter novels in style, themes and also in rhetoric.

Writing is a means of survival. It seems that, Celie is not ready to lose her identity at the hands of outlander, because she has realized the fact that her own community people are the one who discourage and subjugate her. Celie's freedom comes the moment she can articulate her own existence refusing to acknowledge her as an individual. Her spoken voice is more powerful than her written words, but her written words imitate her voice so expertly that there is little difference. Celie stands against the society that has defined her language as an "inferior" because it is spoken by "inferior" people, and she victoriously preserves her own story in the nonconforming language of her resistance. Nettie represents colonial interests conforming the usage of "proper" educated language, seeking to imitate the white idea of perfection rather than finding a black one. Black women are voices from the margins, remaining as the "other". Having a doubt whether they speak as black or whether they speak as a women. More than anything else, at the end of the day, we get to see Celie is only Celie.

Walker maintains that the dynamics of textuality in modern times is very different from that of oral cultures which had an organic society as the supporting edifice. No doubt that her fictions are mature reflections of a writer who strongly situates herself in a

contemporary times even as she turns to the intricacies of artistic endeavors. She is able to create metaphors out of contesting philosophical systems and ideological positions. She has been more metaphorical and symbolic in her very understanding of issues.

Stylistically, the tone of the fictions of the eighties communicates the sense that women of color can no longer be perceived as marginal. An understanding of their reality is essential to the process of change that entire society must undergo in order to transform itself. In black fictions readers find that the black woman searching for their identity, love and happiness. Their perceptions are shaped by their own black womanhood.

Writing as a Therapy

Afro-American literary texts directly mirror social, political, and psychological conditions prevailing in Afro-American culture at any given time. In the written texts, the motivating force may be to encounter embarrassment and communicate it to the reader- which is spiritually healing according to Alice Walker. The process of writing is an intense experience. While describing the state of consciousness of a creative artist, who knows to cleanse herself, even as the turbulent, agonizing experiences of life torment and the existential being of the artist. The creative process is an act of evolution from particular state of "being". All great works of art come out of the anguish and turmoil of human existence, but necessarily gain the spiritual transcendence. No doubt writing becomes therapy for everyone at certain instances.

Therapeutic writing becomes a popular topic in the final decades of the twentieth century. In the United States, one study on the effects of writing about stressful experiences found that after four months of writing therapy, depressed patients

experienced relevant improvements. It can often be helpful to write down one's experiences or memory in the convenient way may be in the form of a story or just like a notes describing the situations, people involved, specific time and many other things with compassionate standpoint. In this way it helps to put the story together which was in a fragmented way in the mind enabling to see a various perspective. I feel it as very optimistic. Writing at times when we are feeling great and times when we are distressed or struggling to cope is a positive step. It helps to put things in perspective and that means we can look back on it to realize how we coped with the situation and that, things will be better. It is just like a ray of hope to get back to life and to survive and being positive that this time will pass.

Writing in our convenient language gives everyone a chance to talk with their own thoughts, which is intensely personal most of the times not worrying about the formal language because it is just like a **cognitive behavioral therapy** referring to our thoughts and ideas that we tell ourselves. Sometimes we are unaware of it. It also effects mind and body then to certain actions followed by our vehement feelings. By learning how our thoughts and actions influence our feelings, we can learn to get control over depressed emotions. We become confident of doing certain things or try to be a certain type of person being positive and thinking. Assuring oneself with the thought that I could probably handle a crisis as well as anyone else. This kind of positive thoughts give rise to another positive thought probably like I have great hopes for the future and may be a thought like I really handled the situation well. The above positive thoughts make one to find the strength to handle whatever comes up. In *The Color Purple*, why Celie chooses to write is that she has no confident to talk about her sufferings.

Alice Walker talks about her traumatic event in many of her works. In her fifth novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy* she assimilates her blinding with women's genital mutilation in Africa and tells the story of a victim who becomes a survivor. I would like to mention one more text over here i.e. *The Yellow Wall Paper*. In this short story, Charlotte Perkins Gilman emphasizes the importance of expressing oneself through writing after traumatic experience. Protagonist of the story experiences repeated mental insanity. Longing for an emotional and intellectual outlet, writing and keeping a journal become a therapy for the narrator and writer, a real source of relief and a wonderful outlet to anxiety.

Writing in our own expressions is just like a meditation. It heals the mind. It's an honest act where we can't lie to ourselves. The above said thought is very much visible in the character of Celie. Through the process of writing, she exorcises her demons, she feels better and eased. It is not that writing can erase all the bad things and memories from one's mind, but it is true that writing gives the power to control the painful moments and bitter experiences. One has to agree that writing is a form of willed creation, Celie's reflection of "self" is very clear since she writes from the heart and hence it is stronger and well defined, intensely private, develops into a subjective and personal style. "Her folk language and rustic style becomes a creative writing. Thus justification for concentrating on language resides in the fact that literary works of art are inscribed in language. Additionally, the linguistic behaviors associated with literary discourse are, different from those surrounding speech in familiar everyday contexts according to Houston" (Baker 122).

The Color Purple reflects new black women who verbalize their needs and go after them. In fact, Walker highlights the concept of sisterhood. Through that, all her

women characters try to come out of their relegated position in and out of the family. This particular concept helps them to revive their subjectivity. By realizing their needs, inner talents and qualities, should find proper way to express them profoundly. This thought is of course towards womanism. All her fictions confirm this power that the defeated antiheroes have to resist oppression. As an African American woman, Walker is able to transform her alienation heritage of slavery into an ultimate victory, she survives against oppression through her powerful voice and writings. Resistance is read on every line of her novels, short stories, poems and nonfictions too. Art definitely become therapy to survival. In her dedication of the novel she writes “To the spirit: without whose assistance/neither this book/nor I/would have been/ written” which suggests that to create a book is to create a life. The act of writing itself enables Celie to rebirth, to come into life again to experience a new life.

Reconfiguration of Language and Style

Afro-American women writers particularly might have felt the sense of responsibility concerned to the task of writing into history. They brought in their experiences, constituting their roles as hard workers, besides being mothers, and also activists. Black feminisms also emerge from diverse theoretical perspectives, they frequently speak to the politics of race and class, as well as gender, and address the dialectics of struggle and community empowerment. As per studies, contemporary white feminism call on black women’s text not only to recognize the sanctioned feminist agenda but it is also called into questioned by post-structuralism. To boost and enrich the post-structuralism by finding out its prefiguration in black women’s texts. Black women writers are enlisted to bestow a cultural authority that derives in part from their enforced experience of embodiment.

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens is a very good example to observe how Walker makes language and style work for her in multiple levels bringing personal writing, storytelling, and literary criticism together to draw attention on the problematic issues and also helps with hopeful alternatives. Through her use of language she calls readers to engage actively in interpreting her texts in order to that, reader fully engages in interpreting their own worlds witnessing her reconfiguration of linguistic elements.

I feel that retelling of memories stored in oral traditions is not celebratory but it is a critical interpretation or reinterpretation and recreation of memories. Thus there is a sense of paradox in language. Recovering past becomes very crucial at certain times, the usual past of course, under the stress of the present and there is no new creation. Continuity is the very essence of being fully human in the fast changing times continuity in the biological life span, as well as with our sage ancestors.

Celie's movement away from an existence as a victim in a patriarchal plot toward a linguistic and narratological presence as the subject rewriting the myth through its creation of an alternative discourse that allows for the expression of both masculine and feminine subjectivity. Here subjectivity refers to sewing because that is her characteristic feature. Comparison is made between needle and pen both has helped her to get liberated and to draw conclusion in relation with her life or her existence.

As mentioned in the earlier chapter about quilting, sewing. Here, Celie's sewing functions as an alternative methodology of language that moves her away from victimization and into self-empowerment. Sewing is seen as feminine subjectivity that helped her to draw a sound conclusion in relation with her life or her existence. And subjectivity deliberately concentrates on the pen and also the needle, deconstructing the

binary oppositions between masculine and feminine. Former the spoken and latter the silenced one. It is clear comparison between pen and needle. Linguistic binary oppositions between women and men respectively. One becomes woman by acquiring the version of femininity her culture defines, as Simone de Beauvoir claims. Celie's resistance voice is enabled by her creation of alternative conception of her audience and by a reconfiguration of the rhetorical triangle of sender-receiver-message.

Exchanging Dialogues and Sewn Binaries

Next point is we could see the act of sewing and also the act of exchanging dialogues unconventionally because they are associate and seem as indivisible part of the alternative methodology of speech. But sewing does more than enable conversation: sewing is conversation, a language that articulates relationships and connects and reconnects networks of individuals to create a community. Sewing is precisely the language that can replace the patriarchal discourse of Mr.____ that can revise the mythic pattern of silence/violence/silence. Further, Celie's pen is the needle that creates a design out of separate narrative threads just like a fabric of the text, remaking individual relationships and roles, trying to replacing the violence of patriarchal discourse with a language that re-members and remakes. She just does not sew the cloth but she sews the language. She sews her daughter's name "Olivia" on diapers. So, the needle is literally, pen, connecting mother and daughter that is both, a linguistic manner by stitching the name and sewing that is embroidered. One could easily observe that in *The Color Purple*, both sewing and usage of language are interlinked. That suggests their way of realizing self-definition, self-expression. Therefore we clearly get to see Walker's language of the sewn binaries and hierarchies of the hegemonic world, such as those between oral and

written language, between informal and formal diction, between art and language, and between discourse and **craft**.

In the text we also come across criss-crossed letters, written to dead, an absence, may be received from the dead, all these point towards the instability of the language. Beyond giving resistance voice to Celie, which allows her to reconfigure the rhetorical situation, recreating her audiences, this text also creates an alternative methodology of language. Walker depicts language as an instrument of coercion and dominance, and it is often used by men to silence women. However, Walker is not content with showing Celie's use of "the master's tools" against the master. She is of the opinion that Celie must learn the fact that language can be used to understand, rather than destroying another's subjectivity. It is better that woman use language in a constructive way than using language in a destructive way denying others voice.

There is experimentation with the voice-shift strategy within a broader scope by inserting different narratives into a letter language. There are several long paragraphs and appears to be a clear-cut patchwork pattern similar to quilt. Celie is made to speak vernacular language because she wants her to maintain her autonomy. She asserts that telling stories has made her mother "**an artist**". Many women in earlier times not having any access to written words, resorts to the oral traditions to pass down her wisdom and creativity. Walker put forth her disappointment through the medium of Celie's strong word about political and economic predicament that stops black women from getting access to education and exercising their power. As discussed already, Celie's letters also record her journey from silence to articulation. What mutes Celie is the patriarchal language.

Patriarchal world in Celie creates a beautiful symbolic and rich world which is different from which she actually lives. Further I feel that letters become her world, she can say anything, any word she likes. This freedom pushes her gradually into the repudiation of her real life with an eagerness for change. She flaunts with the awareness that she needs to change. Writing structures Celie's identity. She undergoes complete transformation feeling that she is brought to life again. The language she uses also reflects her psychological state. A kind of simplicity is reflected through her use of the vernacular language and whole lot of spelling mistakes in her writing. Gradually I could see that she has learned to analyze her own feelings. Her development of thoughts thus play a vital role in helping her to recognize the desolate situation in which she is trapped.

Walker also elucidates the fact about equitable relationship between sexes. Equality between the genders and validation of the "feminine" that Walker alludes to when Albert is included in the sewing circle. Certain sources are of the opinion that Walker's approach to social change is realistic. In her text, I could see that, the "feminine" is not silenced and it belongs entirely to neither gender. The "feminine sensibility" functions as a language that both men and women can speak, a language that offers the possibility of radical social transformation.

The Color Purple conflates needle and pen, undermining the most basic binary structures of patriarchal society, male versus female, public versus private, empowered versus disempowered, spoken versus silent. Walker never fails to bring in her concerns about gender roles and its dynamics in her works especially when it comes to her characterization, plot and its development of thoughts in the story. Black English of Celie is challenging, proves to be a rule-governed language in that there is consistency in

phonology, morphology, and also syntax. It is rich in characteristically black usages, novelist conversational style enlivens the reading experience of the novel. She has made some modification to the dialect, her primary concern is to preserve the black cultural heritage and to challenge the superiority of Standard English.

As we all know that *The Color Purple* has been adapted for a movie by reputed director, and that adaptation stipulates the visual aid in the rendition of the novel. Spielberg's version has caused controversy as to its crude image of black men of evasion of ideological issues, and accommodations to a mainstream audience etc. In view of the positions of the male and female characters in some scenes, the visual images have successfully impressed the viewer's not only with the exploitation but also with the empowerment of women.

Letters are means of structuring her identity. In her world of letters, Celie enjoys a sort of freedom never tasted before and that helps her to understand the humiliating condition she lives in and leads her to start thinking of the possibility of adopting this freedom into her real life. This novel unfolds with the marvelous interplay of language, gender and power. No doubt that Walker's sensible use of language gives rise to new stories and new narrative strategies, and unfold never heard stories of women, and not only that, such stories transforms traditional construction of gender roles. The manipulation of language has empowered the speaker. While failure in voicing the causes is not only silence but a lack of control. Walker's use of Black English certify her to appreciate about the black cultural heritage. Readers get curious to understand the way she throws challenges to the supremacy of white people's language is interesting.

Celie's experience ends in a real triumph. Her fight is a successful example for all women who are still under patriarchal domination. This shows that Alice Walker's true

intention from writing this novel is to point out a bright way for the freedom and liberation of black women as well as all other oppressed women all over the world. As the cultural conscience of contemporary times, breathes life into this great dream of the visionaries of humanity the world beyond violence and hatredness.

I believe that everyone should become active participants in propagating the ideal thoughts of humanity because it is a moral imperative for those who believe in Justice, Peace and Equality against the tyranny of the monstrous world and its economic order. Walker has shown distrust to the sovereignty of constructed identities. She believes that subverts the importance of language by which they are molded. She uses agrarian as well as urban language. As for herself she resists confinement within the boundaries of any political-historical discourse. She doesn't stop here her rebellion goes beyond and above to protest against social and historical injustice.

Further, I get to see the factor of **her story** in the fictions of Walker. The language and forms of black women's fiction have undergone radical changes. They are directly derived from women's experiences and also Afro-American culture just like *The Color Purple* – which is a revolutionary in its own kind. A Step ahead in the revolutionary transformation of novel form. The letters in the novel allowed women to document their everyday lives, their emotional feelings, their predicaments, and their stories particularly as “**herstory**” exploring the richness and clarity of black folk English in such a way that the reader understands that the inner core of a person (woman) could be truly known through her own language. Exploration of new forms based on the black woman's culture and her predicaments has revitalized the Afro-American novel opening new avenues of expression through Black English. In the story, Celie, spoke in reference to her mother's

death of the belief that “his story kilt her.” But by the end of the novel, his story **referring to history**, has become **herstory**, a story of female love, female work, female song, and most importantly, female bonding. Finally, in the process of subjectivity Celie goes through language and desire to construct her own identity and the darkness in which her spirit reveals itself, alienation, silence, and finally the complexion of racism and sexism, all of them are presented as being prior to language in this story.

This chapter has focused on Walker’s use of artistic and impressive language in her fictions. Her fictions depict the importance of language in the search for linguistic self-definition and identity. I get to see that black female writers are optimistic as their narratives conclude on a positive note, I mean, reconstruction of the female self within the structure of the community. Through her writing Alice Walker asks black women to be agents of positive change for themselves and society at large. She is an artistic writer besides being a guiding spirit and her progressive visions are felt in her fictions. As an artistic writer she never fails to insert interesting themes and narrative strategies.

Experiencing Pragmatic Language

Language is always related to culture because of its symbolic nature. Walker’s use of language is set so that cultural meanings are authentically brought out from a person’s true feelings and thoughts. This further helps in bringing out the realm of meanings to enhance the “self”. It is quite clear that in Afro- American English one always comes through the above said especially in the use of language its sounds and utterances that also could be identified with their lived experiences and sometimes beyond and above.

So, here it is clear that meaningful experiences get transformed into authentic meaning of language used in the work of art. No doubt that meaning and expressions always go deeper when compared to the essence of language. Analysis of language is not possible without experiencing resourceful meaning because that is always based on the knowledge and reasonable assertion I mean it is all about linguistic measures and linguistic structures. Needless to say those experiences are properly understood with forms of assertion and linguistic ability that happens through speaking or speech acts.

The creative writings of Afro-American novelists tend to be autobiographical and it is understood that it comes with their personal experiences. In support to the above said I would like to quote Kenneth Kinnamon who is of the opinion that “a novelist rather a criminal emerged from the racial prejudice, poverty, family disorganization and inadequate education that afflicted him every year is a phenomenon not easy to explain” (Kinnamon 3). Richard Wright and James Baldwin have given their childhood experiences a creative expression in their literary work. Wright’s semi-autobiography *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* is a very good example to mention which suggests the black angst through his writing.

It is not only the linguistic meaning which matters but some situations can also function as tool or it just becomes instrumental in giving an account of experiences as we see in *The Color Purple* and *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Language is taken in its widest sense, perhaps a sense that is wider than oral as well as written speech. Emotion are understood when they are expressed in certain way I mean when it is expressed through proper use of language and not only its linguistic structures. For example, Celie’s rustic language in her letters indicate to some extent that letter writing has given her some

sort of relief and made her self-reliant and self-propelled woman. That has helped her to shape her certain idealistic notions regarding herself and I have already mentioned this in under the sub heading “writing as therapy” in the earlier part of this chapter. One could come across multiple themes merged with one another in this novel but it is sensibly handled. I would concentrate on personal development over here besides sisterhood or female relationships not to mention racial issues because major contribution to their sufferings is racial discrimination.

Walker’s writing clearly states that she is preoccupied with exploring the effects of sexism and also women’s determination to overcome all kinds of barriers. All her female characters in the fiction exhibit determination to some extent to attain that selfhood. The above said could be observed in Celie’s character that is able to assertively state her identity, saying “I’m pore, I’m black, I may ugly and can’t cook.... But I’m here” (Walker 214).

Women are natural story tellers no doubt they have developed that innate quality very astutely. What makes their story interesting is their usage of language and their lived experiences and that itself is a realistic approach. As we know there are plenty of cultures with their convictions same thing could be seen in various folk cultures around the world. Earlier stories were loaded with supernatural elements I mean lot of imaginations as if everything is fictionalized. But with the passing time woman have learned to confront the things as it comes. Presently, we could see that women writers think beyond fantasy and yet story is told artistically and feminine language and their experiences has made that possible.

Walker's stories are very interpretative in nature that brings out the elegant art of storytelling also. It is not necessary that stories always should be about some heroic person or epic narrative as such but today, it encompasses whole lot of things from the ongoing of society and its related issues for sure and hence giving a touch of authenticity and serious concern. Above said goes well with the fictions of Alice Walker because they represent the collective consciousness of the black women and their predicament but she is also optimistic and shows ray of hope somehow. That could be observed in Celie's character through the medium of letters to God and her sister Nettie she tries to encounter her "self" because she is having no other contacts. That gives an account of Celie's miseries the she was threatened by her step father and the way she was compelled to remain defenseless ruining her confidence etc. Her letters were in the form of reporting every facts and her helplessness. We get to see this in the text when her step father threatens her "Who you think you is?..." (213) and further we could witness her helplessness when she writes second letter to God saying My mama dead. She die screaming and cussing. She scream at me. She cuss at me. I'm big. I can't move fast enough. By the time I git back from the well, the water will be warm.

Further, in the letter Celie also talks about her sick mother, "She ast me bout the first one Whose it is? I say God's. I don't know no any other man or what else should I say. When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby comes out my pussy chewing on its fist you could have knocked me over with a feather. Don't nobody come see us? She got sicker and sicker. Finally she ast where it is? I say God took it. God took it. He took it while I was sleeping. Kilt it out there inside the woods if possible. Kill that one too, If he can (12).

The above letter shows the androcentric culture of victimizing women. Throughout the text we could observe this kind of language used by Celie that is so real and gives authentic feel. Written in Black English but tone is factual, shows her patience and tolerance but she has also lost her sense of individuality that is so evident in her first letter to God as well. She is struggling to know the purpose of her life. This is how Alice Walker brings out the art of storytelling related to the serious issues rather than fantasizing the traits of women. This particular touch is felt when the novelist use proper language I mean diction and obviously using dialects of specific culture. As we see in the *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, walker uses dialect Tsunga one who performs circumcision. Dialects help readers to relate with the stories because they keep the local ambience or flavor in mind.

Letter writing technique is also been used in Walker's most intense novel named *Possessing the Secret of Joy* also but in this novel language is refined. Language also reflects one's culture besides conveying proper meaning otherwise readers might lose the interest failing to connect with the novel as well as ideas put forth in the story by the novelist. The above said thing goes well with Walker's novels. She uses storytelling as a composite form and language helps us to find and connect with the flamboyant expressions. She goes beyond the spoken word to tell stories through her lived experiences as well. No doubt that gives the required expressions and that seems to be interacting with people. While reading we get the feel of visualizing and this is how her language in storytelling art attracts the audience I guess. Because when we read her novels *Meridian*, *Now is The Time to Open Your Heart*, *Third Life of Grange Copeland*, *The Color Purple*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* etc., it seems that images just float before

eyes effortlessly I mean we could literally sense that visually. For example, In the novel *Meridian*, We could see the Civil Rights Movement and Protagonist association with that gave readers authentic feel literally, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* one could see the southern setting so authentically besides using dialects Walker also highlights how her language and Imageries goes hand in hand and this fact actually indicates double consciousness etc. and yes human relationships which are tangled and struggle to get over it. *Possessing the Secret of Joy* depicts Tashi's experiences and traits with certain amount of Africanism.

In *The Color Purple*, protagonist's personal development as an individual and novels epistolary form and its multiple layers are so evident throughout the story that one never fails to understand the given expressions not only with the words but also through pictures representing Writer's aesthetic concerns.

It is a known fact that writers should have audience. It is very important because they are the people who will hear narrator's voice, beliefs and wide range of ideas etc. Walker attempts to tell the life stories as she herself comes with her own lived experiences. While going through the novel *The Color Purple* and *Meridian* we readers try to connect with the characters. Readers try to relate with the protagonists predicaments. They not only shower sympathy over Ceile, Nettie, Meridian, Kate, Tashi, Sofia, Trueman, Lynne etc. But they also empathize with their predicaments and those are easily relatable characters to readers. This is possible because of her simplified and lucid language. We can experience and feel the language in depth. Walker's fictions are work of art no doubt and the way she narrates the story is just similar to the way of our grandmothers used to do at the bed time, particular occasions, and some social

gatherings, obviously they might have enjoyed blissfully connecting with the older generation then, we don't find any cleft in the relationship between older generation and younger generation but with the passing time there is a visible widened cleft in the contemporary society all over the world.

The concept of understanding is a great miss but that could be established with proper usage of language to bring out the authentic expressions that could promote the emotional bonding between people in general. The above said is evident in the novel *Meridian*, we could see mother daughter relationship who guides her daughter but Meridian sometimes do away with her mother's ideas and in the *Possessing the secret of Joy* we could see the relationship of Tashi with her mother and old midwife and also the old Man whose name is Mzee. This fact also gives hint that there are stories within the story for example: Sojourner tree and the Wild Child's story in *Meridian* the manner author uses the language is rustic and down to earth that it makes us to relate with the story as well as the characters.

There is no exaggeration in saying the above fact because the exotic feel is truly experienced in her writing and the reason behind this is Walker's association with her cultural background even today and that is very much evident in all her literary works. Her thought process becomes so extreme sometimes and that is felt with her intense way of expressing the facts. It seems that she is a writer who is careful not to fictionalize too much but to admit her sense of understanding thoroughly with what could be said as realism or pragmatism in a way giving a touch of philosophy.

Language fits conveniently to showcase the righteousness of the protagonists. That is very evident in the character of Celie, Meridian who was so active in the civil

rights movement and also she was part of Alabama movement which was about student's cause. She stood with the cause because of her righteous ideology. We can't even deny the character of Meg from *Third Life of Grange Copeland* though she was humble and full of wisdom she was righteous person as well and also Maggie and her mother from the short story *Everyday use* besides considering Tashi's intense behavior symbolizes the above said. These characters not only prove it with words but also by their deeds. Through their characters we learn the fact that language experience, primarily, is of communication.

Walker's novels are interactive and interpretative in nature. Word play in her fictions is used tactically compelling us to fall in love with her novels. They never fail to prove her pragmatism. It is very hard to get over her stories since they are so intense, grounded and educative. We readers feel that she is narrating stories to the world with such a confidence using Black English according to her convenience shunning all kind of inhibitions being Afro-American woman. She has always been a struggler and the same thing we get to see in all her female characters. It seems that she is a kind of crusader for women extending her help to those who are in the shackles of so called troubles or their predicaments. She creatively uses language giving the feel of documenting series of facts which are relatable yet metaphorical. Audience could easily relate with the characters. When we examine her fictions it is evident that whatever she writes tends to become word of mouth literally. We could witness that in the letters of Celie and other characters too who try to overcome their apprehensions associated with their **self**. Through Celie, Alice Walker shows us the way how she placed her "self" overcoming the obstacles throughout her life. She has tried to shun all her inhibitions, even her language which was

grammatically incorrect most of the times which was used in her letters written to God as well as her sister, indicates her acceptance of **herself**. Shug Avery was a source of inspiration no doubt and she was the one who taught Celie to love her body and that was the significant thing happened to her since then Celie started realizing **herself**. Shug has helped Celie to identify her sexuality. Her friendship with Shug and Sofia helped her to gain some sort of faith in her “**self**” and that also leads to strong bond of sisterhood suggesting collective performances and connectivity is experienced with her metaphorical exaltation.

Her language compels us to experience every possible thing in the story because that is assertive in the sense besides, her writing unleashes creativity, her thought process and ideas. Needless to say that all art forms in some or the other way mirrors the society and it is vulnerable also but Walker has managed to balance between relevance and novelty. We always feel tempted while reading her novels. She ponders over the fact of woman gaining courage and strength through woman trying to redeem their self-esteem with their own efforts. Her inputs in the texts help to break the barriers. There is hint to **Lesbianism** when we observe the relationship of Shug and Celie in *The Color Purple* but that is not a taboo but a kind of expression indicating something needed mutually. “It seems that incest and black lesbianism as something natural and liberating” (Christian 94). Walker is the true artist in the present times whose works speak in volumes focusing on the present social issues along with the history. She uses her Black English to initiate a kind of conversation between we readers and her very own ideas implied in the stories. That is the major factor we can visualize everything while going through her novels and it seems that is her strength of creative writing which captures our mind establishing a strong bond between her work of art and her readers.

Her use of Black English is the sign of liberation for the black women who might hesitate to recognize their “self” following their inferior position and that might also stop them from listening to their “self”. Again example is Celie from the novel *The Color Purple*. She uses her “pen” as a weapon to write letter and her broken language somehow gives her strength to release her stress frustration whatsoever later, when she realizes her innate quality of stitching, she nurtures her needle work and that “needle” also symbolizes her emancipation as a business woman. These things happened because she was able to recognize her “self” to some extent and her feminine sort of writing helped her in showcasing her protest against the discrimination of the patriarchy.

Language, Culture and History

While concentrating on the usage of language, culture and some sort of history never lags behind. It is evident that they come hand in hand. Primarily, while learning the language or getting used to vernacular language we are also getting familiar with that particular society its cultural background and historical aspects as well. Our childhood remains very influential with respect to the above said. It’s quite obvious that we inculcate lot of things in the phase of learning and that might become habit and may lead us in the journey of life. Similarly, throughout Alice Walker’s fictions, we get to observe her influential factors drawn from her southern experiences besides owing strongly to her mother’s culture whatever it is whether language or her memories of ancestors their traditions including her favorite writer Zora Neal Hurston. With the above fact we can easily understand that “self-interest” naturally becomes the driving force from deep within.

Walker expands her liberated thoughts using Black English in a way acknowledging her rationality. She is a writer who is very optimistic in using her experiences as motivational factor other than “**self-interest**”. It seems that being an activist; her intentions are very clear and not much worried about the social norms, she wants the human race to survive going beyond “self-interest” encouraging in adopting good values for life. It might sound vague but all the above things could be learned through the education. That is the thing which makes a person as a civilized individual. This is what actually required to women to get awareness and to understand about their rationality and existence otherwise women cannot come out of fear of getting doomed. Walker makes these things possible in all her fictions especially in *Meridian*.

In this novel, though protagonist was naïve in her earlier phase of life I mean during her school days, later, she realizes her inner craving of emancipating her “**self**” from the domestic spheres. This novel is a kind of proof to understand Walker’s writing that always combines with her activism and that seems to be a complementary way of getting to know the world and trying to find the means to change it. She herself participated in the Civil Rights Movement *Meridian* is all about that. *Meridian* is also the name of protagonist and it is so suggestive and complementary to her character. She is a person who goes through a lot of changes in her behavior in the wake of her personal development. The meaning of her name according to dictionary is being at the best stage of development. Her attitude leads towards that pinnacle point. This novel is a kind of Erziehungsroman where we witness the development of an individual’s character (<https://en.bab.la/erziehungsroman>). *Meridian*’s character developed from naïve to rational. Her Pragmatic language in her fictions do suggests that it is necessary to possess

some kind of knowledge about what we are doing or what we choose to do because it helps us to take a proper stand regarding the problematic issues.

It is a known fact that respected cultures also contribute to the language. Not to forget the fact that language also reflects the culture. Sometimes both are put to stake in the wake of borrowed ideas. Best example would be colonial impact where once colonized always yearned to speak masters language and tried to imitate them in all possible ways. This is visible in franz fanon's remarkable work *The Wretched of the Earth*. The fact is we cannot deny our history whatever it is. Black writing in general emphasizes to look at their past and present. Walker has always attempted to build a relationship with her ancient culture neither ignoring the present. Black writers have always given a scholarly glimpse into the richness of African heritage no doubt. They attempt to rewrite about their culture and also cultural hegemony during colonial period. Literature and history goes hand in hand. Literature also documents the historical facts. There is a belief that with the passing time perspective changes and undergoes certain changes and history is rewritten. This is evident in third world literatures too.

Walker's language invites readers to take an account of authors' journey. When it comes to history, it is of course a manifestation of clash because of discrimination between master and slave, rich and poor, male and female, feminine language and masculine language and also language spoken by learned elites and working class, American and Afro-American in general. When it is about language, it does not stop to bilingual but it could be multilingual in the present scenario. Afro-American cultural dynamics which plays vital role not only in the Walker's literary works but also in the works of her contemporaries like Toni Morrison, Buchi Emecheta etc. Toni morrison's

remarkable work *Sula* and *Beloved* are the best examples which could be read under the historical context and political understanding because everything is socially constructed. Stories are linguistically constructed. In *Sula* difference between values and historical factors are of the focal point. When it comes to language Morrison has tried to balance strategies and also contradictory philosophies because there is also reference to the I world war through the character of Shadrack and history of two young black girls Sula and Nel. We can witness that Morrison has brought black presence to the centre point.

Walker's language is very complimentary in exploring and understanding human relationships beyond and above. Everything becomes fascinating and her realistic approach has elevated her usage of Black English. I have already discussed about this fact in the segment **language and realism**. Because of her touch of realism, we are able to see the inbuilt aesthetics in her literary works. While examining her novels, we realize that her fictions are multifaceted. With lived experiences Walker has always tried to show unique perspective of life and with her pragmatism, one could sense the distinct plot of life besides knowing the very fact of life which does not come with set of conventions needless to say life is unpredictable.

Black women writers have to bear the burden of both race and gender. Walker, Morrison and other writers emphasize the way black culture confronts the life and encourages one to face the challenges of their times. This happened in the life of Meridian and also Sula. Democratic views brings a lot of changes being an activist she keeps herself grounded and that becomes easy to share her experiences through the medium of writing. She could speak in volumes regarding legal actions against all kinds of discriminations in the society possibly taking to streets; she becomes part of collective movements for the sake of social concern and to persuade women to realize their "true-

self". By using black vernacular language Walker gives the touch of rustic nature specially mention would be of *Third life of Grange Copeland* in which, we come across communion between communication and the mindset, cultural and historical perspective. This is the reason as a story teller she has got success reaching out to a larger audience.

Alice Walker is a techno savvy and makes use of that to reach people and to convey her messages or voice to every nook and corners. One has to undergo changes and must learn to go with the flow. This is the age of technology which rests in our finger tips. Writers are doing away with the traditional way of writing with pen and notepad instead it is just a click away composing directly in the system or laptops etc. Kamau Braithwaite is the best example for this that's the reason his poems sound differently. Writers are updating themselves with the passing time. They are creating blogs and websites to help students and research scholars academically. Walker is techno friendly for that matter and has created informative blogs and websites. We are supposed to make use of technology constructively living in the era of **techno culture**. Story telling style might have undergone changes but writers are careful about social and ethical convictions because that should not scatter because of new influences.

Whatever the narrative patterns are, whether traditional or modern the values are naturally transmitted with the help of simple vernacular language seasoned with life's experiences. Everybody should try to be true to ourselves at least. One must be true in order to build a character because people will always recognize character. For example; Meridian, Shug, Sofia, Tashi, Kate, Maggie, Dee and Celie. They all have proved to be accomplished role models.

While examining her novels one can understand her vantage point. She not only writes fictions for amusement but there is a purpose behind her writing. She is a kind of

helping out women to consider their innate qualities as she believes every woman will be having her own strength and talents. She refers to her mother's talent of quilting and excelled in gardening *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens': Womanist Prose*. But they are hesitant to give it a chance. Sometimes kind of push is necessary to realize their caliber probably in the form of encouragement. Walker's diction in her fictions help women to educate themselves in that sense Walker's language becomes very informative educative ultimately "**didactic**" that becomes the enduring power.

Her fictions are said to be mind-altering it seems. *The Color Purple*, *Meridian*, *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* etc. women characters of all her stories share the common ill-fate and they are all having gut-wrenching individual stories and experiences. There is always a symbiotic tie as a relationship between the story teller (novelist) and the protagonist's wide range of experiences. Reader find it easy to connect and relate with story for example: Celi's letters to God, later to Nettie, letting her to know day to day experiences helps her to express "her-self" through the medium of letter writing in which language becomes vehicle to convey her predicaments. As her language starts getting into shape with her growing experiences which also transforms into a suitable mode of expression. Through her language readers come across many hues of life that help to define every moment of life. Her novels are like think tank offering to read and think about many of the contemporary issues in culture, politics and society collectively besides emphasizing past to certain extent.

Walker successfully conceptualizes images and symbols in her stories which are set in Afro-American culture. Her novels offer a serious analysis on the nature of drawing African influences in her literary works along with inherent conflicts and contradictions.

During Harlem Renaissance many artists tried to pull themselves with flow boosting their confidence in their respected area of interest. At the same time we always see that every cultural movement or similar things comes with both pros and cons. Here, it is not just the matter of language been discussed but also the socio-political and cultural agenda as well. It can't be ignored it happens to be a simultaneous process because this is how society draws its sustenance from various reasons not just centers around issues related to respected language.

Reader never fail to recognize the fact about her fictions that tend to be a cultural conversations and readers might feel as if they are spell bound witnessing her convergence with her respected African beliefs. Best examples would be *The Color Purple*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *Everyday Use* all these stories take reader to pinnacle of excitement and involvement. This perhaps turns out to be her creativity which is her inner strength of course which belie in connecting with the art of narrating stories using language which is so clear to comprehend instead of using ornamental language. Being a prolific writer Walker makes sure that her stories are more interesting and beautiful affirming her continuous engagement with the society without getting distracted. Her language has brought out the best. Artists are constantly being judged. So, one has to be very strong doing away with low esteem otherwise it becomes difficult to survive.

Walker is very humble who strongly keeps belief in her art of writing. A society needs artists who jot down whatever comes in their mind asserting the social concerns. She never fails to showcase her Afro-American culture. It is nothing but preserving their native culture besides adopting American culture too for their survival. Black culture has

contributed a lot to American society and its cultural manifestations are visible and so it is a unique part of it. I would like to quote Frederick Douglass bold Statement made in the article titled “The Destiny of Colored Americans” he says that “More unlike the European in form, feature and color--- called to endure greater hardships, injuries and insults than those to which the Indians have been subjected, he yet lives and prospers under every disadvantage. Long have his enemies sought to expatriate him, and to teach his children that this not their home, but in spite of all their cunning schemes, and subtle contrivances, his footprints yet mark the soil of his birth, and he gives every indication that America will, forever, remain the home of his prosperity. We view it as a settled point that the fate and fortune of the colored man is throttled with that of the white people of his own country; whatever may be the destiny of Blacks” (Douglass1849). It is understood that the above said indicates that blacks are a very much a part of the whole community and they cannot deny their existence he further goes to the extent of saying that whites and blacks “must fall and flourish together” (Ibid).

Afro-American Experiences and Africanism

Walker has attempted to tell us the history through the lens of Afro-American experiences and that is followed by certain cultural, political and Black Arts Movements. People belonging to specific geographical area will be having a particular history and obviously with its interesting elements that society could be considered as cultural unit with distinctiveness. Oral tradition is one among them. Since they were denied education Oral culture was flourished and that has enabled them to save their indigenous factors, African based oral culture are nothing but means to preserve their cultural history which has been passed from many generations. Not to forget the important thing that African

folk tales are just like source of inspiration and they get opportunity to educate one another. Black Arts Movement and black power movement actually encouraged black artists providing them a ground to stage their talents binding with ethnic cohesion.

We are familiar with the fact that American South was agricultural based and North, urban and industrialized. Both have their distinctiveness for that matter including cultural background along with its economy and socio-political aspects. In the novel the *Third Life of Grange Copeland*, both father and son had yearned to go to north seeking good fortune whereas father did that and returned back after many years. He eloped to North with a thought of better earning and he wanted to get rid of debt and was exhausted working in the plantation fields. Many black people tried to do the same. Probably during the Harlem Renaissance there was fair amount of migration from South to North. Some Left their Southern culture and some of them considered it as part and parcel of their life be it any kind of art or work. Writers were enthusiastic in experimenting with newer concepts. Many of them associated with realism and gave realistic approach to their work of art and we get enough reasons to appreciate American realism. During Harlem Renaissance, Afro-American traditions flourished to the greater extent be it literature, music, visual art etc., everywhere we could witness radical changes with innovative ideas with the infusion of African aesthetics.

For Walker, Realism is like an ideology and also philosophy she strongly owes to it because that has given her scope to identify her Africanism. Sometimes we may feel that she is exaggerating besides giving mundane details. Realism usually does away with that kind of hype. In her novels, characters become nostalgic and that is the very feature of postcolonial writing i.e. moving between past and the present. There is also colonial

impact in her fictions. Her Africanism gets emphasized by her language as well as silence and sounds for example, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, we see “The grownups talked softly, intermittently, like the sporadic humming of wasps. The buzz of their conversations became part of the silence, for nothing they said came clearly across the field to where the children worked.” (Walker7) the above sentence shows Walker’s word play about the sounds and silence while working in the cotton fields. Silence also comes from the feeling of fear which is evident in Brownfield’s character. He was afraid of father’s silence, and his fear reached its peak when the truck came. (8) her language brings out exact expressions. Further, when Margaret answers to Grange “Naw, I don’t believe I could.” There was a sigh in her voice (8). This is how she uses Black English.

In the novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, there is plenty to explore the factors related to African culture through this we get much more familiar with the novelist longingness for her African cultural heritage. She writes undauntedly about her cultural history because every writer is associated with their background, past or tradition but they try to interpret it different manner.

Artist needs space to pursue their dreams. This actually happened during Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts Movement they got their spaces to get recognized specially mention would be for women writers and eminent one Zora Neal Hurtston and many others. Walker also draws inspiration from Flannery O’ Connor. Her textual content signifies her liberalism and one can see her convergence with the community because her language sheds light upon her commitment to the society being an activist. She respects heterogeneous society, and she always seems to be concerned with the concept of **wholeness**. Further, her language enhances elements like black imageries. Pragmatism, as

my understanding it comes naturally in her content because her works are the culmination of authentic facts and imaginations which creatively defines every moment.

There is kind of introspective mode in her stories that signifies the intricacies of her thematic concerns. It seems that Walker has excelled in fabricating “**her stories**” best example is again *Celie*. It is very hard to get over this novel because of its simple Black English. One can easily recognize her ideologies which are articulated so well in her literary works some of her statements exhibit her social stance besides propagating her political ideology and also social philosophy. She is gifted writer and humanitarian speaks for the social cause and women’s issues. Her pragmatism is indicative of her inclination towards understanding women’s predicaments that are oppressed twice as a woman and as a black. She brings out the psychological traits of female characters so intensely that one could feel the depth of pain and empathize. No doubt that her realistic approach has enriched inner world of women for example: Celie and Shug who taught her to love her body emphasizing the fact **Black is beautiful**.

Walker’s Africanism is also felt strongly within the Short story *Everyday Use* this story depicts the southern culture through the character of Maggie and her mother who are experts with in the art of quilting. It is not just the patch work but each and every piece of fabric narrates special and different story symbolizing different shades of reminders. That becomes a cherishing moment of sweet memories and sometimes haunting memories and sorrows. Through recalling all those things they struggle and later try to connect or get attached with their ancestors and their folk culture. Not to mention history and literature also followed in this southern perspective. We can see that there is connection between Celie’s Sewing and Quilt making in this short story. Needle is

instrumental in both the things in the way of their liberation. She dares to break the social norms and to interpret beyond and above. In one of her interview, she had told that she doesn't worry about form while penning the story it just get into form naturally. Sketching of her characters gives the lively feeling we can't get over the influence of Celie and Meridian they are as if teaching about gathering courage and individuality grabs the reader's attention.

While contouring her fictional features, we can sense her multilayered patterns and concepts providing wide spectrum of Walker's Africanism as if looking into kaleidoscope. African culture and history both are alluring. She revisits socio-cultural factors and history giving glimpse of rich African heritage. Nettie's letters which lets us to know about the Olinka and colonial influence would be best example. Olinka is also African language. In *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Olivia and Adam arrive at Olinka as missionaries and they come across Olinka tribal beliefs. This is quite evident in the novel. For example, this particular statement "Therefore, I noticed the men: the seed like tribal scar on their necks. I noticed the dust and the heat. The flies, I noticed the long flat breasts of the women who worked bare breasted, tying babies on their backs, as they involved in sweeping and cleaning up the village as if in expectation of inspection" (Walker 13).

Possessing the Secret of Joy is a quintessential work where she talks about genital mutation or circumcision. This is a practice which is still in existence in some parts of African Continent and some other parts of the world. Her fictions appear to be Critique of African influence in Afro-American culture. That could be interpreted in different ages probably with ethical angle or philosophy. Critical reception of her Africanism in her

novels calls for a collective as well as personal exploration and we experience the feel of getting educated occupying mind space. In the very first chapter of this novel we observe walker's love for folktales. In the second chapter we come across this fact Tashi's mother, Catherine, whose tribal name was Nafa, used to send her to the village shop for matches, which a penny each. Tashi tells the story of her lost penny and story goes like this: she has been given three pennies and one gets lost. She makes a story of giant bird, she has placed coin in glass of water for safe keeping it seems. She took aesthetic enjoyment from that. The bird descended down from above the sky and flattered the beautiful wings so strongly that water spilled out of glass and that dropped down from her hand. When she looked at that, hiding her face from the creature for fear of its large beak and outspread wings, why-dash! No more penny! (6).

Further, the way she uses language shows some kind of cultural and linguistic transitions and identities. The language spoken by Meg is polite whereas Brownfield's language is rude. Similarly, Celie's incorrect grammar in her letters shows her innocence in comparison with Nettie's letters. Celie has managed roughly to voice her silence was just like a therapy. This helped to unleash her emotions. When it comes to women's matter then it has to be in favor of their emancipation and empowerment. Certainly, their predicaments get transformed into life stories as mentioned earlier **“herstory”** from **“his-stories”** (patriarchy). For Blacks, English language paved a new ways of opportunity. It was imposed on them and their native language was pushed to corner and their native voices faded away they suffered to rise and forced to keep silence.

This new language opened the door for progressiveness but that couldn't meet the flavor of their native tongue. People hardly tried to connect with that so they changed it

according to their convenience. They felt standing across both the languages this could be seen as cultural colonization but that new culture was considered more sophisticated than indigenous factors and this leads to the identity crisis questioning one's cultural identity. In Ngugi's *Weep Not Child* we could see how Njoroge was studying in English missionary school. That was persuaded by colonial master's culture. Presently we have different scenario, barriers are erasing and learning English has fructified the blacks. They also try to keep contagious relationship with their culture. Similarly, walker's texts always converge with pan African views too. Chinua Achebe's literary works are also good examples for the above said. He uses English language so that he shall convey his thought process to wider audiences especially who even doubted the existence of African literature. List of Black writers is lengthy who engage in depicting Black American culture. Their contribution has helped the growth of their literature. So, I believe that Language symbolizes lot of things and never fails to admit its relevance. Walker's language presents the socio-cultural truths very dominantly educating readers as well as elevating their emotions.

Chapter-4

DISTINCTIVE IDEAS OF BLACK FEMINIST THINKING AND CRITICAL COMPARISON OF BLACK FEMALE TRADITION

The details of personal and discursive history are pertinent to the shape, concerns, and methods to bring literary changes. Black women's writing is the engagement of all the above said with shifting aesthetics, critical, cultural conventions and influential values some times as determining factors for the writing by black women and of course to writing about them. It is clear that novels by black women through the Harlem Renaissance discuss their common concern with the question of black women's struggle for self-realization, wholeness and autonomy in a racist and sexist society. Their work is devoted to ask question about individualism and so called ideal autonomy for women and blacks in general. Along with that they also question the possibilities for and constraints on black female creativity, both from within and without besides, they focus on the question of female bonding and female heroism never lags behind in their literary work. This is what Alice Walker has written about in her fictions while portraying her protagonists Celie, Meridian, Maggie, Dee, etc.

During Harlem Renaissance, one could observe the popular appeal of black women's fiction and also novelists. The reason behind this appeal is that, there was the intersection of race, gender and also about class. No doubt it appears to be grand discursive unity, the texts of certain tradition. These texts, amidst their proliferation, which was increasingly visible at the same time they were playing controversial role in the world. There were lot of developments in African American, feminist and literary studies generally. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s; and the 1970s and

1980s, is a time during which significant publications happened it seems, black women writers started get strong hold over there. Writers like Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston published ten novels among them, a proliferation unrivaled until 1970's during which a stream of novels were published and still continuing with great strength without any reduction it seems. Just like Harlem renaissance writers Walker also depicts the struggles of black middle class because it was a problematic as social group and also as category of analysis. In her fictions we could see that black middle class has been frequently invoked as self- evident besides being transhistorical. Dee's reaction in the short story *Everyday Use* and Meridian's struggle in the novel *Meridian* are very good examples for the above said besides, providing literary analysis and critical inquiry into categories of race, gender, and sexuality. Reader can experience the feminist strategies to expose the male dominance. They also get chance to question the parameters of evaluating literature through standard masculinist way which plots to keep away women from symbolic activity.

Spatial Relations and New Moves

Women writers since long back have fallen victim to literary histories it seems. Their writings were misunderstood by a cultural establishment which operates according to male norms out of male perceptions to certain extent. It is a known fact that black women writers were criticized for their omissions of certain facts and their inclination towards their convenient thoughts. Following this even feminist critics were fiercely attacked around 1970. It seems no one has formulated a precise or complete definition of feminist criticism, but since its inception, theories, and practitioners have agreed that it is a "corrective unmasking the omissions and distortions of the past-the errors of a literary

critical tradition that arise from and reflect a culture created, perpetuated, and dominated by men” (Pratt 176). While thinking of methods of criticism, some of the white feminists fail to offer theory to the Third World female psychology especially in America because as whites, they are reluctant and also unable to construct theories about experiences which they don’t have. Not only have black women writers been largely “disenfranchised” from critical works on the “female tradition”, they have also been frequently excised from those on the Afro-American literary tradition by black male scholars. Yet, black women writers are conspicuously absent from the roster of writers on whom some of the male critics focuses. Although Stepto like writers include a token of two-page discussion of Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes were Watching god* describing it as a seminal narrative in Afro-American letters (p. x).

When black women writers are given critical consideration, their writings are generally misunderstood and summarily dismissed, especially those whose work was published before the “protest” era of the 1940s’. While praising black fiction in this period, David Little John denigrates the work of Fauset and Larsen. He maintains to say that new writers are writing as men for men. It seems they are trying to avoid very close and steamy writing and that is the result of any subcultures taking it too seriously defining the world and its values exclusively in the terms of its own restrictive norms and concerns (48-49). A very good example would be of what Mary Ellman terms “**phallic criticism**” (28). Further, studies show that Little Johns assessment is based on masculine-centered values and definitions, which have dominated the criticism on black women writers and done much to guarantee that most would be, in Alice Walker’s words “casually pilloried and consigned to a sneering oblivion” (Robert xiv).

Various critical communities have not favored black women writers and have, in many cases, actively suppressed their work, has given rise to black feminist criticism, the terms of which Barbara Smith sets forth in her essay “Toward a Black feminist Criticism”. The salient postulates of this critical position are, at this point are just schematically defined; however it proceeds to challenge a fundamental assumption: that the experience of white women, white men, and black men are normative and black women experiences are deviant. That signal challenge has taken a joint form: resurrecting forgotten black women writers and reviving misinformed critical opinions of their work and this seems to be a hard task. Despite the strained circumstances under which black feminist critics’ labor, the committed few have broken necessary ground. Unfortunately, it seems that black feminist scholarship has been decidedly more practical than theoretical, and the theories developed have often lacked sophistication and details and also marred by the slogans, followed by rhetoric and also idealism. Feminist critics have a few philosophical shelters, and try to overcome risks. But fact cannot be denied that they also get plenty of opportunities to showcase their creativity. Besides, we can’t ignore the possibilities of certain errors that follows.

Black critics like Smith justified the need for a black aesthetic and always argued for the existence of black female literary tradition because it would provide them space to discuss the realization that the politics of sex and race are interlocking factors in literary work of black women writers it seems. Their common approach was very much based on their experiences regarding politics, social and economic conditions. For example, we could observe things like midwifery, conjure women, gardening, sewing, herbal medicine as folk elements in the works of Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Margaret Walker and Zora

Neale Hurston. But that doesn't mean these folk elements won't appear in the black male writers. Both of them discuss the above factors in their own distinctive way. To mark this point, the above mentioned writers use black female language very specifically to bring out their thoughts as well as their textual characters. But, it seems from the study that writers have failed to provide enough examples of this unique language. "It's a known fact that to acknowledge many of our habits of language usage are associated with our thoughts like it may sex-derived, and sex-distinctive, that is the way in which men and women seems to internalize and manipulate language are undeniably sex related" (Furman 1978). But this realization in itself provides the way rather than closing investigation, which fails to engage itself in some difficult critical questions like for example whether there is a monolithic black female language? Whether female school dropouts, welfare mothers and college graduates and PhD's share a common language or not? Are there regional variations on this common language? Further, some black male critics have right to describe the uniquely "black linguistic elegance" (Henderson 31-46) that characterizes black poetry in general it seems. Question also arises whether there are noticeable differences between the languages of black females and black males? All these questions need to be addressed with precision if present feminist terminology is to function beyond mere critical jargon as per recent studies it seems.

There is no doubt that black feminist criticism is very innovative by its nature. And one more thing is that it can overturn the past assumption and can shed a new light to expose the specific dimension. If we take an example of Toni Morrison's *Sula*, Smith classifies it as a lesbian novel, because she observes the text in relation to the emotions expressed by the female characters and also the politics surrounding heterosexuality it

seems. It was Smith's critical understanding of heterosexual institutions of male female relationships along with marriage and the family, which makes *Sula* as a lesbian novel. According to other critics this definition of lesbian seems to be vague and imprecise. It is, oddly, a desexualize sensibility that subsumes far more black women writers to some extent, particularly contemporary ones, than not into the canon of lesbian writers. For example, writers like Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston all criticize major socializing institutions, and similarly, Gwendolyn Brooks, Alice Walker, and Anthony Cade Bambara. Further, if Smith's definition of lesbian is applied, there are probably a few black male writers who also qualify as per above said. That means, Smith has simultaneously over simplified and obscured the issue of lesbianism and stripped it of any explanatory power.

In Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, There is a lesbian relationship between Celie and Shug as well besides, we come across she is determined to talk much about sisterhood and caring for one's "self". But again that novel provides reader a possibility of multiple interpretation since that novel is multilayered which is what makes it complicated whether she has just dropped the hint of lesbianism or she had given specific room to discussion of that particular element. But one cannot ignore the fact that while giving lesbian reading to a novel it overlooks other important aspects like folk elements, omen, significance of dreams and metaphorical extension etc., all these things are abundant in black literature and hence lesbian point seems like it becomes a reductive approach. At the same time, innovative approaches are pressed by personal political persuasion no doubt.

While reading literature, we readers, find ourselves virtually rewriting a text, ignoring certain aspects of plot or characterization, or over-simplifying the action to fit our thoughts and ideologies then it is clear that readers are neither practicing an honest criticism nor saying anything useful about nature of art. These kind of things actually alert feminist critics to the dangers of political ideology connected with aesthetic judgment is not to deny that feminist criticism is a valid and necessary cultural and also political enterprise. Indeed, it is both possible and useful to translate ideological positions into aesthetic ones, but if the criticism is to be responsible then the two things must be balanced. As it is already mentioned above that feminist criticism as enterprise of political and culture, the majority of those who practice it is believed that their efforts can bring certain social change.

We find that Barbara smith argues further emphatically for socially relevant criticism in her most of the works about black feminist criticism owing its existence following a black feminist movement. And they have contributed distinct ideas so that women could use in their associated movement. According to Lillaian Robinson, he pointedly remarks, there is no assurance that feminist aesthetics “will be productive of a vision of art or of social relations that is of the slightest use to the masses of women, or everyone that acknowledges the existence and struggle of such women” (226). Deborah E. McDowell also agrees with the Robinson’s words that “ideological criticism must take place in the context of a vertical movement that can put into work. The revolution is simply not going to be made by some literary journals” (52). Further, she ensures that she does not argue in the defeatist position with respect to the social and political uses to which feminist criticism can be put. Because she feels that both are possible and also

useful to translate ideological positions into aesthetic ones. According to her, it must be possible and useful to translate aesthetic positions into the machinery for social change it seems. For example, In Walker's *Meridian* novel, Meridian's struggle and her courage to confront the situation cleverly especially during civil rights movement brought a strike of thought in the minds of public. These kind of actions bring in certain amount of changes in the society for the purpose of good no doubt. One can observe Meridian's as well as Alice Walker's political and ideological thoughts getting translated aesthetically to foster the process of change.

Further, whatever the theoretical framework black feminist critics choose to use, they have ensured an informed handle on black literature as well as black culture in general. Such a grounding can give this scholarship more texture and also completeness and may be it might help to prevent some of the vitiating effect on the criticism so far. This aspect in black history and black culture, serves as a basis for the study of the literature and such "contextualism" is often frowned upon, though it is not dismissed entirely, by critics who insists on exclusively textual and linguistic analysis. Debora and other writers too believe that a contextual approach to black women's literature exposes the conditions under which literature is produced, published and also reviewed. This kind of approach is very useful besides, keeping its importance as a necessary factor to black feminist critics. Next, as per the studies, those who were working with black women writers before 1940, the contextual approach was fruitful it seems. While we observe the writings of Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset and Zora Neale Hurston and some other writers, for example, it is useful to determine the prevalent attitudes about black women during the time they wrote. There is abundant information in the black little magazines which

were published during the Harlem renaissance. Some of the female contributors trust the importance of human's equality with men, socially, professionally and economically, most of them emphasized that a woman's place was in the house. And they argued that it was woman's duty to stay within the domestic sphere or might be confinement because they felt that most of the great men and women evolved from such kind of harsh environment only. It's not only the contributor who charge the black women a formidable task, but she is compelled to see her solely in relation to black men always.

Further, this kind of information enriches our understanding of what Jessie Fauset, Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker confronted in attempting to offer alternative images of black women. And moreover, it also helps to clarify certain textual problems and confusions of their respected literary works. Studies also suggest that Jessie and Hurston explored feminist concerns ambivalently, especially not to forget Fauset. Her novels are alternately forthright and good enough in showing self-interest and shrewdness, radical and also traditional on the issues that actually confront women throwing light upon how woman struggles between social pressure and artistic integrity.

We can witness the above said in her first novel which is named as *There is Confusion* (1924), in this novel, there is abrupt reversal in characterization that can bring the female characters with an absolute feminine norm. Similarly, in the Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948) we could see the depiction of female character who shows the promising growth and also change. It appears just like any bildungsroman character wherein we can observe woman's individual growth. Sometimes, this attitude and courage help them to keep on craving to get away from the conventional expectations

of womanhood, motherhood, marital relationships and being a domestic servitude. We can't deny the fact that power still resides with man. The above reasons are more than enough to see the kind of tension and also pressure to some extent in most of the woman writers to gain artistic unity. And hence, black critics always needs to take up meticulous textual analysis. Otherwise, there is a fear of losing validity and its usefulness. No doubt that the above said is true in the case of certain writers and critics who are stubborn to acknowledge with the critical methodologies which is given by white men.

There is always a pressure to invent new methodology for the analysis of their literary texts so that they shall have their own choice of metaphors, different patterns of sentence, expressions and narrative technique that goes well with their own ideology or specifically feminist ideology. This gives the possibility of innovative ways to get over common things for example, stylistic aspects or else linguistic matters etc. Important thing to note over here is we always come across a lot of thematic parallels among the black contemporary writers. For example, female characters in the works of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, who are frustrated and disappointed especially if the characters are artists in some ways. Like, Meridian's mother in the novel *Meridian*, she used to make artificial flowers and also prayer pillows in small size for the purpose of kneeling while performing prayers.

Further, we could see Meridian also rejected conventional clothing. She wears railroad cap which is the sign of her rejection of all sorts thoughts associated with the expectations of ideal being of woman or we could say womanhood. Cloth is common thing that we see in the black women's writing. Similarly, Jessie Fauset's character Amy in one of her short story named *The Sleeper Wakes* is associated with pink clothing that

suggests some amount of innocence in her and also immature nature because, she was attracted by the notions of fairy tales. She had got husband who was sexist and racist, but, when she got freedom from him she stopped wearing pink color. It seems this action suggests her maturity. Likewise, Pauline Breedlove, In *The Bluest Eye*, she is having the habit of ordering so many things and that was a kind of obsession one could see in her. She used to order so many jars to arrange on shelves and other places according to their size and color but after organizing so well she used to miss without her knowledge of she had missed. When we observe Eva's character in the novel *Sula*, she someone who is obsessed with setting her pleats in order most of the times and this seems strange and destructive and this unusual behavior is explained as the consequence of an idle imagination it seems.

The most recurring theme is the "journey" in most of the black women's novel. Kate, for example, in Alice Walker's *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* novel, is on journey, and In *The Color Purple* Nettie is on journey, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* also deals with the same kind of journey from most of its characters. Even in the *Temple of My Familiar* and the *Third Life of Grange Copeland* deals with this recurring motif in their respected stories where all of them yarn to explore and realize their true "self". I mean this kind of journey has helped them to understand their existence in a better way perhaps in search of job or else quest for knowledge, may be even spirituality and. Journey is not moving from one place to other but it is a kind of life journey where characters are determined to achieve overcoming all sorts of hurdles from one situation to other may be characters try to reposit themselves. Even in Zora Neale Hurston's protagonist, in her very famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, we could witness the similar points exemplifying the theme of journey.

Even black male writers frequently used journey as major theme in their novels for example, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and many more examples we could see especially in the slave narratives. But point is that there is quite a difference in female portrayal of journey in comparison with the male black writing. In the black women's writing, most of the times it is psychological and personal in nature besides being political and social whereas black male writing is very much about political and social implications. This is how one can come across the black female consciousness that also appears to be having specific vision. And this actually paves the way for a specific female literary tradition as well. And no doubt writers may or may not get obsessed with this kind of recurring themes but those things are getting repeated in their respected literary works. This actually gives problem for feminist critics who are always in search of some kind of female language in particular but more usage of gender specific language is supportive aid for the critics it seems. Because it provides them a fertile ground to document their lives which could help them to claim their rightful position in the Afro-American society and making it very clear that they need their own space and their very own name.

Further, major concern of black feminist critics is to explore the similarities which might be manifested in their writings and also to shed light upon the ways in which they can find out whether these commonalities coincide with black male writings. Most of the black women writers urges to new kind of approaches because it is complicated and of course we need to mention that it is very knotty issue within its limitations and it is quite obvious to expect that black feminists expand its boundaries rather than choosing to remain separate. Because, no doubt, black women writers use distinctive literary device

differently to create their own space and that will definitely lead towards better articulation of the black feminist aesthetics it seems. Barbara Smith has really been very constructive while working for critical literary tradition. She raised her voice against those who passed negative judgments on black women writers besides, arguing for the fact of their situation as being artists and also surrounding politics over them.

Black women has always shared their struggles not only of racism but also sexism and hence it makes their position critical. Sometimes they may get univocal response and some other times they may not look unanimous. Everything depends on their social position besides, they also have a responsibility and pressure to avoid reductiveness of their existence. May be this gives the reason to raise question on whether black feminist criticism has validity as a category of knowledge if yes, then how that has served its purpose. That is, the purpose of upholding the language of collectivity. This actually reminds Michelle Wallace's words about the urgent need for a black feminist collective mentioned in *A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood*. And that says "Black feministsexist as individuals... We exist as women who are Black who are feminists, each stranded for the moment, working independently because there is not yet an environment in this society remotely congenial to our struggle-because, being on the bottom, we would have to do what no one else has done: we would have to fight the world" (Wallace 1982). And not to forget Bell hooks also support the above concerns of Wallace. She has also written an essay upon the process of writing and getting that work published.

In most of her writing we could come across desperation for sisterhood and the struggle for releasing their emotions through their works. It is so far understood that black feminist criticism helps to explore some of the untouched subject and hence they

face lot of challenges because of diversities like class, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and other things. It seems that one of the very influential challenge has come from Alice Walker because she has rejected the term black feminist. The way she articulated a “womanist” theory is appreciated among many black women critics. Those women were associated with either theology or sociology. At the same time she was also criticized about the fact that Walker’s position and her view on culture needs thorough interrogation and research. Writers like Deborah raises question on the value of detaching blackness from feminism and whether it is an attempt towards re-universalization. This, according to her is like supporting standard of neutrality so that blemishes of blackness might get vanish after removing black from the black feminist criticism.

Studies show that black feminist criticism and their respective position have been difficult to reconcile going along with contemporary critical ideas of critics and writers. According to postmodernist thought writers medium, is assumed to be transparent, there seems to be an organic line and connection from black women writers to black women critics and the connection might follow between literary characters and black women writers giving rise to new literary tradition. This might be the reason for so many commonalities readers come across of language, themes and perspectives which is what gives them an understanding of a specific structure the writers have brought into their work. This concept embraces various system of order and different meanings, multiple interpretation that constitute unique culture. It is true that criticism cannot happen without any ideology. Even writers and critics know the above fact and believe that, a single thought of separation between ideology and black aesthetics is false, it is immature and also it might get difficult to remain defensible.

Black women writers to certain extent, never fail to discuss about spirituality and its elevation. They also discuss about social responsibility, of course with respect to their Afro-American society. And hence, we get to see politics of theology along with racial factors. But it is not necessary to hold a racial banner every time to raise voice against injustice because that might reduce the real intention. Elevation of spirituality along with political ideology is very much resonating in contemporary writers literary works for example, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and *Meridian*, Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salt Eaters* etc., these texts also drop a hint of spiritual feminism because it seems, in their works, they consider god as maternal. It is suggestive that they might have experienced some kind of spiritual force in the form of female self that means they talk more of a ground realities of black women's life. Naturally, their pain and struggles are transformed into meaningful narrative. Their work of art, with continuities and discontinuities and other things obviously becomes the raw material of literary tradition.

Effective Actions and Comparison

Some critics do feel that there is always a generational connections among writers. Most of them share their ideas of same tradition in a different way. That paves the way for new ways of analysis. For example, like, the double oppression of race and gender, biological verses social conditions of the race etc. we could see these factors repetitively in most of the black texts in general to certain extent. We can trace the above said in the novels like *Iola Leroy* by Frances E. W, Harper and *The Color Purple*. Both the texts are written in different times but we could see that they share few things in common especially images and also basic patterns. We could see the same kind of personal fulfillment and personal growth. Besides that, in both of the novels, we observe

the fact of family separation and family reunion not to forget their quest for lost identities. And the depiction of black female characters gives glimpse of public and private narrative fiction it seems.

Even Lancer says that usually fictional narration is **public** and it implies a private readership or may be within cultural matrix. For example, in the novel *The Color Purple*, it seems that the public and private distinction may require more exact definition that includes gender as well as cultural specifications. Whenever we come across its tone, texture, narrative style, gesture and strategy profoundly show implies the female addressee. When she thinks that God must have been slept and she decides to address the letters to her sister Nettie instead of God. Further, Public and private are more flexible as descriptive paradigms. And there is overlap of the public and private modes, sometimes within the single text as witnessed in the above novel. No doubt every text, selects and encodes the targeted audience through the style, language and strategies and Wolfgang Iser calls such readers as **implied reader**.

While we talk about the main black character who is very much portrayed as living character is also treated as a **whole character** or **integral black self**. These two are the major preoccupations one could see in the black women writers. It is not at all peculiar for them because they have been writing about this since eighteenth century according to Henry Gates. Other than this they also focus more on personal development that is very much suggestive of **bildungsroman**. It is a genre which becomes major tool in the hands of black novelists to highlight the development of **self**. Their journey is traced from childhood days to adulthood. Besides, these kind of things actually allows the critical concerns of the black female novelists which helps them to emerge organically.

Further, while considering character in black women's fiction as a structure that very much reflects dominant paradigm in their literary traditions which is what makes the content authentic and also we could see proper speech representation. They also face some serious questions about the relationship between writer and audience. We also come across that their writing in fictions reveal about certain patterns as mentioned already and their influence of literary history. That also explain not only narrative voice but also their artistic strategies and structures.

In the nineteenth century, black women novelists considered character as aesthetic structure was tightly coupled to character as a moral attributes, which was most clustered around sexuality it seems. One more thing is that, they were very cautious because of the negative presentation of their sexual identity and therefore they treated sexuality very carefully. This is what has been propagated throughout the history about black libidinous desires. It is quite natural that one could observe the conspiracy in the slave narratives of black women's experience during slavery. White master helped to construct a negative image of black female sexuality no doubt. But his interest was on black women slaves to satisfy his own sexual passion. It was created that, the black slave woman has insatiable desire and not him and he was powerless to resist that it seems. This issue was seriously considered by black women writers and they responded to the myth of black women's sexual licentiousness by insisting fiercely about their chastity. In the attempt of overcoming this problem they stripped such characters in which they had created sexual desires. For example, in the texts of Frances E Harper's *Iola Leroy* and *Megda* which was written by Emma Dunham and also in work of Pauline Hopkin's *Contending Forces*. This was possible by the involvement of the club women movement who waged to fight

for the above matter. We have always read about the fact that how much black women in the sense black heroines and other female characters always struggle to defend and preserve their virginity. At this point, they had realized that there was need for reconstruction of black women's sexuality. They started to focus on revisionist aspects that could help in lifting the image of not only black women but of whole black race.

Meanwhile writers started to believe naively that elimination of caste class injustice was possible. Their courage and strength is appreciated no doubt when we come across these earlier texts we realize that the characters are larger than life. Not only that but we can see that earlier heroines were sexually pure. They have set an example of self-sacrifice and tireless labor for the purpose of collective good. They tried to revise the homogenized literary images and somehow they were successful in creating counter myths for myths. This is quite evident in *Iola Leroy* novel where heroine makes conscious choice to glorify the domestic space. According to Barbara Smith's observations, idealness regarding women was very much associated to white females as a result of that, nineteenth century black woman writers tried to create counter image of their positive qualities and there was also combined discussion of physical beauty and character significance. This idealness goes well with the nineteenth century black women writers.

Further, Alice Walker argues reasonably, to a predominantly white readership who could identify human feeling, humanness, only if it came in a white or near white body. She then concludes, "'fairness' was is the standard of Euro-American femininity" (301). Whereas Harper has modified the image of the Southern woman. In the novel, heroine's character is depicted within the traditional boundaries as it is already mentioned

earlier that significance is given to the domesticity. As well as values of motherhood and woman as nurturers are appreciated. Not only from the Iola, but many writers now and then also believed that sin and misery raised from the women's inefficiency to act accordingly and weakness. Protagonist makes a public speech in the novel is unusual for a woman to do earlier since it was men, to whom, that chance which was reserved to do such speeches in the public. During her speech, Iola talks about moral education of the overall race. She sets an example of her different image, style and language. Whereas, in Alice Walker's Meridian Hill character also does similar thing during her participation in the Civil Rights Movement trying to create awareness among black people. There, she sets an image of courageous women with accountability and her tone of assertion is quite visible.

Comparison between past and present is inevitable when it comes to the literary tradition and practice. Alice Walker actually had asked series of questions regarding traditions in her *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* essay like, what was her literary tradition and she was curious to ask questions about black women artists who actually fostered her on her way. Interestingly, she also raised question about her existence and whether she have a ground to stand on and she had some other doubts. Just like her, many critics also had doubt and curiosity. They doubted over her questions because according to American cultural history, black women participated in the singing. That was the earliest art form they were associated with. One thing is that, ordinary and black folk speech has been historically devalued by the standard white English speaking community which means that their superiority feeling shows the linguistic dominance. That kind of devaluation and all that it implies is especially pervasive in Harper's Era.

We could see many instances in the earlier works where, blacks were condemned and ridiculed in white plantation, slurred words and reconstruction humor for the rough rhythms followed by quaint images in their own language. Just to escape this kind of situation, earlier novelists might have created cultural mulattos since they wrote using elegant, elaborate and artificial language which is quite evident in the popular fiction. Iola Leroy speaks in the novel with the defensive tone of moral and social ideal. We could observe the above said in the following example, “Iola says that, To be a leader of a race to higher planes of thought and action, to teach men clearer view of life and duty, and to inspire their souls with loftier aims, is a far greater privilege than it is to open the gates of material prosperity and fill every home with enjoyment” (Harper 219). It is evident that Iola as a major character fulfills her role as exemplary black woman, she very much resemble a human being less and more like a saint. But she is on trial before the world. Meridian’s character in the novel *Meridian* also appears to be doing same by choosing things carefully. In contrast to Iola’s speech, we could see other kind of tradition of minor characters or secondary characters like slaves, Sometimes we could see their masterful intervention of a coded language to carry on certain messages to each other, unsuspectedly about the Civil war. And that sounds as their rich and imaginative language no doubt. They use that language self-consciously mediated throughout the text by the stilted and pedantic voices of the narrator and also the major character.

Contemporary black women writers feel the urge to portray their people with honesty and imagination. No doubt that is their paramount need. For many novelists like, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Gayl Jones and Shirley Anne Williams etc. has felt the above discussed need and has compelled them to transform the black female literary ideal tradition that is inherited from their nineteenth century predecessors it seems. Their

contribution towards uplifting race is critically acclaimed. Further, these recent writers have preserved the revisionist mission that inspired that ideal they have liberated their own characters from the burden of being exemplary standard bearers in an enterprise to uplift the race. Interestingly, result is not only of greater complexity and possibilities for their protagonists, but also it gives greater complexity and artistic possibility for themselves as writers. Many critics do feel that Alice Walker's writing is very suggestive and informative. And could be considered as the quintessential examples of the above discussed paradigm shifts.

In one of her essay "Beyond Peacock" which is from *In search of Mothers Gardens*, Walker writes that "each writer writes the missing parts of the other writer's story and the whole story is what Deborah McDowell is curiously after. Next, Alice Walker, a major, if not the major, missing part is the story of what she calls the **Black Blackheroine**, described in the essay. For instance, Alice Walker has made a particularly suggestive and controversial attempt in the Celie letters of *The color purple*. Those letters could be read as Walker's efforts to write the missing parts of Iola Leroy and other black women texts in its own tradition. According to her, Celie is a revision of a black female character, an unvarnished representation. In her essay "If the Present Looks Like the Past" unlike Iola Leroy and other nineteenth century black female characters Alice Walker surveys the fact that, the black heroine can neither pass for white nor be protected by the class privileged. Whereas Iola Leroy, as a character, she is largely indistinguishable from the southern lady and is devoted to the mission of middle-class racial "uplift", Celie character is poor, she is visibly black, she is barely literate and drudge devoted simply to avoiding and surviving the brutalities inflicted on her by every man with whomever she comes in contact.

When we observe deeply, unlike Iola, no ornate and elevated speeches is given to Celie but she speaks in black folk English and unlike Francis Harper, Alice Walker provides none of the self-conscious assurances to the reader but Celie's most striking distinction from Iola is her sexual experience. Iola survives attempted rape but Celie does not. Celie is unable to fend off attacks on her virtue by men as creator. Although Celie's introduction to sexuality is rape as her narrative unfolds, she, unlike Iola, discovers how vital healthy sexual experiences are to the development of her self-esteem and her creative powers.

In the novel, we get to see that, this form of sexuality is identified with a woman very expressively that means between Celie and Shug. This is how we get to see the exploration of lesbian relationship also in the novel. But the thing to note over here is that, protagonists like Iola and Celie reflect their novelist's divergent approaches to characterization as well. Harper's approach to Iola's character is largely from the outside through her physical characteristics and through what others say about her. Walker reveals Celie's character completely from the inside in the sense we get to see her insight. Everything we learn about Celie is filtered through her own consciousness and rendered in her own voice no doubt. In the novel *Iola Leroy*, it seems **self** is sacrificed to the collective mission and the consequence is a static symbol rather than a dynamic character.

Thing is different in the Harper's image of *The Color Purple*. She says the collective mission is sacrificed to the self it seems and result is the creation of a character in process, one more complex and thoroughly realized than Iola Leroy. It is very important to notice that, in creating the character of Celie, Alice Walker has not only

revised nineteenth century prototypes, but also previous characters of her own creation. For example, the title character of Walker's second novel, *Meridian* Hill is depicted in images that resemble these early heroines. She is mythical, spiritual, described like Christ-like imagery and she sacrifices all personal gains for a larger social good no doubt. If we discuss about heroines energy then, Iola Leroy's energy is invariably directed outside of herself and narratives action is correspondingly social and public in emphasis. Whereas Celie's energy, on the other hand, is primarily directed inward, and the narrative action of *The Color Purple* is correspondingly psychological, personal and intimate in emphasis like *Iola Leroy*, *The Color Purple* primarily fits into the private paradigm suggested by its choice of the epistolary mode and by definition it is private as well as public besides being emphasizing the psychological development of the character.

We can see how writing becomes essential to Celie when she shares her life of brutality with God through the medium of letters. This itself indicates her status as a writer but without an audience. Her sister Nettie's letters give lot of information about shift from personal to social, political and also historical when she writes about her missionary works. Although Celie and Nettie are separated by an ocean, by the life styles. One seems to be ordinary and other is exceptional, one is oral and other literate. No doubt these separated identities are integrated in the novel. They both are allowed to exist as independent entity; each, through their letters allow to speak in their own voice without apology, mediation, or derision. While one might expect it, there is no apology, mediation, or derision on Walker's part of her predecessor, Frances E. Harper, the impulses of whose work she incorporates in the voice and experience of Nettie. Further, when we try to compare Iola's character with Nettie, we find, reminiscent of Iola, Nettie

guards her virginity. For instance, herself conscious and ambiguous description of her developing passion for her love, Samuel, brings to mind Iola's reticence about sexuality. In one of her to letter to Celie, she mentions about her forward behavior with Samuel when they both embraced each other saying that she was transported by ecstasy in arms of Samuel. Not only is this, but more important resemblance between Nettie and Iola is, their sacrifice of personal needs and wishes for a largest social purpose. Nettie is swept up in a social movement and she gets herself busy working for the uplift and betterment of black people.

The black women writers deeply write about the concept of racial uplift as mentioned already and that has become a unique literary tradition. Here, the concept of racial uplift, of corporate machine, so central to Iola Leroy, is explicit in Nettie's letters and acts as counter point to Celie's more private and personal concerns. And those letters together objectify the pattern of intertextual relationships among black women writers, a pattern that departs from what Harold Bloom describes in his *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975). He mentions that those who cannot persuade over anxiety of influence are considered as weak. Not only him but even Hortense Spillers also makes a similar point about the nature of literary influence among women writers in one of her essay titled "A hateful Passion, a lost love" *Feminist Studies* (1983). It is important to note that Bloom's linear theory of the oedipal war between literary fathers and sons does not hold among black women writers, many of whom acknowledge their faithful debt to their literary foremother. Further, Deborah observes the fact that, borrowing literary influence from Julia Kristeva would be in the sense of intertextuality. It seems that each text is in dialogue with all previous texts transforming and retaining

narrative patterns and also strategies in endless possibility. Besides this, we must know the fact that Kristeva does not use the term “intertextuality” in conjunction with discussions of influence, it is possible to use the concept without violating the integrity of original definition of Kristeva. It’s a known fact that she has borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin’s “conception of the ‘Literary word’ as an intersection of textual surfaces...as a dialogue among several writings... Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Gora, Jordine, Roudiez 64).

Further, Henry Gates also sheds light upon the description of intertextuality in his discussion of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Ishmael Reed, for Example, “characterizes the formal relations between them as largely adversarial and parodic” (Gates 696-697). While there is certainly much to parody in Harper’s *Iola Leroy* especially about the uplift concept and the excesses of formality that generally attended it. Walker refrains from doing so, and perhaps, there in, lies a fundamental distinction between African-American male and female literary relations. Study shows that Walker has actually transformed and updated the concept of **uplift**, associated almost exclusively with Harper and her generation, for a kind of uplift that functions metaphorically in *The Color purple*. No doubt that the novel elevates the folk forms of rural and southern blacks to the position of art. Besides taking the tradition of letters and diaries, commonly considered a “female tradition” and also inferior one, from the category of **non art** and therefore elevates it to art.

Next, we could see the way how Walker retains uplift as metaphor in her literary texts especially in *The Color Purple*. She rejects the burden it imposes on the writers, a burden that all black women writers shouldered throughout their literary history in

service to the corporate mission it seems. As a result of that mission for the writers of Harper's generation was a homogenized literary era that inhabited the writers' recognition of their unique voices. The above discussed novel is rich with the images of such voices and most of her literary works go with the same metaphorical significance. As said above, we find many rich images of voices, of singing *The Color Purple* is which is complementary besides commenting on the Celie's description of conversation between Shug and Squeak whose actual name is Mary Agnes. She is a blues singer in her own right. She sings in her own unimitative voice. In the story it is clearly implied that she can sing in the public only when she discovers her own name and her own private unique voice.

This novel underscores the regrettable fact that the black women writers have not been given freedom to discover and then to speak in their own unique voices because they have been forced to use their art for mainly propagandistic purpose that means very publicly. It is quite visible in the words of Ntozake Shange, she is of the opinion that we "as a people, or as a literary cult, or a literary culture, and not even demanded singularity from our writers, we could all sound the same, come from the same region and be the same gender, born in the same year and she adds further that, we assume a musical solo is a personal statement. It seems that poet is speaking for the world, there is something wrong there, a writer's first commitment is to the peace itself; then comes the political commitment" (Shange 4-5). The work of Harper implies no such choice. The morality of the black women was always been attacked for being false, many black texts have discussed about the black people suffering from rank injustices, it is understood that the writer lifted the pen in an act of political intervention.

We get to see that Walker sacrifices the impulse to uplift the race, although her thoughts are not less than Harper's, it is a project whose aim is cultural transformation. We observe the fact that she envisions a new world through her writing with utopian dimension in which power relations between men and women, and between the colonizers and colonized are reconfigured to eliminate domination and promote co-operation. We witness literary manifestations of racial uplift and social movements in the works of Walker especially in *The Color Purple*, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, and *Meridian* etc. She has explained the relationship between writers and audience. Unlike Harper, She could chose to ignore the fact that her audience were predominantly white, a choice that strongly influenced by the social realities and literary circumstances of her place and time. Critic have pin pointed specifically the emergence of Black Nationalism in the 1960's and 1970's and the rise of the women's movement that followed very closely. It's a known fact that during that period, the black women writers and critics who found the cultural arm of the larger political movement became convinced, as Houston Baker notes, that their real audience like the nation to come was Black. No doubt they all have directed their energy to create a new nation. They wrote in ordinary voice for ordinary blacks from the ghettos. Besides, they have fashioned a critical methodology needless to say which is termed as **Black Aesthetic**. "A system of isolating and evaluating the artistic works of the black people which reflects the special character along with their black experiences" (Fuller 1968).

Next thing is to note how second wave called for women's release from the unreal oppressive loyalties. Feminist criticism became one such literary manifestation of the political stance. Similar in the spirit and methodology to the largely male dominated

black aesthetic movement, feminist critics likewise rejected a subverted what they considered alien, male centered literary standards and they began to describe and analyze differently female aesthetic thoughts that reflected women's unique culture. It is necessary to note that, ironically, in their earliest formulations, their objectives and practices of both the black aesthetic and feminist criticism often came dangerously close to insisting on a different and no less rigid set of aesthetic orthodoxies, despite their own perspective leanings, however, these two modes of critical inquiry must be credited with opening up unprecedented possibilities for black women writers. While affirming black and female experience, they also inspired and authorized writers from those cultures to sing in their individual unique voices and to imagine an audience that could hear the song it seems.

The Color Purple's narrative strongly implies that audience is comprised mainly of Walker's "sisters", and other black women. Its structure, plot and black writers writing to each other actually lend this reading some support. According to Deborah, Walker addresses her letters to readers. "She is also aware that this suggestion raises at least two glaring empirical paradoxes of the novel has been enormously successful with a very diverse relationship, a large part of which is white, while often criticized by those to whom it seems addressed" (Harrier 155-161). However, the premise is recommended and supported by a major thread in the novel's plot. The act of reading letters that are written and intended for other eyes.

Just as a novel's letters lend themselves to Walker's reflexive depiction of the act of writing, they simultaneously lend themselves to Walker's reflexive depiction of the act of reading. They offer a compelling model of the relationship Walker implies between

herself and her readers, her own correspondence her audience of “ ‘kissen’ friends” who enters the “intimate gate”, to borrow from Zora Neale Hurston in choosing them as her alters and their experiences as her story. She has made the private, public, and, in the process created new literary space for a black and a female idiom against and within a traditionally Eurocentric and androcentric literary history. It is a common place of current critical discourse to acknowledge that ideas of literary history or “tradition” are most appropriately read as narrations. The details of which are often selected in the interest of clearly visible unitary and coherent story lines by turns, these stories ignored discontinuities, explain them away, or assimilate them into existing narratives, all the while prompting readers to accept certain textual priorities and reading procedures. For this reasons, “many look with suspicion, if not scorn, on ideas of tradition, even finding the very term tradition, a critical fable intended to encode and circumscribe an inner and illicit circle of empowered text” (Spillers 125). Within dominant narration of African-American literary history, the circle of empowered text have tended to include few by women and fewer still by those from the nineteenth century it seems. Many fault the dominant plot of racial protest and the reading codes and the priorities it established. Both are derived mainly from texts by men which was obscuring until recently, the texts of a black women’s tradition.

Now we are able to understand blackness as it had already been constructed throughout Afro-American literary history. Questions like what is “black” about black texts do arise when we go through such books and readers also give a thought regarding thematic features and narrative strategies which makes it a black women’s text. Questions do arise from the existing critical framework also that assumes that blackness is always

self-evidently about itself. But some of them feel that different set of questions must be posed because they alert textual detail and narrative movement it seems. I mean, this, perhaps help in comparing the text with other works too. It is understood that **race conscious** is visible in all most all the black women writers. This is the reason behind why writers like Emma Dunham Kelly's texts are read as **race** neutral and thus it appears like a political foils to the more political and **race conscious**. Certain amount of dichotomies are visible in most of the writers when their literary texts are compared. Therefore, works of Idab Wells- Barnett, Harper and Anna Julia cooper on one side and, say writers like Charles Chesnutt on the other side. Such zero-sum dichotomies are even more relentlessly pursued by the critics unconditioned and opposed to the religious vocabulary that animate Kelly's work, which sits squarely in the discourse of spiritual writings and the tradition of religious movement: these provide the most logical content for reading her work, which is less an aberration in one stream of post reconstruction African American writing than might at first appear.

In juxtaposing Harper's *Iola Leroy's* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* attempted to transcend that logic, implied in the popular notion that fiction by black women gets better and better with each generation especially in its delineation of black female character. Logic, concerned thematic aspects and emerged new approaches to theoretical inclination in the essays and also reading strategies, show a tendency to privilege twentieth century texts over nineteenth century texts, even while calling for non-hierarchical way of considering them together.

That tendency is reflected in some of the theorists and writers decision to evaluate Iola Leroy as character and text in terms of Celie and *The Color purple* the latter

representing in Deborah's mind some kind of high-water mark in writing fiction with fair amount of political intent that inspires and educates readers. The texts are further associated emancipatory narrative strategies almost exclusively with a contemporary movement of literary production and thus uses its values and critical codes as the parameter for measuring the failings and achievements of nineteenth century literary text. These codes constitute the key words to borrow Raymond Williams, the generic vocabulary of critical terms for literary study on African-American woman is all about color, class, stereotype and sexuality. These key concepts actually converge in easily and most of the studies done in the recent past regarding the representation of "black womanhood" especially the mulatta.

Influenced by Alice Walker's engaging discussion of race and color and color in nineteenth century fiction by black women "If the Present Looks Like the Past" Deborah says that the "past" should like the "present". In other words, in all the matters that is central to literary representation of black womanhood, *Iola Leroy* resembles the *The Color Purple*, a strategy which is designed to overlook the possible ways in which "Walker's ideologies of race, gender, sexuality and class which she has located in literary utopia, perhaps not only be opened to some complications, but might also be seen as the contemporary counterpart outer part of the idealism associated strongly with her nineteenth century precursors" (Hite 261). While most of them share Alice Walker's concern to explain the pervasiveness of the mulatta in nineteenth century black fiction, they have astray in reading this figure as an unequivocal capitulation to dominant beliefs in the rightness and the superiority of whiteness. Next, studies show that Hazel Carby actually offers a more constructive and complicated conceptualization of the

function of the mulatta in black women's fiction of the era against the popular critical perspective that the mulatta functions as gesture of acquiescence to a racist social order and is thus politically unacceptable sometimes, further, she argues that the mulatta acts as a **mediating device** it seems. As such, Carby continues to say that "the mulatta enabled an explanation of both the sexual and social relations between the races, relations prescribed under Jim Crow laws and customs" (Carby xxii), Alice Walker followed and she was moved by his thoughts. Reading *The Color Purple* and *Iola Leroy* comparatively is just like getting to know past and the present. Besides that, we get to see the modern tendency to view sexual expression as inherently liberating, rather than governed by relations of power in a steadily changing and complicated cultural field.

This kind of analysis while comparing, actually bring out the evaluation of autonomous black feminist movement especially the movement that exploded in the 1890s. Because of this kind of political context has enabled many writers to achieve success. Strange thing is that, nineteenth century women actually wanted to be remembered as upholders of puritan morality it seems. However valid such an explanation might be, removed from historical context, even reconstructed context, they say that is has over simplified the complex ways racist ideologies shaped and continue to shape black women's sexual choices.

No doubt the above said fact helps to construct black sexuality of black women, defined against the so called purity of white women was the major factor on which racist sexual ideologies turned. Deborah has actually focused on the thematic connections between Alice Walker and Frances E Harper. But some of them have argued regarding marriage in the both stories following to say that *The Color Purple* self-

consciously re-enact a form of rape and in Harpers work we find the construction of a counter mythology through representing marriage as a social problem which is geared toward a black women regarding their self- determination. The feminist reading strategies from twentieth century says that marriage is an unambiguous surrendering. That means oppression of women was happening but in a persuasive argument. Claudia Tate is in line to give some suggestion over this matter and she suggests a restorative way to marriage for more transgressive ends and aims. She goes to the extent of arguing that a masculinist discourse of unconditional freedom, sometimes co-occur with marriage as freedom's antithesis. This kind of reading formation has dominated criticism of African-American culture in the present century as well and it very well explains and gives enough reasons to believe that why contemporary readers construe marriage as a loss of freedom.

The comparison of past and present literary traditions never stop here. Claudia, further proposes that writers of earlier time's especially black women novelists in nineteenth century must be read with the understanding that they are exercising the civil right to marry it seems. It sounds just like right to vote which was very important for the black population. She perhaps consider both the mattes as civil responsibilities and through this information we understand that people in the past centuries collectively respected their civil liberties. Contemporary writers reconsidering writers from earlier centuries, precisely is an attempt to historicize their narrative choices and to read their plots according to the specific outline of racial formation pervasive in their time.

Color based social stratification within the race was real. Though not the only basis for divisions in black communities, color consciousness was real and pervasive and found subtle, perhaps unconscious, expression in strategies of nineteenth century black

fiction and overt expression in the structure of everyday life that affected those who wrote it. To acknowledge this is not to detract from the power these writers command as cultural critics, but rather, to caution ourselves against the limits and dangers of hyper-idealization of correctness. In the zeal of writers and theorists to correct that error, they have remade these writers into aesthetic ideals and granted them an artistic and political self-consciousness that re-homogenizes them, even as it insists on their “difference”. Contemporary writers like Alice Walker and others have made corrections by drawing on the necessary discipline of “historicism” and contextualism. But one that frequently and falsely implies a notion of both history and of context in need of its own corrections.

Black Paradigm and Identity

African-American literary criticism has seen the major paradigm shift. Afro-American critical paradigm is something where we get to that, the world is divided into black and white, race is the sole determinant of being and identity, subsuming sexual as well as all other forms of difference, identity is preexistent, coherent and known ; and literature has the power to unify and liberate the race. This perspective pivots on a set of interchangeable and uncomplicated oppositions- black/white, positive/negative, self/other. In flexible demand for literary characters who are essentially figurations of myth, akin to Alice Walker’s description, as she says, “I am black, beautiful and strong, and almost always right” (Walker 137). This is the **self** with which our hypothetical Afro-American critic, desperately seeking flattery is likely to identify. To put the material in its baldest and most simplistic form, this **self** is uniformly **positive** and **good** and defined in contradistinction to its **other** uniformly **negative** and **bad**. As feminist theorists have consistently and emphatically argued, the opposition of **self to other**, as well as its

analogues, is gendered and hierarchical, tending to reproduce the more fundamental opposition between male and female. Man is **self** and women, **other**. And in this configuration, as Shoshana Felman in “Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy”, eloquently puts it, echoing to dutiful terms of the dominant Afro-American paradigm women is “the negative of the positive”(Felman1975). While these observations are common place in feminist discourse, their usefulness to students of Afro- American literary studies has not been fully interrogated. Preventing such interrogation is almost exclusive focus on race in Afro-American literary discourse which is often seen as being essentially equal to focus on maleness. General understanding about black women is that they are subordinated if not absolutely smudged out in the discourses of blackness. The **black self** has historically been assumed as male it seems. Besides this point, we can also observe that while constructing standard accounts of an Afro-American literary canon, again the **face** of the **race**, and the **speaking subject** is male according to Ian Mac Innes, in one of his work *Closure and the Fiction of Female Development*.

After realizing the limited boundaries black feminists are helping to redraw them. And they had attempted to move the discourses on blackness to different channels beyond those whose place and detailed study kept them locked in antagonism. *Sula* by Toni Morrison is a very good example to observe such a plethora of liberating possibilities just like Walker’s liberating and educative fictions. It is believed that it transgresses every rhetoric of opposition that excludes women from creative agency. To say more about the *Sula*, it teases the audiences with certain kind of oppositions like good versus evil, virgin versus whore, most probably self-versus other. Besides that, we also get to know that Toni Morrison thought that *Sula* is quintessentially and metaphysically

black who tries to extract better choices from choicelessness. Sometimes narrative insistently blurs and confuses the above said binaries then we find the boundaries blurred which they created. Boundaries are actually separating from others. *Sula* has glorified in paradox, ambiguity and also its prologue and that actually describes the setting. Readers experience a new kind of new world where there is no fear of getting to bottom of things. Most of the things are shifted to “self” besides that, the novel also questions about the “Self” of Afro-American literature.

Most of the writings during black power movement actually was so strong that its narratives used to invite readers to imagine and think about different kind of script that transcends the boundaries of social and linguistic convention besides challenging the western metaphysics which historically operates seriously in the African-American literature. Toni Morrison questions a traditional notion of self because they have been translated into narrative. She analyses such concepts as protagonist by decentering and deferring the presence of Sula. The title character is the privileged center but still deferred. Strange thing is Sula character is introduced much later after many characters and it continues almost for long even after her death. It is clear from the above said that not only does the narrative deny the reader a central character, but it also denies the whole notion of character as static essence besides replacing this with the idea of character as a process.

It is clear that earlier said is based on the imagination of the self that is knowable, which is centered and seems to be unified. Next, point based on the assumption that the self is multiple, easy thought flowing is experienced and relatable. The nature of fluidity in the text is metaphorically considered in comparison with Sula’s eyes that are steady as

well as clear as rain. Further, Morrison has portrayed Sula's character with multiple perspective and therefore we get to see her multiple identity. The reason behind this is changing perspectives of her birthmark for example, which depends on the viewer's perspectives that acts as a figurative selves no doubt. But real problem is Sula struggles and never achieves a completeness of being.

Morrison has reconceptualized the character and that shows clearly there is direct implications for Afro-American literature and its critical study of **self**. That means, if **self** is perceived as if, it is in process, rather than a static entity, already formed and being known it seems, so, it is there by, difficult to show its idealness or "positive" representation. We have come across certain theories that describes act of reading a complicated and dialogical though it has enriched that on the other hand. It is of course an interpretation between reader and the text that means self and the other. This fact suggests that act of reading is nothing but a self-exploration and the same thing we get to see as a narrative strategy in *Sula*. The reader might feel that novel threatens his or her assumptions and may disappoint their expectations at every turn. The familiar black and white confrontation and expected plot is put to background. Whereas, characters are foregrounded whose lives have transcended their social conditions.

Most of them who have read both Alice Walker and Toni Morrison may have discovered that there is the presence of a kind of web of references and allusions, to a wide range of literary and cultural heritage directly or indirectly. Studies open up lot of such comparisons and responses regarding canon formation or literary tradition. In the wake of such responses, we could see Barbara Johnson's response to Henry Louis Gates's literary tradition, and the Afro-American Tradition. Which is also pertinent. She

states that, both the black and white imply the relation of mutual exclusion based on certain fallacies one is about fallacy of spatialization and other on the fallacy of unified and pure traditions. This indicates the fact of considering the cultural differences as modeled only after geographical and spatial differences which talks about cultural apartheid. No doubt many kind of intellectual traditions can be used I mean incorporated while discussing the black text in contemporary academic life besides observing the hegemony of certain parameters on marginal literatures. Most of the writers believe that this is a serious study of the unique presence of the Afro-American in the American national literature.

Family Recuperation and Black Community

Further, it is not a surprise when we look into the narration, we come across lot of male abuses in and out the literary text especially while going through familial relations. Sometimes readers might get the feeling as if the family romance is ignored in the most of the black women writings. Therefore, contemporary black women writers are criticized regarding family plots in their stories. We also come across arguments regarding Alice Walker's high level of enmity towards men in her most of the fictions. She is criticized for that and David Bradley has "actually explained this tracing back to Walker's childhood incident of shooting by her brother and the way she felt as if her family failed to protect her though it was an accident" (Bradley 34).

Next, we could see that Phillip Royster also criticized Walker following Bradley in an riff on one of her famous essay that, Walker may be in search of not so much our mothers' gardens as our fathers' protecting arms. He usually criticizes her fictions pointing that she has a great desire to hate younger men and soft corner to older man. He

goes to the extent of comparing her work to Morrison's in which we come across the fact "if a woman learns to be a daughter, then she will be able to be a wife to a black man and a mother to black children and a nurturer and preserver of black people" (Royster 357-361). It is unsure which he is referring to but it is understood that he might be following what Susan Willis Calls "**three woman households** which indicates that it does away with the male domination" (Willis 106). Further, the epigraph from *Beloved* alludes to another of these three-woman households. They were a family somehow and he was not the head of it. Walker's work were psychoanalyzed using the language of family. According to Bradley and Royster, Walker is placed outside of the larger family of black community because of her involvement with feminism. But Royster would like to welcome her back to the extended family and unity of tribe on one condition that she must feel a greater loyalty toward a black men.

Mel Watkins criticizes black women writers saying that they chose to target men to attack. In his words Afro-American literary history is written in a way that emphasizes family unity. According to him sexism is more oppressive than racism. There is some amount of violent representation of double standardness regarding rape and violence even in Richard Wright's work and hence he is installed in a unified portrait of black writers. This representation could be seen in the Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, and *The Color purple* to justify the disinheritance.

Darryl Pinckney has given a joint review of the *The Color Purple* and Ishmael Reed's *Reckless Eyeballing*. But, one thing is that *The Color Purple* was already reviewed along with Reed's *The Terrible Two's* in *The New York Review of Books*. His essay reads *The Color Purple* stories and movie as stories of violence in which women is

presented as the helpless victims of brutal black men. In the next part, observes the Reckless Eyeballing and that shows the deterioration of the Civil Rights Movement and also the rise of Feminism in the US. This influenced the Afro-American literature. Further, there is discussion about *The Color Purple* and the novelist connection with the Spielberg and its link with texts of Morrison, Gayl Jones, and Hurston. Review appears to be eclipsed and it looks like Reed is almost stuck between Walker and Spielberg. It is very interesting to observe that black males are victimized in the earlier parts due to the partnership of Walker and Spielberg former is black and latter is white. As a result of that we get to see Ishmael Reed has been erased because of their power of publishing strategies.

Sometimes we tend to go unnoticed the fact that critics leading the debate over black women writers have less focused on the black men as a subject because they have shed more light upon the complexities of black female subjectivity and their experiences as their own family stories. Black male reader suffers by not getting favorable place especially in the contemporary black women's literature. In most of their stories we come across characters struggle to recover their own family and also tries to talk about fathers restitution. Therefore, I believe that, the family also becomes framing rhetoric in their texts.

Black sociologist named William Julius Wilson talks about the problem of inter-generational and female headed households. Along with him, Adolph Reed also observes that he is not appealing for the equal wage or salary and some other kind of initiatives to women for their independent living in the world but to increase the pool of black marriageable men (Reed 168). Further, Wilson attempts to narrate a family romance with a sociological touch. One would feel that the desire to recuperate family is very powerful.

According to Reed, “the new concern with the black family-like the old concern with the black family...is...a moralistic ideology that...enforces a patriarchal institutions by appealing to a past that may have been largely mythical...and one that was certainly predicted on the subordination of women” (Reed 168). But in the contemporary writing this kind of family narrative is missing. It’s obvious because in present times much of the writing is exposes black women’s subordination in and out. Their works usually talk about nuclear family, try to rethink and also tries to reconfigure its structure and it has tried to place utterances outside the father’s preserve and control.

The contemporary black women’s writing refuses to offer any kind of idealized fantasies related to family life. The best example would *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, in her very first novel, Walker depicts the relationship between father and son. Followed by this, we can observe that she captures origins of Brownfields daydreams again in relation to his family and his childhood observations of his father and his slave life as a sharecropper. He is someone who becomes stone like object in presence of his master Mr. Shipley in the wake of terror. But in his own house he was different person. To cope with this unusual situation, Brownfield used to day dream about his father’s presence.

The novel articulates his desire for the father’s presence in the sanctity of the home. But, at the same time, that particular home, a domestic space becomes the place war between husband and wife, a place of exploitation. This is quite evident that the possibilities of so called **wholeness** within the black community, I mean, black family have been wounded by black women’s feminist thoughts. They are, to certain extent, criticized for their affiliation with whites. Though we get to read about reconciliation

factor after such distrust black male, no doubt is seen as stranger in his own house as if he is out casted. Readers might form the opinion that such works are based on a conspiratorial theme. It is understood that women's matters are no longer private as it was considered earlier but things are different now even. Interesting fact is the distinction made by Pinckney about the public and private space this is what repeatedly deconstructed in the writings of black women's writing and gave rise to significant axiom known as "the personal is political". Perhaps their intention is to educate men as readers and as persons. This kind of reeducation begins with questioning along with certain values and assumptions. Different texts offers different "sources" which incorporates various categories of readers and scenes of instruction and that might reinforce the strategic possibilities to experience different model of reading as we read in Toni Morrison's works and Alice Walker's works for example. To put it like this, Walker has been the object of the most savage, sustained, and partisan attack for *The Color Purple* particularly. In the process, like *Sula*, it poses questions about the nature of identification and recognition in the reading process.

Talking about sources means discussing about origin and roots. The titles of black texts usually indicate the same. For example, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, *Birth of a Nation* etc., these texts obviously shows the nature of identity and subjectivity besides they are instructive and it showcases the artistic side of fiction and narrative self-consciousness. The sources behind Walker's stories instruct the reader about the disguises of identity and about the identity as disguise it seems. Further Walker is liberal in discussing references of historical personages in her fictions, one could witness her sensitiveness to fictive status of her work and also their fictive status in the world. She

also intensifies the self-complications by suggesting about the actual historical figures that they, might also have made up their identities. This dynamic, ever-changing, historically and spatially situated nature of identity is counter posed to the static conception of identity is embodied in “source”. This actually incorporates various categories of readers and scenes of instruction followed by a discussion of identity. It is about self-identity that is thematized in “source” but sometimes, the narrative exploits, complicates and affirms a dynamic conception of identity that resists any notion of a single identity to be positively represented in fiction. Shoshana Felman is of the opinion “that it is not so much the critic who comprehends the text, as the text that comprehends the critic” (Felman 161) One could interestingly make out that the narrative can understand the critics who might criticize Walker and her black female contemporaries with shattering the established image, the positive identity. The point over here is that the text understands the critics’ rhetoric of family, the way it reveals and conceals.

Further, the text also comprehends the critics of African-American women novelists, it is certain that these reviewers have an intense influence on the writers they attack. In the wake of controversy black women writers were hesitant and have expressed fear and concern about their reception of depiction of men in their fictions. Some had tried to change their ways and also aesthetic vision while depicting men in their stories to avoid negative publicity. Whereas we come across Reed’s momentary shift in response to black women writers. His venomous feeling erupts in his *Reckless Eyeballing*. Ian Ball is such a character that shows a clear self-portrait whose story allegorizes Reed's well known and predictable perception regarding male writing. He strongly felt that the work of most talented black men is cornered and eclipsed in the wake of powerful feminist

extended support to black women writers. To certain extent, it seems that with *Reckless Eyeballing*, reed's masks come off, which reveals plainly his thoughts. This sounds controversial and could not be reduced to conflictual interaction between the texts of contemporary black woman and male readers.

Coming back to Walker, she defamiliarizes the familiar and secularizes the sacred origins of this creation myth. We can get to see her understanding of twin relation of church to state and underscores the power of their interlaced control over women's reading and writing. She also allegorizes the white male dominance over her usage of artistic language and tries to raise her voice against the power that is institutionalized. Walker is not someone who doesn't know escapable situation of men who are agents of that hegemony. Male gaze over black women texts cannot be ignored that is fixed. This fixed match may reproduce the older meta-narrative in which, the black women's texts appear as battle field where, we get to see them fighting for their position and dominance inside and outside the family. This kind of plots makes women permanent daughters content to transcribe their father's words.

We shall not forget Walker's very first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, she was criticized for her negative portrayal of men especially for father figure but she never failed to defend her ways of portrayal and carried on her depiction of women's plight. But the sad thing is the novel was ignored in the beginning though that has authentic depiction of south. Her novel *By the Light of My Father's Smile* also show cases father daughter relationship which turns violently after getting to know that his daughter is involved with Mundo boy that means mixed race of black and Indian tribe it seems. But we can also see her approach that experiments with different point of views in

the novel and thus we get to see her fictions coming across different traditions. Readers sometimes may get the stale feeling after going through the black women's writing because in most of their works, plot revolves round the slavery while discussing past and present. Question do arise in their way of expressing about whether they want to find out sociological significance or an attempt to get the things right in present learning from the past? There might be more combination questions like this but many of them agree with Hortense Spillers view on that, she is of the opinion that we can know only through discourse, slavery that "inscribes a repertoire of relationships of texts and among texts that is purely open to modes of improvisation and rearrangement." (Spillers 37) Studies show that many of them are in forefront of reinventing slavery.

Re-representation of Slavery as Genre

As said above, it is quite significant to note that, contemporary African American writers, black women writers are at the forefront to write about the reinvention of slavery in an improvised manner. Earlier most of them were men writers and studies show that only twelve percent were published by black women writers according to John Blassingame. It's quite understood that women could get enough encouragement for their artistic writing skills then. And we obviously see that they foster themselves to bring in some changes into their society. Like Margaret Walker, Sherley Anne Williams also write in a way to suggest that history's lies can be rectified and whatever was left out could get its place and restored. This is like recreating the history to avoid the earlier erasure of the blacks from the historical record. For example, William's *Dessa Rose* and Morrison's *Beloved*, and also Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, etc., are best examples for contemporary fictionalization of slavery by African American

women improvise on many discursive features of slavery. Neo-slave narratives do certainly expose the atrocities of silenced figure of the slave black mother who is forced to endure rape, and saddest thing is theft of their infants. Besides all these, they also expose upon concubinage, try to disclose white master's sin. They have given a lot of importance to the female subjectivity and titles chosen for their texts are quite evident for that reason. Their works showcases more on the sexual victimization of slave women, followed by the relationship between slave men and slave women and also between slave woman and a slave mistress.

Writers try to reconfigure a salient convention of the slave narrative as a genre along with the discussion of the novels political inclination and their associated problems, sociohistorical realities etc., and not to forget power relations because that seems to be major stuff in textualizing that slavery. *Dessa Rose* is such a work that foregrounds about the questions like who, what, when, and how, and are suggestive and it appears from the study that it resonates far beyond. It is just like reconventionalizing the classic slave narratives. Why in the sense it engages to give all the details of inherited text along with the raising questions and challenges coming across critical discourse. The novel shows enough amount of the trappings of narrative and semantics of truth about Dessa's enslavement and her subsequent escape.

Nehemiah is the character who gives an account of Dessa's story in the novel. His information about unrepentant Dessa appears as if, his recreated fantastic fiction. Primarily his account about Dessa, who is a slave woman and he tries to fit her into proslavery text. And disgusting fact is, he is collecting facts about her and doesn't her name and he has titled that documentation as "darky" it seems. As he failed to remember

her name, he uses some substitution claiming it from some proslavery text. As said above fiend, nigger bitch, she-devil etc., nothing but reducing to “darky.” This is quite evident that there was a generic, gender neutral discrimination in his thought. This novel and other contemporary novels of slavery, usually discuss the engraved past and present that means even future generations. But still question remains the same about contemporary African American women writing, why they still write about slavery? Whether they are trying to take hold on the historical memories of slavery? Obviously they have tried to keep it alive through bringing out horrific details of slavery, to find reposition to the stress points of that degrading system. Therefore, it seems that answer to the above questions may be yes.

We might-get an answer to that remembering Toni Morrison’s view regarding this in one of her interview during the publication of *Beloved*, she says that, slavery was so intricate, so immense and so long, and so, unprecedented, that it can take over the writer over. She adds, “We know what that story is. And it is predictable”. Further, she goes to the extent of saying that the “writer must, then, focus not on the institution but on the people, which puts the authority back into the hands of the slave” (Morrison 1987).

An Insight into the Practice of Black Feminist Thoughts

Analyses and interpretation of black women texts are incomplete unless we deeply dive into the practice of black feminist theory and criticism. It sounds like attempting to the construction of certain amount of knowledge associated with history. The reason is, it seems that there is metaphysical relation regarding the nature of being and existence between both history and knowledge. Whatever the history is, it indicates something constructive, besides being the place for conflict and power politics. It really

matters how the history has been told through the medium of black women's fiction and what are their priorities regarding literary strategies particularly narrations about race and gender. In the wake of above said, we get to see Deborah McDowell thoughts, who agrees with Hortense Spiller's statement. That is, "in a very real sense, black American women are invisible to various public discourses, and the state of invisibility for them has its precedent in an analogy on any patriarchal symbolic mode that we might wish to name" (Spiller 24). Most of them have tried to secure this and attempted to showcase in their writing. But, their efforts have been seen as compromised very often by certain compulsions of their historical legacy and not to forget it also depends on the present social structure. Next point is, there has always been a debate over the use of the terms theory and practice because in the discussion of black feminist thinking, most of the time it was racialized and gendered.

Bell Hooks is of the opinion that feminism did not emerge from the most victimized women. They were women who are not powerfully equipped to bring positive changes in their life. She further says that they are like silent majority, but powerless. In most of the black women's writing, when they discuss about grave matters, their personal experiences are considered quintessential evidence it seems. The reason behind this thought is their lives experiences are no doubt gives a unique criteria.

It is quite understood from the studies that black women observed white feminist who focused only on male tyranny and women's oppression which was not at all new for blacks. Those white feminists just needed a theory to tell the world that they are oppressed and ignored the real ones. They were truly struggling to sustain all those predicaments. They are the people who failed to register their voice in the movement in the written form their nature of oppression was very tough in comparison to whites. But

the case is different in Southern white women, they actually know more about racism than others. Next, black women did not come collectively in the beginning because of lack of awareness and to certain extent they didn't find anything liberatory in the associated party line. Saddest thing is that they didn't even bothered to use that term feminism because most of them did not knew. That was really tough situation for them since there was no accessibility for them to that kind of power system.

Bell Hooks share her experience about white women's dishonorable treatment towards blacks when she was participating in the feminist movement it seems. She was of the opinion that whites had no knowledge to understand black women's struggle whereas many of the blacks knew about white women's conditions also. Further, she also says that they always tried to remind blacks that movement was only theirs. Trying to showcase the fact that they had allowed black women to participate in the movement because they want to present that way. It really sounds ridiculous it is of course a movement for women and there was such a discrimination that they did not see black women as equals. But they wanted their experiences and struggles to be shared publicly and at last they were the one who will decide the credibility of their predicament. They had developed a kind of stereotypical things regarding blacks as poor, illiterates etc. This was the time when some of the black educated women stood strong and criticized the biased movement. This paved the way for reframing new black feminist ideas which could suit them accordingly but that was also tried to repress their ideas. There might be only seldom discussion regarding the above fact in the written form. Worrisome factor is they reduced black women as object of their so called discourse of race. This clearly indicates that black women were still inferior and white women never did away with the white supremacy though they might had real concern.

For instance, Lillian Hellman writes about being with black women since her birth but their status were never equal. As a little girl she exercised dominant position over blacks and never forgets to mystify her true relations. That means power is passed to them because whites wished to do so and doing this, they promote false image of themselves as sorry figures. This obviously indicates the real face of their social status and no doubt it definitely stops them from empathizing with the black women especially in the US. Some of them come across difficulties while understanding the interrelation between class, gender, and racial oppression. Feminist also face problem in constructing feminist theory because they very much focus on the gender but fail to provide enough basis to construct the feminist theory it seems. Question do arise whether gender should be the determinant factor for deciding women's fate. But another point is people do not have that kind of racial experience only talk exclusively about the gender. Just like Dalit's in India, Blacks are also positioned at the bottom level when it comes to occupation.

But interestingly, we come across different turn and twist in the case of white women and black men here, they can be oppressor and oppressed also. That means, it is clear that, men gets a chance to be exploiter through sexism but let's not forget the very fact about them being oppressed by racism. Similarly, white women is enabled by racism to be oppressor and she can be victimized by black men obviously. To certain extent it still persists though both were part of one or the other movements but they were busy in serving their own interests no doubt this has enabled the strongest whites to overrule them.

The thing is, Black women have enabled unique vantage point to criticize the racial oppression and imposition of its related kind of hegemony one could say. This is that point where Bell Hooks suggests to form a liberatory feminist theory which means margin to center and praxis as a contribution that can offer to serve their community with proper vision because it is their collective responsibility it seems. This is how we come across different ideas that seriously matters in shaping up of black feminist thoughts and all the above said appears as the reason for the construction of black feminist thoughts as well. Not only distinguished African American women activists and writers but many ordinary black women most of whose life goes through such struggles, some in showing resistance, have also contributed a lot to the tradition of black feminist thought. This kind of standpoint is seen in the contemporary black women writers and intellectuals no doubt. They have implemented alternative ways to validate black women's oppression. But we cannot forget the fact about political and epistemological influence in the social construction of this above said tradition. One more thing is, most of them ignore the fact that, Black Arts Movement actually helped a lot to create Black Literary Theory it seems. But let us not forget that if theories are not practiced properly then, it might just be used for the sake of prescription in the fear of losing its importance.

Next thing is, vitality remains if view point is also clear along with black feminist thought since that's very difficult task to carry on. They cannot use same technique to analyze and interpret the text of the dominated and powerful. Contemporary Black women's writing gives an account of using alternative ways to create a free spirited consciousness. One can realize the significance of Black feminist thought that goes to the extent of producing independent as well as specialized knowledge. This has definitely

fostered the spirit of Black women writers to value their own distinctive subject matter. This also sounds like a tool they can make use of it in defining their stand point leads them to create a strong meaning. By speaking about issues that are serious and life threatening, which also comes from their personal experiences are considered as authentic proof of their predicament.

One more interesting thing about creating meaning comes from Henry Mitchell and Nicholas Lewter in *Soul theology: The Heart of American Culture* claim “experience as a criterion of meaning with practical images as its symbolic vehicles is a fundamental epistemological tenet in African American thought systems” (Mitchell and Lewter 1986). It is clear that knowledge comes from experiences. When we deeply study African American women’s writing we come across to value this kind of literary tradition which is not only Afrocentric but also a distinctive women’s tradition. This is absolutely what we see in the Alice Walker’s *In Search of our Mothers’ Garden, Everyday Use, The Color Purple* etc., where characters show different ways to strengthen one’s mind to confront the situation undauntedly. Besides, writer has shown how they have brought out their innate talent which was preserved and treated as part of their culture.

African American women traditionally have found considerable institutional support for an Afrocentric feminist epistemology because some find it unique. Another important tradition is of sisterhood where, black women experts with certain amount of knowledge, who are self-defined black women, share their experiences with younger ones and undoubtedly inexperienced or less experienced giving rise to sisterhood. Doing away with Eurocentric epistemology, some of them have really embraced Afrocentric epistemology for example, Alice Walker, Zora Neale Hurston etc., No doubt Zora must

be specially mentioned over here for earning advanced degree. But saddest thing is that unwillingly some of the black women scholars adhered to Eurocentric thought in their academic places in the wake of expecting acceptance of their scholarly work. There are some serious problems in establishing the legitimacy of their knowledge claim it seems. First thing is, they must earn the credibility in the eyes of African American scholars and they need to prepare themselves to monitor their work and also confront Eurocentric masculinist political and epistemological requirements.

Black women scholars also face a dilemma in meeting the criteria of adequacy regarding the knowledge claim because some times that fails to get translate into the terms of other different groups. It is quite difficult to translate from Standard English into Black English. Some of the fictions shows that worldviews may share a common vocabulary but the ideas themselves defy direct translation. It is not just uniting black folk culture with body of literature but to keep up the interests of black women's standpoint. But studies also suggest that not to forget the fact that this kind of independent view point faces lot of challenges and try hard to overcome the series of questions regarding validating the related truth.

Alice Walker's fictions do highlight the series of black feminist issues like rape, health care, sterilization abuse, circumcision, abortion rights etc. One could also observe the interlocking connection among all the above said. This also shows that African American texts highlight the inclusive nature. Besides that, Black women's fictions reflects the particular relevance like inclusiveness of politics including Third World and their commitment to address the problem of race, sex, and class. Many destructive things happen in the name of justice to achieve the vested political goals. Studies suggest that it

is better to avoid clashes in the name of politics. Their belief is in collective process and equal distribution of power.

Black feminist also believe in the practice of keeping check on their political ideologies and their self-criticism to carry on revolutionary task ahead. Similarly, Alice Walker's characters have shown the same kind of revolutionary behavior when required. They have vehement power to continue to speak for their own sake in defense of one another as well as African American community. They have a courage now to speak against those who show injustice no matter which race they belong to. They have learned their lessons from their experiences and hence preach that no one will speak for us but we need to speak for ourselves. When we deeply dive into the analysis of Afro American women's writing, this is what we get to understand about black feminist thoughts that foster the mind not only of blacks but women in general to strengthen the mind. That might appear as if their predicament has been superficially glorified but that kind of criticism cannot stop their artistic and aesthetic deliverance that outshines rest of the things and hence Afro-American novels are artistic in their form.

Chapter-5

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by saying that all the chapters discussed over here are suggestive in taking integrity a way forward so that there shall be a noticeable development in the society. This is quite visible when observed and analyzed with the womanist lens. I have tried doing so in my analyses and focused also on different ways regarding how the series of problems have been addressed or being approached by black women. We get to see the above said not only in Walker's fictions but also in general in African American milieu. This is also evident in most of her non-fiction works. For example, *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens* is such a work where we get to see that she doesn't hesitate to mention the names of leaders, women from whom she is inspired and that has actually paved a way to articulate all her experiences.

Alice Walker, just like other black writers she too has carved her name in the American literary consciousness. For instance, the concept of national consciousness is given more consideration especially, in *The Color Purple*. Besides this one, I have already discussed her use of recurrent issue based themes which actually keeps her works rooted. This particularly helps her to overcome the demerits of her works, if any. Because, she has faced lot of criticism for misrepresentation of the black experiences it seems. But these criticisms apart we get to see the fact by her earlier writings whether it is poems, essays, short stories or novels, she has written with great certainty about women's victory. Overall it could be seen as a human triumph and that has drawn audience towards her literary works. One more thing is, reader community has made writers like Walker as ideals of aesthetics. Not only that we realize from her works that

she has always exhibited her political self-consciousness. We readers have tendency to make corrections conveniently by drawing on some important notions. Her Fictions whether it is short stories or novels they give details of the history. As said above, corrections are sometimes inevitable while considering history and also context. Walker's writing makes her as a cultural critic no doubt but one can sense over zeal and also hyper idealization of certain things and attempt of showcasing correctness. That means, she is very much in favor of self- reflexivity, self-realization and also self-preferentiality. All her female characters in the novels reject external definition in favor of all the above said self-definitions. Therefore, her novels are guided by a spirit of effecting each and every women and also appears to be as a driving force for societal changes. Not only that, she has been writing on healing black lives personal as well as community raising her voice in wake of addressing an account of physical and psychological relationship besides giving an account of the relationship between trauma and psychological.

No doubt her entire body of work has established her as an icon of African American literature. Her works exhibit artistic elements that is given by the Black Aesthetic values which is the most important thing in the propagation of new ideas and writing traditions and certain theories. I mean her novels showcases the defined values of aesthetic features like incorporation of African American musical styles and folk culture following black music, black vernacular, blues and jazz. This could be traced back to nineteenth century for deep understanding of Black Aesthetic. Next important thing is we get to see that it does away with the notion of arts for the sake of art but it gives privilege to art which serves not only social but political function as well. Besides rejecting western ideology, Walker's fictions satisfy the major characteristic feature of Black

aesthetic that means, speaking to her readers directly as if giving call for revolution and that sounds rebellious. According to Larry Neal one should create an art that converses to black American's aspirations and the same thing is visible in Walker's work as well. Just like Black Art Movement artists, even in her work there is functionality and this is not only for aesthetic pleasure but it shows her responsibility towards art as well as society. During the time when every black writer was struggling to prove their ability in the white America some of them really stood by their convictions. This was that particular time when black writers felt like catering more and more black audience. Same thing was done by Walker. It seems she realized the fact that race pride is very essential to uphold their cultural aspects. Besides that fostering is also a required factor to uplift black's emotionally and psychologically, and spirituality that never lags behind in her novels. This is how one could observe the essentiality of black aesthetic which is more evident not only in the fictions but in her poetry too. She followed the call given by her ancestors like Zora Neal Hurston to get back to the roots especially southern roots because that's the place of authentic black identity.

Awareness regarding black identity and their culture, language was brought to the forefront by certain literary movements. Among them Black Arts Movement played a dominant role. Writers from this particular movement used various and unique form of writing technique to bring in the awareness. They actually concentrated more on poetry than other things it seems because they felt that poetry could be more effective. There is more stress given to blues ideology. In most of the poems speaker is made to address the discrimination of black people. Besides their ability to write, they were criticized for not bringing in proper rhyming and felt they lack in appreciating beautiful things in poetic

medium. For example, Nikki Giovanni's "For Sandra" in which speaker is enabled to have conversation with black people and to bring out their harsh experiences comprehensively. Whoever associated with this movement they all emphasized poetry is convenient medium to convey their messages in a small pieces of poems because this would be something great to observe in the shorter space. And no doubt poetry attract many people due to the usage of figurative language. Therefore, Walker, following her seniors' footsteps she too has set same revolutionary goals. Not only setting goals but her works are quite evident that she has made it happening. All chapters over here focus on the struggle of asserting one's being that has grown stronger with the passing time. Especially, the above said goes well with the assertion of **self**. Where, one has to be or grow stronger instead of giving chance to manipulate or dictate their thoughts and behaviors by certain external and internal compulsion. While doing so we come across the fact that her novels are engaged in the mission of not just freeing the body but also language. Needless to say that she has not restricted her writing to Afro American women but for humanity. Being didactic in nature her novels preach wholeness. Besides that, she tirelessly speak about the above said and also of spirituality.

In her novels we could see that she stresses upon structural aspects of literary work followed by memory, which speaks volumes in her novels, striking perspectives and most importantly her usage of language comprehensively so that readers shall understand the reflection of concerns. Characters like Celie, Nettie, Meridian Hill, Kate, etc travel in the memory lane of their life in the stories. One can observe that there is a pattern of repetition while unfolding the story or characters various experiences that brings them together within recurrent thematic framework. Not only that as I have

mentioned already about freeing up body in her works, that is more evident in her *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* never fails to present an African American woman at peace with her body and the choices she made for herself in the novel. Novels are in conversation with audiences and it seems same with the different authors. While analyzing her fictions one does not fail to observe that most of her works exhibit individual expression of resistance which brings out Walker's dynamic style of writing.

As a novelist she has moved towards or else we can say that there is profound inclination towards theoretical aspects not only in her novels but in short stories too. All the three chapters over here talk about individual expressions which gives an artistic account of Walker's message and concern towards society. That might be the reason for getting global attention. No doubt that her concern have become global in nature. But what is superficial over here is climax of her novels. She ends them with a prophetic note and that appears as optimistic by nature just like all is well that ends well but that's hard to believe. One significant thing is that, she is always in conversation with the role of personal history. As we observe in the character of Meridian Hill throughout the novel she is engaged with one or the other movement. Similarly, Walker has gone through that kind of a transformation during Civil Rights Movement. She has shared her testimony so that her experiences help others also so that concerned people shall experience the same kind of transformation. I mean to say that her novels have become a kind of medium to elevate her own race and hence she is considered as the doer of the living world. May be it goes well with experiencing transformation and also sharing it through her creative and expressive actions. We shall not forget her social activism because that also strengthens and gives more substance to her fictions.

Her novels are inspirational besides empowering her own people along with her audiences to change themselves for the sake of their betterment. Through her characters, not only female characters but also male characters have set an example while living through their painful pasts rather than showing them as just dealing with their painful pasts. We find these thoughts not just in her writings but she herself has undergone through that tough situations in her own life. Her fictions are not just stories but lesson to strengthen their will power. In the wake of that one can see that she has retold the stories of her foremothers as well but with the new perspective that could be called as like contemporary and womanist lens. Not just that as I have repeatedly mentioned that she strongly owes to all her ancestors and foremothers but she literally acknowledges them in her *In Search of Our Mother Gardens*. For example, Hurston and Walker join text with body effortlessly to signal the healing of that rupture between body and the mind. It seems that both of them believed that expressivity of the body very much depends on the expressivity of the mind because that is something which provides exact expression. Further, we could see the same in the development of an Afro American women's literary tradition. In support of that we can see how Zora Neal Hurston has provided a necessary bridge from suppression of self and woman's voice to racial uplift so that woman shall assert her self-liberation doing away from the various constrictions of language and gender.

In some moments we witness that stereotypes are destroyed and the language of the dominant race and its culture is subverted, but interestingly, the body of a character speaks. As said earlier, novels are in conversational mode with each other and also themes that are repeated with variation are the facts of redemption. Where there is loss

there is also a hidden way to find out the redemption. Further, one can see the thwarted communication and the problem of miseducation which are addressed intensely. Through her medium of writing walker and her characters voices her own call and this is how she has created her own tradition. we could witness the above said in the novels like *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *The Color Purple* where characters realize the importance of education and that is the only tool which can help marginalized section to empower themselves. Next point is, miscommunication. For example between Celie and Nettie, Mr_____ and Celie. Later, looking towards future positively then obviously we find redemption. There was always fear filled gasp in between the father son duo's conversation in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and also between Mr. Brown and his master. When we observe the characters like Mr._____ and Grange Copeland, Harpo and Brownfield Copeland, the reader can see a conversation on these themes. In the first pair fathers had experienced a kind of redemption. In the second pair sons are those who suffer the consequences of miseducation. There is a striking difference in their characters. In his life, Grange is a sharecropper nearly obliterated by the futility of his situation. His character is oppressive, humorless, he is contentious and he is verbally abusive. He, later gets into the clutches of frustration and deserts his own family and moves to the north. Where as in his second life, he has spent in New York City, where Walker has developed the dynamic nature of his character. The reason behind this intention is to observe the way he struggles and wrestles with identity. He came across the surprising northern white oppression again and he grapples with the thought of redeeming himself.

Further, we readers hope that Walker as an author will not have Brown make the mistakes committed by his parents but walker has included nothing in his education and

readers are taken aback. Because it is not having education or experience that allows him to acknowledge the divinity of his own body and its own capacity for the purpose of good. We should observe the fact that walker has shown his father showing denial of divinity when he refuses to wipe off his son's tears that means he is denying the communication with divine it seems. But again she repeats the positivity over here by giving chance to make his own life but his past experience leaves him shattered, ill-equipped to overcome the weird patterns of the past. In the wake of redemption Grange wishes to raise Brownfield's daughter Ruth. The way he educates her gives her opportunity to explore life in a different light. As a result of that she makes choice to assert her individuality. Through her character walker shows the way to defend the sanctity of her liberal thoughts to fight against the injustice.

In all the three chapters there is about self-revelation. Because Walker highlights that self-realization in her fictions which is very difficult to avoid. Evils of not getting education and miscommunication is presented reasonably in her major novels. Solution does not come by blaming each other within the society. She is criticized for reducing the stature of black men for showing them as evil and also making them appear as decipher in the stories to certain extent. She aims to direct towards integrity through her works. While bringing in so much things together, walker has interesting usage of Black English to her credit which executes every expression profoundly and artistically, realistically. This actually opens a new kind of terrain to channelize multiple concepts.

Redemption and education seems to be the only way to re structure their position in the society. Again it is left to individual responsibility for remaking their life. Every person must be given chance as walker has given to Mr. ____ and Grange for correcting

their wrong doings. This happens only when they take personal responsibility to end the cycle of physical and psychological abuse. Similar things seems to happen in *The Color Purple* as Mr_____ cannot assert himself to his father, he creates a miserable life not just for him but for Celie and his own son Harpo. Redemption over here comes in a different way. Here, the way of communication is redirected from son to father. Walker shows the combined effort of men and women in her novel to get educated and reeducate themselves. For example, Sofia reeducated Harpo and she demonstrates to him that her decisions are not about to break the gendered norms to emasculate men, but she realizes to him about her choices about remaking things in her own stride. Walker has shown redemption to demonstrate the importance of sharing and caring experiences. This is how Harpo like persons are redeemed. These kind of thoughts makes Walker as a doer of the world where, this philosophy is all about the personal transformation which is undoubtedly passed on to the community. May be this personal understanding of experiences helps in defining and asserting the self that he or she participates in community healing and rebuilding. This is also a process of healing I believe that plays major role in the personal transformation.

In *Meridian*, Walker has brought out her experiences with a realistic approach that makes everything look organic over here. The reason may be her usage of pragmatic language and autobiographical elements as already discussed in that particular chapter. While narrating the lead Woman's story she faces the taboo, and demonstrates a path to redemption for a woman who usually scares even to think about making choices that fits specifically with the dominant moral code. She weaves autobiographical elements that miraculously speak to a diverse group of women. She chose to give a call to attend the

spiritual wellbeing of her characters and also call out her readers with the poetry of human speech and self-reflection. Through Meridian Hill Walker shows us the organic engagement as a process to involve in the living world. In this novel, she issues a call about the cultural oppression that everything and everybody's evolving mind is separated from the body. This refrain is quite personal and particular. Whereas Barbara Christian says that Meridian Hill's character is constructed as a device that actually articulates the quest for the individual's voice within a particular communal context. Through her works, one will notice that she has highlighted self-love. To certain extent it sounds to be self-centered and she is criticized for that by male counterparts. No matter what but she has given strategies of survival through her fictions that links between values and their faith on whatever they believed.

In the book, *Black Womanist Ethics*, Cannon writes that, African American Women's perspectives on what is right and what is wrong behavior are significantly influenced by the context of oppression they have lived in. One cannot avoid womanist perspective while analyzing Walker's novels because we get to see that kind of an ethical system and moral code. That enhances the aesthetic nature of her organic writing immensely. She compels people's mind to guide their lives that is shaped by that kind of a moral wisdom. And that wisdom is obviously passed from one generation to the other. No doubt that womanist ethics presents valid sources and proof of African American moral Wisdom and viable life-affirming ethical systems for African American women and their communities (Cannon 1988). One more important thing to note is that, from its origins, womanist religious thoughts has given attention to the shared experiences of racism, class, sexism, hetero and some other forms of oppression suffered by other

communities of color and marginalized groups of women. It is interesting to see that, third-wave womanism and certain works of womanist scholars like Emilie M. Townes, Asian writers, Native American and, black feminist scholars, are getting influenced by the womanist idea to withstand white supremacy and sexist order. But, few male scholars never lagged behind they too were ahead to resist the above said discriminative structure especially those who never hesitant to identify themselves with feminist notions.

Coming back to Walker, she has actually encompassed the past and the present, along with the future as her major character seeks her own expression. As already mentioned, Meridian Hill is not just the character of the novel but she is the embodiment of the novel's major concept and the relationship between personal and social change. This kind of relationship between the individual and society is also the major concept in investing forms with new meaning formation. She is criticized for using most of the things repetitively but there is a reason behind that. She uses that strategy of repetition of characters in her three novels to bring out the dynamic qualities of her characters and also concepts, their intense impact on their community.

Besides that we cannot ignore the fact of subverting language and western literary structures. One such repetitive character is Shug Avery who appears in *The Color Purple* also figures in the *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and also in *The Temple of My Familiar*. This show the importance of the process of personal transformation and passing that on to the community. Not to forget that Tashi is also repeated character from *The Color Purple* to *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. As this Celie and Shug are strong believer in God they feel that divinity is present everywhere and in everything. This divinity is found in most of her works when we see from womanist lens. No doubt there is always a link between

divinity and creativity that connects people. There is a clear message to her people and the society on the whole in her novels that, through expressive and creative actions only affirmative relationship is established between divinity and humanity. Naturally, we get to see the close link between the creative impulse and the identification of the divinity within the self. That is more evident in the character of Shug Avery as a blues singer in the *The Color Purple* and in *The Temple of My Familiar* as “minister” and the author of a pamphlet. Celie’s daughter Olivia is the one who addresses Shug’s publication and her religion.

Novels over here shows Walker’s Concern with how assertion of the self and individual expressivity are connected by the mutilation of the body. The most important thing is Walker explores the cycle of abuse, damaged psyche, mutilation, and lack of agency in all her novels. Further, there we get to see an account of the connections between body image and expression. According to her it seems that the body becomes either passive text written on, or that might be an instrument through which the self is expressed.

Tashi’s divided consciousness is much visible in *The Possessing the secret of Joy*. Here, we get to see the conflicting fragments of Tashi in order to give voice to the corporeal and psychological damage of the circumcision. But in the end, it is evident the protagonist Tashi Evelyn Johnson Soul is no longer fragmented and she is like reborn to spread the living word through her voice in the novel. She also goes through greater amount of physical and emotional pain. Further, in this novel, Walker speaks undauntedly about female circumcision and revealed that that as a mutilation of the female form born out of the male need to dominate. It seems that not only female

circumcision was a bothering matter but even male circumcision was an attempt to create a man-made unusual gender division. Pierre is an important character in the novel who is the son of Lisette, a French woman. He helps Tashi to unlock her pain of her nightmares and also about mutilation. His research opens up the meaning of the tradition and allows Tashi to be free of inscription. He very well knows the fact that she cannot recover her clitoris and her character is portrayed as a woman of strength to remake herself and spread the gospel. At the end of the story, when Tashi is executed she comes across the banner and that was made for her which said “Resistance is the Secret of Joy” (Walker 281). This incident is again a lesson for everyone irrespective of race class and gender. Walker makes us realize that Tashi’s resistance to oppression has actually inspired her fellow country women. Though her fragmentation drives her to violence in the story, Walker ensures her to be remade whole as already mentioned and the women who meet Tashi during the time of execution, they try to make it violent act into a scene of resistance and unification.

In all of her fiction’s characters are busy defining themselves. She has used a third person omniscient narrator to tell the stories of individual characters. She has tried Epistolary form in *The Color Purple* giving much scope to the protagonist perspectives. *The Temple of My Familiar* is such a novel which is multi layered and has third person narration. It helps to mediate the activity and to fill up the gaps. More importantly all the characters are intertwined. Third person narrator is to mediate the activity and to fill up the gaps. Whereas in the *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, there are many characters and we get to see the polyvocality and along with antiphony blend to create a master narrative. Interestingly, we observe the voices blending together with fair amount of distinctiveness sharing their individual experience in the narrative of the community.

Further, she combines the above discussed narrative style in *By the Light of My Smile*. Father character over here is again repeated. His Figure is almost similar to as Grange Copeland, and Mr._____. He is unable to redeem himself in this life and attain peace after death because he had sinned against the spirits and bodies of his daughter. When it comes to style of narration again we find a third person omniscient narrator. He is father who is a spirit a Susannah and Pauline's father all of their stories do relate. That person is restless spirit, and he is forced to watch the result of the domineering actions of his earthly life.

Novelist portrays him as an absent presence felt by his daughter seeking their forgiveness and trying to do for them in death because he was not able to do that when he was alive. Just like Grange, he is unable to redeem himself in life and attain peace after death because he has sinned as told above. One could easily see is bent toward patriarchal system. Both of his daughters suppress the self and abuse or mutilate the body throughout the rest of their lives. Again positive thought is exhibited through the father's spirit and he was able to restore a sense of wholeness, acceptance of the body and also acceptance of the self to his daughter. What she is trying to say over here is that love of the entire self is essential to a healthy self-image and healthy behavior. She also talks about continual process of achieving balance. In most of her works whether it is a poem or novels she never fails to discuss about the miseries of people especially which is left out of history in the wake of ignorance. Walker questions the pseudo beliefs of her society, and she never fails to celebrate the fact that she has come along and through various experiences recognizing the fact that they have made her more alive and active.

Most of her novels attract the readers mind because of the concept of forgiveness which considers as celebration of life especially in one of her poem that is “Good Night Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning”. This kind of poems compel her readers to learn to forgive and hence it sounds like preaching as well as didactic by nature. *The Color Purple* is again good example for that nature of forgiving because it comes naturally with the experience. First and foremost thing is because of being a daughter of sharecropper, she is emotional and that is very much evident when she agonizes over an abortion. All her novels teach and preach about facing and suffering the losses. The texts also guides to change and redemption and to love and forgive as already mentioned repeatedly.

Critics are of the opinion that her poetry writing is like prewriting of her novels it seems. But she feels that poetry directs her especially to explore self. Interestingly, her poems releases the stories in which her transformations could be witnessed. Similarly, her nonfictions are also extended epilogue to her fictions all together for instance, *Warrior Marks* is a complimentary piece in itself if we deeply analyze the novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Walker was criticized for some of her political engagements. Her pragmatism, Realism and theoretical inclination is acclaimed and appreciated because that has lead her writing towards artistic form no doubt she has secured that fundamental grip. But still, her readers were offended because many of them believed that she has mediated from the art. She is still loved by many because of her convergence with her community. This is something as a set example to be followed. She has succeeded in imploring people to love their **selves** and her works give a call to join her in making the better world. I believe that Walker’s novels are incomplete without womanist concept. Therefore, her works are visionary by nature but there is always a glimpse of black

Aesthetics. It is again natural factor because it is associated with the folk culture, oral tradition which widens the scope of organic and also artistic form. But womanism is something that gives Walker's novels a wholeness despite herself endorsing certain movements. And how can we forget the fact that she defines "womanist" during crucial time of "women's movement". That movement was torn apart between racial and sexual lines. It's a known fact that black women experience sexism to greater extent and womanism is concerned about sexism.

We all know the fact that feminism is in confluence with the concept of womanism. They also said that feminism is to womanism as purple is to lavender. But experts do believe that both cannot be blend in nor it can be considered that womanism as a different version of feminism. All her woman characters struggles to overcome this sexism. It is really interesting to note that around mid-1980's scholars in many disciplines such as theology, literature, and history began to use the concept of womanism in their writing and therefore one could witness its proliferation widely. This is not limited only to Black American contexts. It is more visible in popular culture, magazine, music and other forms of arts. Now it is quite evident that World Wide Web can easily locate womanist related citations in thousands of numbers. As it is approached analytically, it is polyvalent, polyvocal and dialogic in nature. So it draws more audiences I believe. This thought is actually appreciated as improvisational character, which, to some extent resist canonization.

Besides that, it is accessible to a people from diverse walks of life. What's shocking is, because of womanisms various taxonomies, its appearance is somewhat less intelligible and had also lessened its visibility in certain context. There also lies the

importance of merits and demerits in comparison to feminism in general. When we go through Walker's novels many questions do arise in the mind like, whether womanism is just another version of black feminism? Whether it just about identity crisis or whether it is instrumental in deviating from feminism? Further, whether it only supports lesbianism? Or is it truly vernacular? etc. etc. of course it is vernacular. To certain extent Walker's novels are good source to know and understand about womanism in all possible shades. For Example, *The Color Purple*, here we are let to know about the lesbian side and yet it is profoundly vernacular in nature defining the artistic factors elaborately. It does not just start with women and end with women but it is more than that beyond and above where one can witness the celebration of "**individuality**", or a celebration of women. This is what her novels and short fiction are relayed on. This faces criticism for not mentioning about Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi or Clenora Hudson Weems but only Walkers definition of womanism is widely known through encyclopedia. It is also criticized for less elaboration in the areas of Africa itself and not leaving behind Europe. It just keeps rotating within the United States. It is quite difficult sometimes to understand the conceptual schemes in womanism. Because, we come across a kind of covering those existing conceptual schemes. Here, it becomes necessary to mention about feminism at this point because that has been always strong, leading to the unfortunate and unintentional tendency for not observing the aspects that are important in womanism. Above said points are so suggestive that womanism has been seen as under articulated or it is misrepresented. But some of the texts shows womanism as it is visible in its own way, for example, the works of Alice Walker that too in her, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*. So I am interested to conclude with this particular lens just to ensure it may provide further room to research.

Whereas, Marsh-Lockett has mocked the nuances of womanist theory and its praxis that actually extend beyond Walker's phraseology in 1983 and that sounds as a universal perspective given by her or black women and also the entire Black race, female relationship with male along with humanity and therefore, it appears to be universal because of its over expanding nature. For example, womanist discuss local along with international culture they don't stop here but interestingly they also discuss about global politics dominantly. Intersectionality is discussed in relation to womanism. They do not conflate womanism and black feminism. There might be relationship but they are not interchangeable. But Layli Phillip says that there was always a problem in its representation it seems. Sometimes it conflates with black feminism and some other time just with feminism.

Besides these things, few more characteristic features are brought to fore front. Like, womanism being anti oppressionist, vernacular, sometimes it sounds nonideological and communitarian and lastly it is very spiritual. Walker's novels are loaded with the above features. Like, *Mother Characters* are mostly spiritual, language is rustic because of its association with oral and folk tradition. I have discussed the related factors in the chapter which is dedicated on language itself. Especially about its being organic and vernacular in nature. For example, *The Color Purple*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *The Temple of My Familiar*, *Everyday Use* etc. are the texts which comes in mind whenever there is vernacular factor.

Further, we get to see the detailed explanation about anti oppressionist that it conveys womanism as it identifies with the liberationist projects, of all kind. Not only womanism but looks like it supports the liberation of all human kind. Interestingly, it is

all about togetherness. And it is more important when something is related to womanism because that could be easily linked to grassroots, culture, language, humanity. There is no such matter to worry about dividing line of the common people and elites but it actually focuses on unifying all kinds of people. The novels messages are very clear about collective wellbeing. This is something that has been articulated artistically using Black English conveniently. Layli Phillip gives us favorable thought about womanism, that everything is about going on adding up and that really sounds positive. Similarly, we could see most of Alice Walker's novels do this job of collective performance and they appear like mouth pieces of common people. And those are obviously her intense characters. It is just like taking a step forward because it is the kind of standard set for progress without being person. In Phillip's words personhood matters nothing else it seems. Next point is the concept of "nonideological" which works in decentralized manner. It helps to evade the demarcation. It is all about being inclusive and not forget that fact it always encourages positive inter relationships in its network. Needless to say that ideology is really tough sometimes. It is rigid in other words and differences and aroused tension makes difficult in the way of ideology. Just like that in the novels discussed over here are not based on strict rules but womanist choose to use dialogue system to indulge or negotiate any kind of relationships and to solve the conflicts.

So far we have understood that analytic way of self-evaluation method is not visible to that extent because it is holistic and spiritual in nature. I have already given the example of Walker's mother character with regard to the spiritual thought. Not only that we also see that Meridian also feels the spiritual feeling when she was sick and left alone. *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* also show cases spiritual belief and interestingly

that has been considered as a process of healing. Communitarian is one more important characteristic feature of womanism we get to see in Walker's novels. In which collective being of community is repeated. Focus is on the deliverance of humanity at universal level. On the contrary, Phillip's *Womanist Reader* text states that communitarian is not concerned to black women to greater extent but never fails to say that black women are the place where this kind of thoughts are originated. No doubt that it is all about healing wounds, Here, Phillip also mentions about reconcile nature with three relationships that is the relationship between the people from different groups, the relationship between people and environment/nature, and next is the relationship between people and the spiritual /transcendental realms.

All the above said are quite evident in the Walkers fictions since her characters are very associated with the nature. They find solace and escape in the nature just like Kate. By now one can understand that womanist procedure or mode is something that mediates between or strive to heal the wounds and disparity. Next important feature is obviously spirituality. Here, not only religion matters but again it includes or intertwines everything in the sense of complete material world it seems. But one thing is important to note that ideological and academic perspectives avoid spiritual and transcendental considerations. This to certain extent sounds contentious.

Walker's novel do exhibit some amount of social transformation in all her fictions as mentioned already. That is because of womanist methods of social transformation which surrounds the activities of harmonizing and coordinating, balancing and healing. Studies show that these kinds of methods work very well in and through relationships. It also encourages to do away with the fact of violence and aggression. There are many

methods followed collectively like using a dialogue strategies, arbitration and also mediation, followed by the spiritual activities mutual aid and self-help and also **mothering**. Intensive integral medicine and folk healing novel lag behind since womanist do believe that not only physical but psychological wellbeing is also important. The dialogue method actually helps most of the people to express and establish individuality. In that sense, it moves towards an organic and dynamic wholeness. For example, *The Color Purple*. Alice Walker highlights the concept of spirituality in her fictional works. I have repeatedly given examples of her text regarding this. And this shows womanists also use prayers rituals, mediation, collective visualization so that it could impact positively towards social and political, issues and also it gives more importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between nature, man and also spirituality alongwith hospitality where we can witness the fact of mutual aid playing important role. For example, coordination between meridian and Trueman, Celie and Shug, Sofia etc. they were helpful to each other while lifting their optimistic thoughts and encouraging each other in order to prove their independent existence.

Similarly, many were associated with the above said developments, just like Black Women's Club Movement in early twentieth century that came up with interesting motto of "Lifting as We Climb" it seems. Important leaders during that time were Maggie Lena Walker, Elizabeth Ross Hayaes, and Mamie Phipps Clark, and one cannot forget the Civil Rights Activism Style of Ella Baker. The meaning of all the above indicates repetitively womanist mutual aid and self-help begins with the survival not only of color any anybody can get the benefits and this helps marginal sections to tackle certain kind of institutions.

Motherhood is one more intense factor which is treated as one of the important womanist method of social transformation and that has its role in African cultural legacies it seems. According to Ogunyemi, there are many types of motherhood it seems like “Osun” or “Chi Ori” for spiritual mother, “oracle” as mother (odu), “Mammy wata” for childless mother, and community mother (Omunwa Iyalode) anybody can engage in this kind of behavior, it seems there is no matter of gender, age, heterosexual or homosexual. It is just the individual ability that showcases the ultimate goals of womanism like trying to healing society, reconciliation, redemption etc. By now it is understood that womanism values both traditional naturalistic spiritually based methods of healing and they have always tried to recognize the interconnectedness of body mind and of course the spirit. Just like the above said being a positive person Alice Walker is a womanist and as a social activist she values everyday activism that involves confronting violence and oppression wherever and whenever they appear throughout the day or in the course of a day. These factors actually enrich the aesthetic quality of writing that glides into artistic fold.

Further, in her texts we get to see the convergence of womanism and post structuralism at a locale characterized by new forms of community. That is built around lives of affinity rather than identity. And a radical respect for responsible freedom would represent the reconciliation of poor black women, who were longing for this. Just like walker’s women characters who tries to balance between their past and the positive present.

Next thing is, Walker’s fictions are like stage where we get to see the actual representation of the historical and symbolic bottom of the global social hierarchy, and

rich white men are the one representing the top, under the present dehumanizing brutal management, as a result of that, people of all races and ethnicities, along with genders were brought together into a new kind of system of relations. There is a belief that womanism theory and praxis, envisions and also it enacts a world that is freed from the oppressive and dehumanizing effects of this binary, womanism is postmodernism at street level. But sometimes it is questionable.

In all my chapters I have discussed about Walker's theoretical engagements along with her usage of language but I would like to conclude touching different perspectives those are also as important as the previous ones. All these perspectives have equally contributed in bringing out the artistic quality. Just like post structuralism's compatible relationship with womanism. It is understood that does not suggest there will be no place for differences. To comprehend such things deep understanding and proper articulation is necessary. There is always a fear of overlapping of ideas, theories concepts and perspectives. But some believe there should not be any boundaries of limitation. Overlapping is common while making some connections with the theories or perspectives that is because of commonalities. But actually we ignore the fact that it complements the concepts of harmony and coordination. The very nature of womanism is that itself appreciating each other's concern.

Walker's novel's stories surround families and hence family values are propagated. Studies show that it is all about interconnectedness and therefore it requires a family mode because womanism cannot be understood without understanding the idea of promoting relationships. This is visible not in her novels but also in her short fictions. It is important to remember that her characters like Grange, Celie, Tashi Maggi, Meridian,

Kate, Sofia, Shug and even Mr_____ all of them carried the responsibility of securing the relationships sooner or later in the stories. People do say that feminism and womanism are cousins especially in terms of identity and also politics. But they both are adverse when it comes to respective taxonomies.

Euro American feminism is considered as the kind of obstacle in between feminism and womanism which try to assimilate all sort of differences into itself and to exhibit racism and cultural imperialism. It is quite evident in *The Color Purple*. The problem with feminism is that it believes as if it is the only progressive thought for all women's issues around the globe. They have triggered the thought of accepting feminism as the only superior social justice for women. But this is actually an accusation that might force upon women to think that everyone has to be feminist. They feel that womanists are disloyal to the concept of feminism because of their lack of understanding it seems. On serious note, womanist like Walker is not worried about label. She is worried for the matter of social justice. Labelling is just a psychological and political valuable process. One thing is that, all self-labels and identities are socially negotiated through dialogue.

Some critics criticize that Walker's works reflects interpolated perspective of womanism and it is not just an ideology. After all writing is all about usage of language, here that is feminine in nature. Mode of dialogue is always appreciated then and now because it helps in synthesizing the various expressions through verbal, written mode and also visual mode. Womanism is quite natural and does not stick to set of rules most of the time. Instead of that it always believes in looking forward towards a horizon of healing. And not worried about any methods. Walkers writing is just like a guiding dialogue

dependent on spiritual communities and spiritual. The above said is very much visible in *The Temple of My Familiar and Now is the Time to Open Your Heart*.

As already mentioned about relationship between womanism and feminism, following the family metaphors, we get to see that black feminism and womanism are sisters that means there is a close relationship between black feminism and womanism because of its common cultural and historical origins. It seems that womanism's collective nature embraces the creativity and politically productive tension between black women who frame their literary work in terms of Black social movements like Civil Rights Movement, Black feminism, African feminism, Africana feminism, third world feminism, post-colonial feminism etc. Layli Phillip has given a lot of metaphors in praise of womanism and feminism latter as an instrument and former as a song. And a song is richest which could be played on any kind of instrument and feminism is one such instrument.

Black feminism is a black expression of feminism which is believed to be animated by the womanist idea and conveyed through womanist frames. In walker's writing, it is clearly visible that womanism is the soul of Black feminism. Both the concepts have made her writing more comprehensive. Her association with cultural roots is most important reason that gives an account of her adherence to aesthetic belief that brings out her artistic creativity. But we know that Womanism is not magical wand to eradicate all kinds of oppression meted by black women though it infuses critical perspectives. Of course it is a social changing perspective focusing on harmonizing and promoting well-being. It's been a long time now but still there is discrimination in society. But that is something like positive approach to confront and overcome all kinds of inhibitions concerned not only the blacks but mankind in general.

Even writers like Walker, Ogunyemi, Weems are of the opinion that womanism is a perspective open for everyone and it is not solely owned by black women and women of color. But the fact is that it was articulated for them. Even some men of color and black men have also partaken in this enterprise but not white men. Womanism actually compels one's ethnic and cultural origins to get acknowledged. Everything over here is culturally rooted because when we talk about racial issues then that is in relation with domination, suppression and oppression. When we talk about language then it is ethnicity along with that culture never lags behind since it is storehouse of knowledge. This knowledge is loaded with various elements of ancestry, history, memory, cosmology, epistemology, worldview, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and most significant element is language. Many other things get along like, literatures, tradition, logic, spirituality etc. interestingly, womanist writing is not just artistic but it can blend into contemporary forms and it keeps changing and transforming. If somebody wants to be a womanist then that person should be aware of their cultural roots and ethnicity. Needless to say one has to consider oneself as a global body and should have human concern as already mentioned. This actually benefits humanity on the whole moving towards universal community and this is its greatest distinction beyond race.

Very important thing to note over here is comparison between Walker's womanism and Ogunyemi's. Former's is all about enduring love between same sexes and latter is against that, it rejects homosexuality. Womanism is no doubt shaped beyond the race but still opposes oppression based on sexuality. Her works exhibits affirmation of human diversity and she extends her support for grounded self-expression. For example, Tashi, Meg, Celie, Shug, Sofia etc. were enabled by themselves to standby their

self-expression or assertion just to support free expression of sexuality. Feminine language has provided that accessibility no doubt.

Because of nonideological nature, womanist language does not compel to separate politically or socially from people whose views are different. In the serious situation, when humanity and well-being is put to stake then it helps to have healthy conversation. Not just blues ideology but Walker's texts are beyond race, gender, culture and sexuality. This is almost like transcending not only in the direction of justice but it is extended for the purpose of healing. But the problem come across because of its nature of intersectionality.

Question still persist why black women is given more concern. And answer is very clear because black women and women of color have always been at the lower strata that means of every social hierarchy. Because of education now there is awareness, black women have understood the fact about marginality. But now, they have developed mental ability to become rational using multiple perspectives. Walker's novels, are artistic creations, presently those are pro-people rhetoric right now. Using language conveniently has become a tool with the help of that black women struggled to overcome the difficulties of economic deprivation. Trying hard to create the way from where there is no way.

There is a clear message to society from her novels. Accessibility to women's knowledge is most important thing to understand the development of women's epistemologies this is the major concern of Walker. Women stories are not for amusing. There is a lesson in their each and every experience. For her, access to women's stories not only safe guard women but also provide strategies of strength and survival for women

facing multilayered oppressions as mentioned already. She has established global links through her literary works that addresses the global need of wholeness for the sake of universal humanity. This is how she has created different aesthetic world through her womanist writing using language realistically and creating space for womanist discourse which is artistic, philosophical, visionary, inclusive and ethical.

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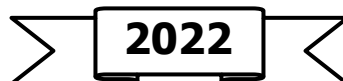
**Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta-577 451**

**“AFRO-AMERICAN NOVEL AS AN ARTISTIC FORM: AN
EXAMINATION OF ALICE WALKER’S FICTIONS”**

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Submitted by
Veena J.
Research Scholar
Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri
Shankaraghatta - 577 451

Under the Guidance of
Prof. Namratha M.
Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English
Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri
Shankaraghatta - 577451
Shivamogga, Karnataka, INDIA



Chapter-5

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by saying that all the chapters discussed over here are suggestive in taking integrity a way forward so that there shall be a noticeable development in the society. This is quite visible when observed and analyzed with the womanist lens. I have tried doing so in my analyses and focused also on different ways regarding how the series of problems have been addressed or being approached by black women. We get to see the above said not only in Walker's fictions but also in general in African American milieu. This is also evident in most of her non-fiction works. For example, *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens* is such a work where we get to see that she doesn't hesitate to mention the names of leaders, women from whom she is inspired and that has actually paved a way to articulate all her experiences.

Alice Walker, just like other black writers she too has carved her name in the American literary consciousness. For instance, the concept of national consciousness is given more consideration especially, in *The Color Purple*. Besides this one, I have already discussed her use of recurrent issue based themes which actually keeps her works rooted. This particularly helps her to overcome the demerits of her works, if any. Because, she has faced lot of criticism for misrepresentation of the black experiences it seems. But these criticisms apart we get to see the fact by her earlier writings whether it is poems, essays, short stories or novels, she has written with great certainty about women's victory. Overall it could be seen as a human triumph and that has drawn audience towards her literary works. One more thing is, reader community has made writers like Walker as ideals of aesthetics. Not only that we realize from her works that

she has always exhibited her political self-consciousness. We readers have tendency to make corrections conveniently by drawing on some important notions. Her Fictions whether it is short stories or novels they give details of the history. As said above, corrections are sometimes inevitable while considering history and also context. Walker's writing makes her as a cultural critic no doubt but one can sense over zeal and also hyper idealization of certain things and attempt of showcasing correctness. That means, she is very much in favor of self- reflexivity, self-realization and also self-preferentiality. All her female characters in the novels reject external definition in favor of all the above said self-definitions. Therefore, her novels are guided by a spirit of effecting each and every women and also appears to be as a driving force for societal changes. Not only that, she has been writing on healing black lives personal as well as community raising her voice in wake of addressing an account of physical and psychological relationship besides giving an account of the relationship between trauma and psychological.

No doubt her entire body of work has established her as an icon of African American literature. Her works exhibit artistic elements that is given by the Black Aesthetic values which is the most important thing in the propagation of new ideas and writing traditions and certain theories. I mean her novels showcases the defined values of aesthetic features like incorporation of African American musical styles and folk culture following black music, black vernacular, blues and jazz. This could be traced back to nineteenth century for deep understanding of Black Aesthetic. Next important thing is we get to see that it does away with the notion of arts for the sake of art but it gives privilege to art which serves not only social but political function as well. Besides rejecting western ideology, Walker's fictions satisfy the major characteristic feature of Black

aesthetic that means, speaking to her readers directly as if giving call for revolution and that sounds rebellious. According to Larry Neal one should create an art that converses to black American's aspirations and the same thing is visible in Walker's work as well. Just like Black Art Movement artists, even in her work there is functionality and this is not only for aesthetic pleasure but it shows her responsibility towards art as well as society. During the time when every black writer was struggling to prove their ability in the white America some of them really stood by their convictions. This was that particular time when black writers felt like catering more and more black audience. Same thing was done by Walker. It seems she realized the fact that race pride is very essential to uphold their cultural aspects. Besides that fostering is also a required factor to uplift black's emotionally and psychologically, and spirituality that never lags behind in her novels. This is how one could observe the essentiality of black aesthetic which is more evident not only in the fictions but in her poetry too. She followed the call given by her ancestors like Zora Neal Hurston to get back to the roots especially southern roots because that's the place of authentic black identity.

Awareness regarding black identity and their culture, language was brought to the forefront by certain literary movements. Among them Black Arts Movement played a dominant role. Writers from this particular movement used various and unique form of writing technique to bring in the awareness. They actually concentrated more on poetry than other things it seems because they felt that poetry could be more effective. There is more stress given to blues ideology. In most of the poems speaker is made to address the discrimination of black people. Besides their ability to write, they were criticized for not bringing in proper rhyming and felt they lack in appreciating beautiful things in poetic

medium. For example, Nikki Giovanni's "For Sandra" in which speaker is enabled to have conversation with black people and to bring out their harsh experiences comprehensively. Whoever associated with this movement they all emphasized poetry is convenient medium to convey their messages in a small pieces of poems because this would be something great to observe in the shorter space. And no doubt poetry attract many people due to the usage of figurative language. Therefore, Walker, following her seniors' footsteps she too has set same revolutionary goals. Not only setting goals but her works are quite evident that she has made it happening. All chapters over here focus on the struggle of asserting one's being that has grown stronger with the passing time. Especially, the above said goes well with the assertion of **self**. Where, one has to be or grow stronger instead of giving chance to manipulate or dictate their thoughts and behaviors by certain external and internal compulsion. While doing so we come across the fact that her novels are engaged in the mission of not just freeing the body but also language. Needless to say that she has not restricted her writing to Afro American women but for humanity. Being didactic in nature her novels preach wholeness. Besides that, she tirelessly speak about the above said and also of spirituality.

In her novels we could see that she stresses upon structural aspects of literary work followed by memory, which speaks volumes in her novels, striking perspectives and most importantly her usage of language comprehensively so that readers shall understand the reflection of concerns. Characters like Celie, Nettie, Meridian Hill, Kate, etc travel in the memory lane of their life in the stories. One can observe that there is a pattern of repetition while unfolding the story or characters various experiences that brings them together within recurrent thematic framework. Not only that as I have

mentioned already about freeing up body in her works, that is more evident in her *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* never fails to present an African American woman at peace with her body and the choices she made for herself in the novel. Novels are in conversation with audiences and it seems same with the different authors. While analyzing her fictions one does not fail to observe that most of her works exhibit individual expression of resistance which brings out Walker's dynamic style of writing.

As a novelist she has moved towards or else we can say that there is profound inclination towards theoretical aspects not only in her novels but in short stories too. All the three chapters over here talk about individual expressions which gives an artistic account of Walker's message and concern towards society. That might be the reason for getting global attention. No doubt that her concern have become global in nature. But what is superficial over here is climax of her novels. She ends them with a prophetic note and that appears as optimistic by nature just like all is well that ends well but that's hard to believe. One significant thing is that, she is always in conversation with the role of personal history. As we observe in the character of Meridian Hill throughout the novel she is engaged with one or the other movement. Similarly, Walker has gone through that kind of a transformation during Civil Rights Movement. She has shared her testimony so that her experiences help others also so that concerned people shall experience the same kind of transformation. I mean to say that her novels have become a kind of medium to elevate her own race and hence she is considered as the doer of the living world. May be it goes well with experiencing transformation and also sharing it through her creative and expressive actions. We shall not forget her social activism because that also strengthens and gives more substance to her fictions.

Her novels are inspirational besides empowering her own people along with her audiences to change themselves for the sake of their betterment. Through her characters, not only female characters but also male characters have set an example while living through their painful pasts rather than showing them as just dealing with their painful pasts. We find these thoughts not just in her writings but she herself has undergone through that tough situations in her own life. Her fictions are not just stories but lesson to strengthen their will power. In the wake of that one can see that she has retold the stories of her foremothers as well but with the new perspective that could be called as like contemporary and womanist lens. Not just that as I have repeatedly mentioned that she strongly owes to all her ancestors and foremothers but she literally acknowledges them in her *In Search of Our Mother Gardens*. For example, Hurston and Walker join text with body effortlessly to signal the healing of that rupture between body and the mind. It seems that both of them believed that expressivity of the body very much depends on the expressivity of the mind because that is something which provides exact expression. Further, we could see the same in the development of an Afro American women's literary tradition. In support of that we can see how Zora Neal Hurston has provided a necessary bridge from suppression of self and woman's voice to racial uplift so that woman shall assert her self-liberation doing away from the various constrictions of language and gender.

In some moments we witness that stereotypes are destroyed and the language of the dominant race and its culture is subverted, but interestingly, the body of a character speaks. As said earlier, novels are in conversational mode with each other and also themes that are repeated with variation are the facts of redemption. Where there is loss

there is also a hidden way to find out the redemption. Further, one can see the thwarted communication and the problem of miseducation which are addressed intensely. Through her medium of writing walker and her characters voices her own call and this is how she has created her own tradition. we could witness the above said in the novels like *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *The Color Purple* where characters realize the importance of education and that is the only tool which can help marginalized section to empower themselves. Next point is, miscommunication. For example between Celie and Nettie, Mr_____ and Celie. Later, looking towards future positively then obviously we find redemption. There was always fear filled gasp in between the father son duo's conversation in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and also between Mr. Brown and his master. When we observe the characters like Mr._____ and Grange Copeland, Harpo and Brownfield Copeland, the reader can see a conversation on these themes. In the first pair fathers had experienced a kind of redemption. In the second pair sons are those who suffer the consequences of miseducation. There is a striking difference in their characters. In his life, Grange is a sharecropper nearly obliterated by the futility of his situation. His character is oppressive, humorless, he is contentious and he is verbally abusive. He, later gets into the clutches of frustration and deserts his own family and moves to the north. Where as in his second life, he has spent in New York City, where Walker has developed the dynamic nature of his character. The reason behind this intention is to observe the way he struggles and wrestles with identity. He came across the surprising northern white oppression again and he grapples with the thought of redeeming himself.

Further, we readers hope that Walker as an author will not have Brown make the mistakes committed by his parents but walker has included nothing in his education and

readers are taken aback. Because it is not having education or experience that allows him to acknowledge the divinity of his own body and its own capacity for the purpose of good. We should observe the fact that walker has shown his father showing denial of divinity when he refuses to wipe off his son's tears that means he is denying the communication with divine it seems. But again she repeats the positivity over here by giving chance to make his own life but his past experience leaves him shattered, ill-equipped to overcome the weird patterns of the past. In the wake of redemption Grange wishes to raise Brownfield's daughter Ruth. The way he educates her gives her opportunity to explore life in a different light. As a result of that she makes choice to assert her individuality. Through her character walker shows the way to defend the sanctity of her liberal thoughts to fight against the injustice.

In all the three chapters there is about self-revelation. Because Walker highlights that self-realization in her fictions which is very difficult to avoid. Evils of not getting education and miscommunication is presented reasonably in her major novels. Solution does not come by blaming each other within the society. She is criticized for reducing the stature of black men for showing them as evil and also making them appear as decipher in the stories to certain extent. She aims to direct towards integrity through her works. While bringing in so much things together, walker has interesting usage of Black English to her credit which executes every expression profoundly and artistically, realistically. This actually opens a new kind of terrain to channelize multiple concepts.

Redemption and education seems to be the only way to re structure their position in the society. Again it is left to individual responsibility for remaking their life. Every person must be given chance as walker has given to Mr. ____ and Grange for correcting

their wrong doings. This happens only when they take personal responsibility to end the cycle of physical and psychological abuse. Similar things seems to happen in *The Color Purple* as Mr_____ cannot assert himself to his father, he creates a miserable life not just for him but for Celie and his own son Harpo. Redemption over here comes in a different way. Here, the way of communication is redirected from son to father. Walker shows the combined effort of men and women in her novel to get educated and reeducate themselves. For example, Sofia reeducated Harpo and she demonstrates to him that her decisions are not about to break the gendered norms to emasculate men, but she realizes to him about her choices about remaking things in her own stride. Walker has shown redemption to demonstrate the importance of sharing and caring experiences. This is how Harpo like persons are redeemed. These kind of thoughts makes Walker as a doer of the world where, this philosophy is all about the personal transformation which is undoubtedly passed on to the community. May be this personal understanding of experiences helps in defining and asserting the self that he or she participates in community healing and rebuilding. This is also a process of healing I believe that plays major role in the personal transformation.

In *Meridian*, Walker has brought out her experiences with a realistic approach that makes everything look organic over here. The reason may be her usage of pragmatic language and autobiographical elements as already discussed in that particular chapter. While narrating the lead Woman's story she faces the taboo, and demonstrates a path to redemption for a woman who usually scares even to think about making choices that fits specifically with the dominant moral code. She weaves autobiographical elements that miraculously speak to a diverse group of women. She chose to give a call to attend the

spiritual wellbeing of her characters and also call out her readers with the poetry of human speech and self-reflection. Through Meridian Hill Walker shows us the organic engagement as a process to involve in the living world. In this novel, she issues a call about the cultural oppression that everything and everybody's evolving mind is separated from the body. This refrain is quite personal and particular. Whereas Barbara Christian says that Meridian Hill's character is constructed as a device that actually articulates the quest for the individual's voice within a particular communal context. Through her works, one will notice that she has highlighted self-love. To certain extent it sounds to be self-centered and she is criticized for that by male counterparts. No matter what but she has given strategies of survival through her fictions that links between values and their faith on whatever they believed.

In the book, *Black Womanist Ethics*, Cannon writes that, African American Women's perspectives on what is right and what is wrong behavior are significantly influenced by the context of oppression they have lived in. One cannot avoid womanist perspective while analyzing Walker's novels because we get to see that kind of an ethical system and moral code. That enhances the aesthetic nature of her organic writing immensely. She compels people's mind to guide their lives that is shaped by that kind of a moral wisdom. And that wisdom is obviously passed from one generation to the other. No doubt that womanist ethics presents valid sources and proof of African American moral Wisdom and viable life-affirming ethical systems for African American women and their communities (Cannon 1988). One more important thing to note is that, from its origins, womanist religious thoughts has given attention to the shared experiences of racism, class, sexism, hetero and some other forms of oppression suffered by other

communities of color and marginalized groups of women. It is interesting to see that, third-wave womanism and certain works of womanist scholars like Emilie M. Townes, Asian writers, Native American and, black feminist scholars, are getting influenced by the womanist idea to withstand white supremacy and sexist order. But, few male scholars never lagged behind they too were ahead to resist the above said discriminative structure especially those who never hesitant to identify themselves with feminist notions.

Coming back to Walker, she has actually encompassed the past and the present, along with the future as her major character seeks her own expression. As already mentioned, Meridian Hill is not just the character of the novel but she is the embodiment of the novel's major concept and the relationship between personal and social change. This kind of relationship between the individual and society is also the major concept in investing forms with new meaning formation. She is criticized for using most of the things repetitively but there is a reason behind that. She uses that strategy of repetition of characters in her three novels to bring out the dynamic qualities of her characters and also concepts, their intense impact on their community.

Besides that we cannot ignore the fact of subverting language and western literary structures. One such repetitive character is Shug Avery who appears in *The Color Purple* also figures in the *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and also in *The Temple of My Familiar*. This show the importance of the process of personal transformation and passing that on to the community. Not to forget that Tashi is also repeated character from *The Color Purple* to *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. As this Celie and Shug are strong believer in God they feel that divinity is present everywhere and in everything. This divinity is found in most of her works when we see from womanist lens. No doubt there is always a link between

divinity and creativity that connects people. There is a clear message to her people and the society on the whole in her novels that, through expressive and creative actions only affirmative relationship is established between divinity and humanity. Naturally, we get to see the close link between the creative impulse and the identification of the divinity within the self. That is more evident in the character of Shug Avery as a blues singer in the *The Color Purple* and in *The Temple of My Familiar* as “minister” and the author of a pamphlet. Celie’s daughter Olivia is the one who addresses Shug’s publication and her religion.

Novels over here shows Walker’s Concern with how assertion of the self and individual expressivity are connected by the mutilation of the body. The most important thing is Walker explores the cycle of abuse, damaged psyche, mutilation, and lack of agency in all her novels. Further, there we get to see an account of the connections between body image and expression. According to her it seems that the body becomes either passive text written on, or that might be an instrument through which the self is expressed.

Tashi’s divided consciousness is much visible in *The Possessing the secret of Joy*. Here, we get to see the conflicting fragments of Tashi in order to give voice to the corporeal and psychological damage of the circumcision. But in the end, it is evident the protagonist Tashi Evelyn Johnson Soul is no longer fragmented and she is like reborn to spread the living word through her voice in the novel. She also goes through greater amount of physical and emotional pain. Further, in this novel, Walker speaks undauntedly about female circumcision and revealed that that as a mutilation of the female form born out of the male need to dominate. It seems that not only female

circumcision was a bothering matter but even male circumcision was an attempt to create a man-made unusual gender division. Pierre is an important character in the novel who is the son of Lisette, a French woman. He helps Tashi to unlock her pain of her nightmares and also about mutilation. His research opens up the meaning of the tradition and allows Tashi to be free of inscription. He very well knows the fact that she cannot recover her clitoris and her character is portrayed as a woman of strength to remake herself and spread the gospel. At the end of the story, when Tashi is executed she comes across the banner and that was made for her which said “Resistance is the Secret of Joy” (Walker 281). This incident is again a lesson for everyone irrespective of race class and gender. Walker makes us realize that Tashi’s resistance to oppression has actually inspired her fellow country women. Though her fragmentation drives her to violence in the story, Walker ensures her to be remade whole as already mentioned and the women who meet Tashi during the time of execution, they try to make it violent act into a scene of resistance and unification.

In all of her fiction’s characters are busy defining themselves. She has used a third person omniscient narrator to tell the stories of individual characters. She has tried Epistolary form in *The Color Purple* giving much scope to the protagonist perspectives. *The Temple of My Familiar* is such a novel which is multi layered and has third person narration. It helps to mediate the activity and to fill up the gaps. More importantly all the characters are intertwined. Third person narrator is to mediate the activity and to fill up the gaps. Whereas in the *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, there are many characters and we get to see the polyvocality and along with antiphony blend to create a master narrative. Interestingly, we observe the voices blending together with fair amount of distinctiveness sharing their individual experience in the narrative of the community.

Further, she combines the above discussed narrative style in *By the Light of My Smile*. Father character over here is again repeated. His Figure is almost similar to as Grange Copeland, and Mr._____. He is unable to redeem himself in this life and attain peace after death because he had sinned against the spirits and bodies of his daughter. When it comes to style of narration again we find a third person omniscient narrator. He is father who is a spirit a Susannah and Pauline's father all of their stories do relate. That person is restless spirit, and he is forced to watch the result of the domineering actions of his earthly life.

Novelist portrays him as an absent presence felt by his daughter seeking their forgiveness and trying to do for them in death because he was not able to do that when he was alive. Just like Grange, he is unable to redeem himself in life and attain peace after death because he has sinned as told above. One could easily see is bent toward patriarchal system. Both of his daughters suppress the self and abuse or mutilate the body throughout the rest of their lives. Again positive thought is exhibited through the father's spirit and he was able to restore a sense of wholeness, acceptance of the body and also acceptance of the self to his daughter. What she is trying to say over here is that love of the entire self is essential to a healthy self-image and healthy behavior. She also talks about continual process of achieving balance. In most of her works whether it is a poem or novels she never fails to discuss about the miseries of people especially which is left out of history in the wake of ignorance. Walker questions the pseudo beliefs of her society, and she never fails to celebrate the fact that she has come along and through various experiences recognizing the fact that they have made her more alive and active.

Most of her novels attract the readers mind because of the concept of forgiveness which considers as celebration of life especially in one of her poem that is “Good Night Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning”. This kind of poems compel her readers to learn to forgive and hence it sounds like preaching as well as didactic by nature. *The Color Purple* is again good example for that nature of forgiving because it comes naturally with the experience. First and foremost thing is because of being a daughter of sharecropper, she is emotional and that is very much evident when she agonizes over an abortion. All her novels teach and preach about facing and suffering the losses. The texts also guides to change and redemption and to love and forgive as already mentioned repeatedly.

Critics are of the opinion that her poetry writing is like prewriting of her novels it seems. But she feels that poetry directs her especially to explore self. Interestingly, her poems releases the stories in which her transformations could be witnessed. Similarly, her nonfictions are also extended epilogue to her fictions all together for instance, *Warrior Marks* is a complimentary piece in itself if we deeply analyze the novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Walker was criticized for some of her political engagements. Her pragmatism, Realism and theoretical inclination is acclaimed and appreciated because that has lead her writing towards artistic form no doubt she has secured that fundamental grip. But still, her readers were offended because many of them believed that she has mediated from the art. She is still loved by many because of her convergence with her community. This is something as a set example to be followed. She has succeeded in imploring people to love their **selves** and her works give a call to join her in making the better world. I believe that Walker’s novels are incomplete without womanist concept. Therefore, her works are visionary by nature but there is always a glimpse of black

Aesthetics. It is again natural factor because it is associated with the folk culture, oral tradition which widens the scope of organic and also artistic form. But womanism is something that gives Walker's novels a wholeness despite herself endorsing certain movements. And how can we forget the fact that she defines "womanist" during crucial time of "women's movement". That movement was torn apart between racial and sexual lines. It's a known fact that black women experience sexism to greater extent and womanism is concerned about sexism.

We all know the fact that feminism is in confluence with the concept of womanism. They also said that feminism is to womanism as purple is to lavender. But experts do believe that both cannot be blend in nor it can be considered that womanism as a different version of feminism. All her woman characters struggles to overcome this sexism. It is really interesting to note that around mid-1980's scholars in many disciplines such as theology, literature, and history began to use the concept of womanism in their writing and therefore one could witness its proliferation widely. This is not limited only to Black American contexts. It is more visible in popular culture, magazine, music and other forms of arts. Now it is quite evident that World Wide Web can easily locate womanist related citations in thousands of numbers. As it is approached analytically, it is polyvalent, polyvocal and dialogic in nature. So it draws more audiences I believe. This thought is actually appreciated as improvisational character, which, to some extent resist canonization.

Besides that, it is accessible to a people from diverse walks of life. What's shocking is, because of womanisms various taxonomies, its appearance is somewhat less intelligible and had also lessened its visibility in certain context. There also lies the

importance of merits and demerits in comparison to feminism in general. When we go through Walker's novels many questions do arise in the mind like, whether womanism is just another version of black feminism? Whether it just about identity crisis or whether it is instrumental in deviating from feminism? Further, whether it only supports lesbianism? Or is it truly vernacular? etc. etc. of course it is vernacular. To certain extent Walker's novels are good source to know and understand about womanism in all possible shades. For Example, *The Color Purple*, here we are let to know about the lesbian side and yet it is profoundly vernacular in nature defining the artistic factors elaborately. It does not just start with women and end with women but it is more than that beyond and above where one can witness the celebration of “**individuality**”, or a celebration of women. This is what her novels and short fiction are relayed on. This faces criticism for not mentioning about Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi or Clenora Hudson Weems but only Walkers definition of womanism is widely known through encyclopedia. It is also criticized for less elaboration in the areas of Africa itself and not leaving behind Europe. It just keeps rotating within the United States. It is quite difficult sometimes to understand the conceptual schemes in womanism. Because, we come across a kind of covering those existing conceptual schemes. Here, it becomes necessary to mention about feminism at this point because that has been always strong, leading to the unfortunate and unintentional tendency for not observing the aspects that are important in womanism. Above said points are so suggestive that womanism has been seen as under articulated or it is misrepresented. But some of the texts shows womanism as it is visible in its own way, for example, the works of Alice Walker that too in her, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*. So I am interested to conclude with this particular lens just to ensure it may provide further room to research.

Whereas, Marsh-Lockett has mocked the nuances of womanist theory and its praxis that actually extend beyond Walker's phraseology in 1983 and that sounds as a universal perspective given by her or black women and also the entire Black race, female relationship with male along with humanity and therefore, it appears to be universal because of its over expanding nature. For example, womanist discuss local along with international culture they don't stop here but interestingly they also discuss about global politics dominantly. Intersectionality is discussed in relation to womanism. They do not conflate womanism and black feminism. There might be relationship but they are not interchangeable. But Layli Phillip says that there was always a problem in its representation it seems. Sometimes it conflates with black feminism and some other time just with feminism.

Besides these things, few more characteristic features are brought to fore front. Like, womanism being anti oppressionist, vernacular, sometimes it sounds nonideological and communitarian and lastly it is very spiritual. Walker's novels are loaded with the above features. Like, *Mother Characters* are mostly spiritual, language is rustic because of its association with oral and folk tradition. I have discussed the related factors in the chapter which is dedicated on language itself. Especially about its being organic and vernacular in nature. For example, *The Color Purple*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *The Temple of My Familiar*, *Everyday Use* etc. are the texts which comes in mind whenever there is vernacular factor.

Further, we get to see the detailed explanation about anti oppressionist that it conveys womanism as it identifies with the liberationist projects, of all kind. Not only womanism but looks like it supports the liberation of all human kind. Interestingly, it is

all about togetherness. And it is more important when something is related to womanism because that could be easily linked to grassroots, culture, language, humanity. There is no such matter to worry about dividing line of the common people and elites but it actually focuses on unifying all kinds of people. The novels messages are very clear about collective wellbeing. This is something that has been articulated artistically using Black English conveniently. Layli Phillip gives us favorable thought about womanism, that everything is about going on adding up and that really sounds positive. Similarly, we could see most of Alice Walker's novels do this job of collective performance and they appear like mouth pieces of common people. And those are obviously her intense characters. It is just like taking a step forward because it is the kind of standard set for progress without being person. In Phillip's words personhood matters nothing else it seems. Next point is the concept of "nonideological" which works in decentralized manner. It helps to evade the demarcation. It is all about being inclusive and not forget that fact it always encourages positive inter relationships in its network. Needless to say that ideology is really tough sometimes. It is rigid in other words and differences and aroused tension makes difficult in the way of ideology. Just like that in the novels discussed over here are not based on strict rules but womanist choose to use dialogue system to indulge or negotiate any kind of relationships and to solve the conflicts.

So far we have understood that analytic way of self-evaluation method is not visible to that extent because it is holistic and spiritual in nature. I have already given the example of Walker's mother character with regard to the spiritual thought. Not only that we also see that Meridian also feels the spiritual feeling when she was sick and left alone. *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart* also show cases spiritual belief and interestingly

that has been considered as a process of healing. Communitarian is one more important characteristic feature of womanism we get to see in Walker's novels. In which collective being of community is repeated. Focus is on the deliverance of humanity at universal level. On the contrary, Phillip's *Womanist Reader* text states that communitarian is not concerned to black women to greater extent but never fails to say that black women are the place where this kind of thoughts are originated. No doubt that it is all about healing wounds, Here, Phillip also mentions about reconcile nature with three relationships that is the relationship between the people from different groups, the relationship between people and environment/nature, and next is the relationship between people and the spiritual /transcendental realms.

All the above said are quite evident in the Walkers fictions since her characters are very associated with the nature. They find solace and escape in the nature just like Kate. By now one can understand that womanist procedure or mode is something that mediates between or strive to heal the wounds and disparity. Next important feature is obviously spirituality. Here, not only religion matters but again it includes or intertwines everything in the sense of complete material world it seems. But one thing is important to note that ideological and academic perspectives avoid spiritual and transcendental considerations. This to certain extent sounds contentious.

Walker's novel do exhibit some amount of social transformation in all her fictions as mentioned already. That is because of womanist methods of social transformation which surrounds the activities of harmonizing and coordinating, balancing and healing. Studies show that these kinds of methods work very well in and through relationships. It also encourages to do away with the fact of violence and aggression. There are many

methods followed collectively like using a dialogue strategies, arbitration and also mediation, followed by the spiritual activities mutual aid and self-help and also **mothering**. Intensive integral medicine and folk healing novel lag behind since womanist do believe that not only physical but psychological wellbeing is also important. The dialogue method actually helps most of the people to express and establish individuality. In that sense, it moves towards an organic and dynamic wholeness. For example, *The Color Purple*. Alice Walker highlights the concept of spirituality in her fictional works. I have repeatedly given examples of her text regarding this. And this shows womanists also use prayers rituals, mediation, collective visualization so that it could impact positively towards social and political, issues and also it gives more importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between nature, man and also spirituality alongwith hospitality where we can witness the fact of mutual aid playing important role. For example, coordination between meridian and Trueman, Celie and Shug, Sofia etc. they were helpful to each other while lifting their optimistic thoughts and encouraging each other in order to prove their independent existence.

Similarly, many were associated with the above said developments, just like Black Women's Club Movement in early twentieth century that came up with interesting motto of "Lifting as We Climb" it seems. Important leaders during that time were Maggie Lena Walker, Elizabeth Ross Hayaes, and Mamie Phipps Clark, and one cannot forget the Civil Rights Activism Style of Ella Baker. The meaning of all the above indicates repetitively womanist mutual aid and self-help begins with the survival not only of color any anybody can get the benefits and this helps marginal sections to tackle certain kind of institutions.

Motherhood is one more intense factor which is treated as one of the important womanist method of social transformation and that has its role in African cultural legacies it seems. According to Ogunyemi, there are many types of motherhood it seems like “Osun” or “Chi Ori” for spiritual mother, “oracle” as mother (odu), “Mammy wata” for childless mother, and community mother (Omunwa Iyalode) anybody can engage in this kind of behavior, it seems there is no matter of gender, age, heterosexual or homosexual. It is just the individual ability that showcases the ultimate goals of womanism like trying to healing society, reconciliation, redemption etc. By now it is understood that womanism values both traditional naturalistic spiritually based methods of healing and they have always tried to recognize the interconnectedness of body mind and of course the spirit. Just like the above said being a positive person Alice Walker is a womanist and as a social activist she values everyday activism that involves confronting violence and oppression wherever and whenever they appear throughout the day or in the course of a day. These factors actually enrich the aesthetic quality of writing that glides into artistic fold.

Further, in her texts we get to see the convergence of womanism and post structuralism at a locale characterized by new forms of community. That is built around lives of affinity rather than identity. And a radical respect for responsible freedom would represent the reconciliation of poor black women, who were longing for this. Just like walker’s women characters who tries to balance between their past and the positive present.

Next thing is, Walker’s fictions are like stage where we get to see the actual representation of the historical and symbolic bottom of the global social hierarchy, and

rich white men are the one representing the top, under the present dehumanizing brutal management, as a result of that, people of all races and ethnicities, along with genders were brought together into a new kind of system of relations. There is a belief that womanism theory and praxis, envisions and also it enacts a world that is freed from the oppressive and dehumanizing effects of this binary, womanism is postmodernism at street level. But sometimes it is questionable.

In all my chapters I have discussed about Walker's theoretical engagements along with her usage of language but I would like to conclude touching different perspectives those are also as important as the previous ones. All these perspectives have equally contributed in bringing out the artistic quality. Just like post structuralism's compatible relationship with womanism. It is understood that does not suggest there will be no place for differences. To comprehend such things deep understanding and proper articulation is necessary. There is always a fear of overlapping of ideas, theories concepts and perspectives. But some believe there should not be any boundaries of limitation. Overlapping is common while making some connections with the theories or perspectives that is because of commonalities. But actually we ignore the fact that it complements the concepts of harmony and coordination. The very nature of womanism is that itself appreciating each other's concern.

Walker's novel's stories surround families and hence family values are propagated. Studies show that it is all about interconnectedness and therefore it requires a family mode because womanism cannot be understood without understanding the idea of promoting relationships. This is visible not in her novels but also in her short fictions. It is important to remember that her characters like Grange, Celie, Tashi Maggi, Meridian,

Kate, Sofia, Shug and even Mr_____ all of them carried the responsibility of securing the relationships sooner or later in the stories. People do say that feminism and womanism are cousins especially in terms of identity and also politics. But they both are adverse when it comes to respective taxonomies.

Euro American feminism is considered as the kind of obstacle in between feminism and womanism which try to assimilate all sort of differences into itself and to exhibit racism and cultural imperialism. It is quite evident in *The Color Purple*. The problem with feminism is that it believes as if it is the only progressive thought for all women's issues around the globe. They have triggered the thought of accepting feminism as the only superior social justice for women. But this is actually an accusation that might force upon women to think that everyone has to be feminist. They feel that womanists are disloyal to the concept of feminism because of their lack of understanding it seems. On serious note, womanist like Walker is not worried about label. She is worried for the matter of social justice. Labelling is just a psychological and political valuable process. One thing is that, all self-labels and identities are socially negotiated through dialogue.

Some critics criticize that Walker's works reflects interpolated perspective of womanism and it is not just an ideology. After all writing is all about usage of language, here that is feminine in nature. Mode of dialogue is always appreciated then and now because it helps in synthesizing the various expressions through verbal, written mode and also visual mode. Womanism is quite natural and does not stick to set of rules most of the time. Instead of that it always believes in looking forward towards a horizon of healing. And not worried about any methods. Walkers writing is just like a guiding dialogue

dependent on spiritual communities and spiritual. The above said is very much visible in *The Temple of My Familiar and Now is the Time to Open Your Heart*.

As already mentioned about relationship between womanism and feminism, following the family metaphors, we get to see that black feminism and womanism are sisters that means there is a close relationship between black feminism and womanism because of its common cultural and historical origins. It seems that womanism's collective nature embraces the creativity and politically productive tension between black women who frame their literary work in terms of Black social movements like Civil Rights Movement, Black feminism, African feminism, Africana feminism, third world feminism, post-colonial feminism etc. Layli Phillip has given a lot of metaphors in praise of womanism and feminism latter as an instrument and former as a song. And a song is richest which could be played on any kind of instrument and feminism is one such instrument.

Black feminism is a black expression of feminism which is believed to be animated by the womanist idea and conveyed through womanist frames. In walker's writing, it is clearly visible that womanism is the soul of Black feminism. Both the concepts have made her writing more comprehensive. Her association with cultural roots is most important reason that gives an account of her adherence to aesthetic belief that brings out her artistic creativity. But we know that Womanism is not magical wand to eradicate all kinds of oppression meted by black women though it infuses critical perspectives. Of course it is a social changing perspective focusing on harmonizing and promoting well-being. It's been a long time now but still there is discrimination in society. But that is something like positive approach to confront and overcome all kinds of inhibitions concerned not only the blacks but mankind in general.

Even writers like Walker, Ogunyemi, Weems are of the opinion that womanism is a perspective open for everyone and it is not solely owned by black women and women of color. But the fact is that it was articulated for them. Even some men of color and black men have also partaken in this enterprise but not white men. Womanism actually compels one's ethnic and cultural origins to get acknowledged. Everything over here is culturally rooted because when we talk about racial issues then that is in relation with domination, suppression and oppression. When we talk about language then it is ethnicity along with that culture never lags behind since it is storehouse of knowledge. This knowledge is loaded with various elements of ancestry, history, memory, cosmology, epistemology, worldview, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and most significant element is language. Many other things get along like, literatures, tradition, logic, spirituality etc. interestingly, womanist writing is not just artistic but it can blend into contemporary forms and it keeps changing and transforming. If somebody wants to be a womanist then that person should be aware of their cultural roots and ethnicity. Needless to say one has to consider oneself as a global body and should have human concern as already mentioned. This actually benefits humanity on the whole moving towards universal community and this is its greatest distinction beyond race.

Very important thing to note over here is comparison between Walker's womanism and Ogunyemi's. Former's is all about enduring love between same sexes and latter is against that, it rejects homosexuality. Womanism is no doubt shaped beyond the race but still opposes oppression based on sexuality. Her works exhibits affirmation of human diversity and she extends her support for grounded self-expression. For example, Tashi, Meg, Celie, Shug, Sofia etc. were enabled by themselves to standby their

self-expression or assertion just to support free expression of sexuality. Feminine language has provided that accessibility no doubt.

Because of nonideological nature, womanist language does not compel to separate politically or socially from people whose views are different. In the serious situation, when humanity and well-being is put to stake then it helps to have healthy conversation. Not just blues ideology but Walker's texts are beyond race, gender, culture and sexuality. This is almost like transcending not only in the direction of justice but it is extended for the purpose of healing. But the problem come across because of its nature of intersectionality.

Question still persist why black women is given more concern. And answer is very clear because black women and women of color have always been at the lower strata that means of every social hierarchy. Because of education now there is awareness, black women have understood the fact about marginality. But now, they have developed mental ability to become rational using multiple perspectives. Walker's novels, are artistic creations, presently those are pro-people rhetoric right now. Using language conveniently has become a tool with the help of that black women struggled to overcome the difficulties of economic deprivation. Trying hard to create the way from where there is no way.

There is a clear message to society from her novels. Accessibility to women's knowledge is most important thing to understand the development of women's epistemologies this is the major concern of Walker. Women stories are not for amusing. There is a lesson in their each and every experience. For her, access to women's stories not only safe guard women but also provide strategies of strength and survival for women

facing multilayered oppressions as mentioned already. She has established global links through her literary works that addresses the global need of wholeness for the sake of universal humanity. This is how she has created different aesthetic world through her womanist writing using language realistically and creating space for womanist discourse which is artistic, philosophical, visionary, inclusive and ethical.