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**UNVEILING THE UNSEEN: EXPLORING THE ATROCITIES FACED BY
BLACK WOMEN THROUGH ALICE WALKER'S LENS**

Kanchan Lata Bhardwaj

*Research Scholar,
C.C.S. University, Meerut,
U.P., India*

&

Dr. Vijeta Gautam

*Assistant Professor,
K.M.G.G.P.G. College, Badalapur,
(G.B. Nagar), U.P., India*

Abstract:

*It is an ultimate reality that women are facing subjugation and stigmatization all around the world. Especially, in the case of black women, this is much more worsened due to racism and gender disparity issues. African American literature has laid its foundations on the marginalization of black women. The term womanism was invented by Alice Walker in the year 1984, which emphasizes the idea that black women must be treated equally on grounds of race, gender, and class. The books *The Colour Purple* and *The Temple of My Familiar* strongly depict the true conditions of black women surviving under oppression and gender disparities. Alice Walker has depicted the nature of black women facing atrocities of sexism and class discrimination in both of her works with equal aplomb. This article delves into the profound exploration of the atrocities endured by Black women as portrayed through the works of Alice Walker. Walker's literary oeuvre, renowned for its powerful narratives and unflinching portrayal of social injustices, serves as a poignant lens through which to examine the multifaceted experiences of Black women. From systemic oppression to interpersonal violence, Walker's writings uncover the layers of injustice and resilience that characterize the lives of Black women. Through a critical analysis of select works by Walker, this abstract aims to illuminate the often-overlooked struggles faced by Black women, shedding light on their resilience, resistance, and unwavering strength in the face of adversity.*

Keywords: *Black Women, Oppression, Gender Disparity, Discrimination, Subjugation, etc.*

Introduction:

In recent times, concerning the struggle of feminists' movement a lot has been relieved in our society today and because of this, it has become an enormous phenomenon where it has acquired an extensive support and power through the voice of women fighting for the cause of equal rights that is for equality. 'Feminism' here is the basic word that indicates the strive for equal rights. So, around the 19th century, the feminist social movement set off due to the



unequal rights treatment of women and the disparaging roles in which the society allocated them. The fact that in society humans are considered as products thus reveals that feminism looks for a means to readdress and redefine the existing issue of unequal social status treatment that exists between male and female. However, feminism

However, feminism is seen as part of the issues of gender which has turned out to be trans-generational, on account of the aspects or elements it has lay hold of in the past. This is spelled out or seen in literature in the three forms or waves of feminism. The late 19th century and the early 20th century is said to be the starting point of the first wave of feminism. Moreover, in the case of electoral processes, feminist activities were foreseen by pursuing equal vote and right and to be voted as well. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft is viewed or seen as the first feminist and in her work *The Vindication of the Right of Women* it states that it has activated the differential roles of women consciousness in the society and the need to tackle them. (Malinowska, 2020).

However, in this our society, in spite of the oppression that women faced, there exist some elements in the hole of collectives which is still faced with a combination of changes such as; stigmatization, racism and violation of rights (despite the oppression that is faced by women in our society, there are still factions within the collective hole that face a combination of challenges, violation of rights, racism and stigmatization). Therefore, the reason why feminist ideology grows to be fortified with identity politics is because of the heat of the social anxiety or agitation (And so, in the heat of this social agitation, the feminist ideology became embattled with politics of identity). Apart from the fact that black women or women of colour are oppressed and treated as insignificant, not only because they are women but also because they are black. It is at this point that Black Feminism that led to African feminism became known which led to the process of other sub-sections. For instance, there are African varieties which surrounds African feminism which include mothers, stiwanism, negro-feminism, snail-sense feminism, and females. Black feminism goes after the equal rights between male and female and equal opportunities between black and white women. The consciousness of Black feminist is described as follows: "... black feminist consciousness is the recognition that African American women are status deprived because they face discrimination based on race and gender. Having to bear the burdens of prejudice that challenge people of colour, in addition to the various forms of subjugation that hinder women, African American women are disadvantaged doubly in the social, economic, and political structure of the United States. During the civil rights movement, black women were not recognized for their numerous political activities, such as behind-the-scenes organizing, mobilizing, and fundraising. Positions of leadership were reserved for black male" (Simien, 2004:83-84). Providing the historical forerunning of colonialism and slave trade in world history, Black Feminism became known from the crucible discrimination between gender and race across the continents and countries. Also, the second wave feminism and The Civil Right Movement of the 1960s contributed to the rise of Black Feminism. The Black feminists writing as we can see argues that feminism which is another tool of suppression only supports or favours white women given the racial gap and the social classification between the black race and the white race. Ajayi-Soyinka (1993:161) identified that "...The feminist movement which gave impetus to feminist critical theory had been based mainly on the history of white women's experience and



gender construction. By the middle of the 1980s, women of colour begin to question the basis of mainstream feminist theory, the domination of the feminist movement by white women, the omission of the experience and works of women of colour in feminist theories and critical analysis, and the inadequacy of the single focused feminist critical theories to the multiplicity of factors that constitute their experiences and inform their writings. " As mentioned earlier in the declaration above, politics of identity thus fortifies feminism which therefore led to the arrival of black feminism. Black women's interest as well as their feelings or emotions and their skills are not represented or captured in feminist ideology. (In essence, feminism is the business of white women. Corroborating this, Lola (1998) claims that black feminism stands at the intersection of racism fostered by a white feminist agenda and sexism in Black Nationalism).

Therefore, looking at other issues that are controversial and which affect the world today, the main subject which is mostly discussed amongst scholars is the marginalization of black women. Moreover, this prevails more in the literature of art where authors expressed themselves by presenting their own knowledge on the topic. Alice Walker is seen as the most respected author in African American culture, literacy, and black feminist thought. So, the creative writing of Walker's work paved a way for coloured women by creating platforms for them to be heard taking into consideration the consciousness of black feminism. Alice Walker has won many different awards at different points in her life and her literary works thus presents to us the struggles and predicament of African American women who are passing through the trauma of violence, racism, gender, class conflict and marginalisation. There are two novels in this thesis that are going to be discussed to examine the representation of black women as regards to sex, race, and class. The first novel which is "The Colour Purple", shows the protagonist in the story known as Celie who went through a very terrible violation of human rights like being physically, verbally and sexually abused by various different men, causing her to be traumatized and this left her without a voice on her own, will be studied. Moreover, Shug who is another character in the novel will also be examined. She gives a great relief to Celie who is going through a lot and is already in a broken state. Shug played a very vital role in the life of Celie, by giving her a reason to love, a reason to belong, teaching her about sex or sexuality and most especially leading her towards God. Therefore, in "The Colour Purple ", Walker laid more emphasis on the important elements such as: love, marriage, religion, family, women, sex, violence, and feminism. Also, in the work, the second novel known as "The Temple of My Familiar" will be analysed. (In this novel, the main idea is centered around the narration of blacks from different potentials in the United States the experience of (The general idea of this novel revolves around narrating the experiences of blacks in the United States from different perspectives.) However, the most (However, the perspective that was paramount was the experience of black women.) Walker tells the story of a young girl known as Zede who lives in South America. She is very intelligent, but she is from a very poor background. She became a highly regarded teacher due to her scholarship. Also, she was arrested and locked up by the authorities because of her communist ideas. There in prison she gives birth to her daughter known as Carlotta. Following this, she ran away to the United States with her daughter and stayed in San Francisco. It is in San Francisco that her daughter eventually goes to college and falls in love with a rock star known as Arvada. On one



hand, Zede completely separated herself from her origins. Whereas on the other hand, Arveyda who is an immigrant coming from India is trying to trace back its origin. Things between Arveyda and Carlotta get chaotic because of the fact that he gets into a love affair with Carlotta's mother Zede knowing that he is married to Carlotta and has children with her. Looking at the importance of this novel, we see that Walker the author portrays a vivid picture about the culture of African American and the struggles that black women go through for being black. Thus, the two novels will be analysed under the theory of womanish and Patriarchy to show how Alice Walker represents black women in her novels with respect to gender, race, and class.

As a pioneer of womanish theory as well as a world known advocate for the movement of black feminism, Walker speaks about the struggles and difficulties that black women go through. It is not only because as an individual she is a woman but it's because she is a black woman. Therefore, the two novels "The Colour Purple" and the "The Temple of My Familiar" shows the lack of segregation of gender, class, and racism, self-recognition, marginalization, infringement of the human rights, respect and gender bias as areas of research which will be investigated in Alice Walker's novels by showing how Alice Walker represents black women in her novels. However, this research is very important not only because it focuses mainly on the problems of the American feminist affecting normal women but because it provides an awareness of black women struggles as will be investigated in this work. (Moreover, by exploring Alice Walker's works of literature this research will (Moreover, the research is taking these factors into account by exploring Alice Walkers' literary works to decipher her viewpoints and analyse the issues of class, gender, and racism, from the theory of womanish and patriarchal).

This paper's objectives in "The Colour Purple" and "The Temple of My Familiar" by Alice Walker is to inspect the representation of black women. In order to attain the following objectives, I need: To inspect/examine how black women are represented through the eyes of female characters in the selected texts; to foreground representation of black women within the concepts of Womanish and patriarchal; To investigate how Womanish and patriarchal address the representation of black women in relation to sex, race, class, patriarchy, and matriarchy in the selected texts and to discuss the implications of these representations in a male chauvinistic African American society. This study is significant because it tackles the controversial issues discussed in Alice Walker's novels through hybridized insights from the womanist and gyno-critic framework, to discuss the issues on class, race, and gender.

Review of Literature:

This section therefore resides with the former learning/studies which is related to this research/work topic and its theoretical framework which is used as a guide to this study. However, black feminist establishment of consciousness came as a result of the problems/challenges which were opposing African American women, who were deprived of their status and were faced with discrimination because of their race and gender. So, Black feminism was born due to Black women's wish to "ameliorate conditions for empowerment on their own terms" (Yee, 1992, p. 235) and as well as handle race-gender intersection in the context of conquering/defeating. For this reason, Black feminism was discovered back before



the 1880s, at the time Black women were activists “championed for equal rights in relation to the structured black abolitionism” (Yee, 1992, p. 151). Furthermore, Black feminism is seen here as the act of creating, of free and oppressed Black women and applying ways in order to reduce the legitimate practice of enslavement/slavery as well as sexually gendered racial violence/assault (Taylor, 1998).

Furthermore, some Black feminist in the early time were Ida B Wells Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth (Collins, 1991; Combahee River Collective, 2017; Taylor, 1998).and Frances E. W. Harper. Some of the early Black feminists were Mary Church Terrell, Frances E. W. Harper, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth (Collins, 1991; Combahee River Collective, 2017; Taylor, 1998). From the early 1830s right to the early 1990s indicates that these advocates symbolises Black feminism before it originated rhetorically from Black Feminist Theory. Through the continuous Women’s Liberation Movement and the Civil Rights Movement which was a conversation that surrounds Black feminist theory, and which became authorized around the 1960s since Black women happened to be in need to either decide on whether to endure racism or jingoism/chauvinism (Taylor, 1998). There was no mutual attention given to these different groups and so, Black women had no safe place among any of these general continuous/progressive movements. In addition, although the creation of feminist movement in the U.S was to challenge the problem of oppression that every woman encounters, the strategies and aims for the need of general feminist was opposed and was applied to deal only with the white woman’s desire (Collins, 1990; Patterson et al., 2016; Taylor, 1998).

Due to the lack/absence to include Black women in the general feminist movement thus strengthened them to increase more on their practices and viewpoint which obviously served their problems/difficulties. This continually empowered the “yet-undecided well-formed baggage related with the word’s ‘feminism’ and ‘feminist’” in the United States (Patterson et al., 2016, p. 58). In order to tackle the time period influenced by feminist and anti-racist movement which its main emphasis was on Black men and White women, Black feminist organizations were accepted and they began producing a number of books/works, as well as beliefs, and politics which therefore led to the reality/fact and in addition the Black female experiences in problem/difficulty (Black female matter). (Combahee River Collective, 2017; Nash, 2011; Taylor, 1998). Nash (2011) expounded that from 1968-1987, Black feminist used authorized organizations like National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), the influential Combahee River Collective and Salsa Soul Sisters, as avenues to set up theoretical reviews, bringing about political advocacy and constructing the texts that have appeared to establish the Black feminist precepts. During the time when these institutions’ objectives were partially an extension of Black feminist political labour from past historical periods, this minute was identified by the creation of certified Black feminist institutions which were political as well as emotional “houses” for Black feminists. (p. 451) For instance, in 1973, the NBFO was created, and its goal was to “deal with the specified and certain desires of the wider, yet nearly half of all abandoned Black race in America, the Black woman” (Wada, 2017).

One may claim that “Black feminists were the earliest activists in the U.S to propose and act upon the joining of class, gender as well as race” (Springer, 2005, p. 2). Patricia Hill Collins in 1990, provided a literary contribution to the Black feminist discourse that further



propelled the energy ignited by the elder Black feminists. As a matter of fact, Collins (1990) was responsible for introducing the Black feminist thoughts, which differed from the Black feminist theory in that it was more focused on executing actions. According to Collins (1990), Black feminist concept can be defined as a resistive action taken to oppose the rebuttal and barring of Black women's encounters and thus their knowledge of the social relations of domination and resistance. Collins' (1990) work highlighted major actionable targets for Black women: to describe themselves; to form positive, multiple representations of themselves; to make use of their cultural tradition as power to withstand daily discrimination; and to challenge interconnecting forms of control, like gender, class enslavement as well as race. In the same period, Collins' (1990) Black feminist framework became a part of the Black feminist theory conversation, as did Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) formation of 'intersectionality'. Intersectionality is described as a survival principle which mainly addresses the different methods in which gender and race communicate to create the various extents of Black women's experiences, mostly with regards to employment (Crenshaw, 1989). As a result, Black feminists have "for a very long time formulated the commonly integral nature of gender and race by framing Black women's multiple threat as well as through examining the metalanguage of race" (Nash, 2011, p. 451), Crenshaw's intersectionality structure became an approved lens for Black feminists to specifically point out the way race and gender collide under certain situations.

In all, Black feminist have held onto the idea that the Black community derives benefit from feminism due to its importance in challenging the conventional patriarchy for its institutionalised oppressive framework, by acting as a strong proponent for establishing coalitions among the Black community. According to Collins (2000), Black feminism stands as a social justice project and for the success of the initiative to be realised, forming a coalition is of great importance. Black feminism benefits the struggle for Black liberation rather than causing divides amongst members into various factions; this is because the fight against racial discrimination, heterosexist, economic exploitation, and gender subordination, are integrally related to the collective pursuit of social justice (Ransby, 2000). Furthermore, Black feminism advocates for a sense of belonging or conscious loyalty amongst Black women, who face similar struggles of racism, class stratification and gender stereotyping. In the 21st century, gender-nonconforming, queer, and Black trans feminism are integral in today's Black feminist movements. Therefore, these expressions of Black feminism have their roots from earlier Black feminist articulations and so, in our world today, it is a strong ideal that governs the radical Black queer feminism of members of the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) and Black Lives Matter (BLM) (Ransby, 2019). However, this thesis will focus on Alice Walker's interpretation of Black feminism and how it relates to the two novels to be reviewed i.e. *The Colour Purple* and *The Templar of My Familiar*.

Alice Walker's womanism theory is used in this work for a better comprehension of the research topic. It is one of the most important theories that black feminism has adopted over the past years. A popular example of womanism is the Combahee River Collective, initiated by Barbara Smith, and its Black Feminist Statement. Although very much related with literary review by conventional feminists, the theory of womanhood has been applied in different associative forms (Walker, 1983; 2006; Phillips, 2006). Womanism can be found in a cultural



structure which was very much plainly communicated by the writer and activist Alice Walker in the 1980s. Her opinion was that Black women can be referred to as “womanish”. Womanish, the origin of Womanism, entails the cultural appearance of Black women’s lives. Black girls are referred to as “womanish” when they behave maturely as grown women, and Walker views this as the societal seedling of Womanism (Walker 1983). Definitely, Walker is not alone in the articulation of Womanism, and other things will be spoken of the other originators of the theory

The Womanist concept argues that Black women survive inside a parallel history of racism and gender injustice. Womanist concepts: (1) essentially recognizes that race is important for Black women; (2) argues that study of Black women must involve race and gender reviews simultaneously and (3) recognizes that Black women in the past years have battled for the rights to be linked to Black men, this is in complete variance to the historical desires of White middle class heterosexual American feminists.

Alice Walker conceptualised the term “womanish” in her series of essays titled “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” which was published in 1983. At the start of the series, she presents the meaning of womanish as “Afrocentric, feminist, spiritual, healing as well as embodied” (Razak, 100). She describes “womanist” in the first account of the series of essays with respect to the creation, the primary use and definition of the word. This concept of ‘womanist’ came from the black population adjective “womanish,” which is mainly used in the black community’s colloquial language such as “you are behaving womanish.” Black mothers would say to their daughters with such words, and this has similar meaning with “you are trying to be grown” (Walker, 2004, p.42). As Collins claims, by using the term from the Southern black people expression of mothers to their daughters, Walker proposes that black women’s existing history supports “a womanist perspective available majorly to black women” (Collins, 1996: 10). However, womanish is a gender progressive worldview that has its root in the history of black women’s struggles, but extends beyond the women of African background, accommodating a multi-ethnic feminist standpoint (Cannon, 1995) descriptions. To begin with, the expressions reflect “appalling, bold, resolute or wilful behaviour” (Walker, 11). These four adjectives all describe doing or saying something which is not evident or simple but with a strong resolution and plenty of inspiration. As Saunders claims, the attention is on “wilful” because for a long time, a lot of black women have not been regarded to be in possession of their personal free wills, and no little part of the issue has been found in the personality of black men” (Saunders, 1988). Secondly, both expressions describe an attitude which is categorized by “aiming to know more and to a larger extent than is qualified as “good” for one” (Walker, 11). This again signifies the non-apparent side of Womanism. Thirdly, the expressions show a developed, grown attitude. As Walker states in the earlier part of the account, “womanish” is the inverse of “girlish”, which means “impractical, reckless, not serious” (Walker, 1984, p.11). On the contrary, “womanish” (just like the expressions) means not acting alone but being matured as well. It relates to being accountable, in control and serious.

In the second account, Walker describes ‘womanist’ by making reference to the various types of relationships that can exist between women (Walker, 1983). Most of all, womanists love other women, to a large extent for those things that qualify them as females, for instance



their emotional life, their strength as well as their common female culture (Walker, 1983). Apart from only loving these female attributes, Walker states that womanists should also choose them as sexual partners. It appears that Walker does not only state that women should love other women, but that most importantly, they should also appreciate those things that are attributed to them. Even though Walker makes reference to lesbian relationships in the beginning sentence of this account, she isn't against heterosexual relationships. As one of the concepts of womanhood is that, a woman "sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non sexually. committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female" (Walker, 1983). And so, Walker implores her audience to love one another mainly because of the fact that they are female, expressing this love to the opposite sex. As stated by Collins, "Womanism apparently presents a method for black women to deal with gender exploitation without condemning black men" (Collins, 11).

She demonstrates this through the means of the metaphor of the garden where "the women and men of various colours live together like flowers in a garden but maintain their cultural uniqueness and morals" (Collins, 11). As a matter of fact, Walker reveals that a forgiving attitude is not only required among sexes, rather among races as well. Therefore, she presents a philosophy here which is helpful not for black women alone but for all of mankind. Her description hence explicitly has both a real dimension (the development of the word in black (female) people expressions) and a more worldwide one (the imaginary, universal picture of the garden). As stated by Davis, Walker's description reveals that "people are not different from the survival of the earth; rather they act as continuity of the world itself" (Davis, 33).

Walker later refers to a part of a particular relationship between women: the relationship between a mother and the child. The reality that the two examples she presented in this account consist of a mother-child (seemingly a daughter) condition proposes that she regards motherhood as necessary in the adventure of being a woman. As Razak argues, Walker gives attention to the distributing and mentorship that are a common aspect of idealized Black mother-daughter relationships" (Razak, 99).

In the third account, Walker describes 'womanist' recursively. In a list which outlines things a womanist loves, she majorly regards the irrational part women are commonly said to have (the moon represents femininity) (Walker, 1983). In her list, Walker mentions love, dance and music, food as well as roundness as signs for the worldly and fleshy pleasures in life. She also mentions the moon and the spirit as signs for the spiritual aspect of our existence. In addition, she claims that womanists enjoy struggle, which possibly means that they keep fighting and not give up quickly in their existing. Also, besides loving people generally, womanists love themselves also (Walker, 1983).

The fourth and final account involves only the phrase "Womanist is likening to feminist in the same way purple is to lavender" (Walker, xii). This has become quite a popular phrase now. With this statement, Walker demonstrates that the two have some similar attributes, yet they are evidently different. By concluding with this sentence, she also closes the circle of her description, as she started with a related conclusion in the first account, which is that a womanist is a black feminist. The reason she selected purple and lavender as the colours of reference (rather than blue and violet) is not apparent. It definitely causes one to think of The



Colour Purple. We are not sure whether or not this was planned by Walker. In her description of Womanism, Walker reveals various things which are not easy to conclude on. Most essentially, she states that black women are beautiful and powerful beings without condemning men or white people in the course. Generally, in this universalist viewpoint which presents Walker with more power as a feminist. In relation to women, without violently attacking other people (men, white people) for any reason at all, she simply and very actively shows what every feminist intends to reveal, such as that women are helpful because they are women.

Discussion on First Novel: *The Colour Purple*:

In the novel *The Colour Purple*, Celie is seen as the main protagonist. She writes letters to God, but she realises that there haven't been any responses from the letters she has been writing to God and so, she decided to rather send letters to her sister Nettie instead. Here, Celie is fourteen years old, and she lives in the interwar in the south; However, she has passed through so many troubling issues and because of these issues, her existence is now interpreted as oppression; also, it is during the time where males had total control over the women that Celie was born. This is seen from the beginning of the novel where Celie is raped by her stepfather multiple times as he declares to her: "You better not ever tell anybody but God." It'd kill your mother" (Walker, 3).

Her own stepfather raped her after her mother passed away and she gave birth to her two children. Sadly, her stepfather took the children away from her. So, because of the constant raped from her stepfather, he then forced her to get married to their next-door neighbour whose name is Mr._. Mr._ is a single farmer looking for a woman who is going to be a mother and maid for his children, for he has four children from his first marriage. When reading the literature, the readers will be able to bring out all the deep feelings of troubles and oppression that Celie had to go through. An example can be seen through the oppression that she is going through in the hands of Mr._. Furthermore, in the story, there are times where the situation is brightened like we see in the relationship between Celie and Shug. So, in proportion to the written essay call, *The Colour Purple*. An Existential Novel: We noticed that *The Colour Purple* is seen as a song or music of delight and of victory: victory here means the victory of a woman who struggles against sexism, racism and social determination which eventually bloom her being into wholeness. Therefore, Walker portrays African American as an oppressed, gender and racialized culture. Walker daily does not disdain the difficulties that black women go through. But rather, Celie shows how black women are sentiments of victimization which is because of the masculine prejudice, as well as their skin tone. Black people on the other hand see Women with darker complexions as unattractive, whereas women who have lighter skin colour are seen as beautiful as if black is terrible and white is wonderful. This ideology therefore is handled in a thorough manner in Walker's novel.

Discussion on Second Novel: *Temple of My Familiar*:

The novel focuses mainly on three couples and Walker on the other hand sends across her message by using circumstances among the six characters. However, after reading the novel, I noticed that Miss Lissie is the main protagonist that makes the narration move, and she is seen as a matriarchal goddess. Moreover, looking at her past experiences, it thus authorises her to



section together various stories from her past, living as man or woman, white or black in diverse age groups or generations. Between the years 1980 and 1990, it shows her ancestral memory and a continuous voice from a distant place where human beings and animals existed in the past in harmony and as a family. The story plan of *Miss Lissie* between 1980s and 1990s played a very important part in preserving traditional harmony of Africa and that of Native America. Looking at the novel within the first few paragraphs we realised that the novel focuses on a Latina known as Carlotta who is based in the United States. However, the focus of the narration is also shifted to the mother and grandmother of Carlotta who are living in South America. According to this, Walker makes us the reader to understand that:

In the old country in South America, Carlotta's grandmother, Zedé, had been a seamstress, but really more of a sewing magician. She was the creator of clothing, especially capes, made of feathers. These capes were worn by dancers and musicians and priests at traditional village festivals and had been worn for countless generations. When she was a young child, Carlotta's mother, also called Zedé was sent to collect the peacock feathers used in the designs" (Walker, 3).

As a talented mistress, Zedé was able to help herself. Before, she was a poor girl who comes from a very happy family. As a poor girl, she was able to develop her skills. Over the years, as a learned woman, she accepted the communist ideals. But her communist ideology resulted to her ended up in prison where she gives birth to her child known as Carlotta. At the end she is freed from prison and she and her daughter found protection in San Francisco where she was able to meet her husband known as Arveyda. The same way the story about the history of Carlotta's mother in Southern America unravels, so does the marriage between Arveyda and Carlotta. However, all things went completely wrong due to the men's jealousy where they took the women's right to priestesses away from them by taking their feathers without their knowledge. Due to this, the women were regarded as nothing, and they were lessening to a mere producer of robes in order for the men to be glorified. Here, it is noticed that Carlotta is gross and sexually overpowered with a lot of troubles or difficulties which looks like she is enormously connected with menfolk. and grossly overwhelmed with troubles and it seems she is deeply associated with the menfolk. Finally, in the end, she turns out to be Suwelo's mistress while she herself is married to Fanny. She isn't the only person who is seen as a cheat in the story, but her mother Zede as well is seen sleeping with her husband. Furthermore, Fanny Nzingha is another character in the novel who is an African American woman. She is faced with enormous antagonism at the beginning of the novel which thus originates from the anger she had against her own husband and the white society. She travels all the way to Africa so that she can confront the anger she feels insight against the white society which therefore presents or shows part of her ethnicity. Also, Fanny is a feminist who sees her husband's masculinity to be a very toxic type to her because her husband totally believes that he has all the right to have an affair with many other women including Carlotta. The main reason why Fanny thinks that her husband believes the way he does is because of the way he was raised by his family to be a sexist stereotype and his philosophy is strongly based on white predominance and male superiority. Again, being a history professor, his lectures on history were mainly focusing on white view and male superiority. Thus, Suwelo here truly represents the collapse or failure of masculinity which was to defeat white predominance and



sexism around the post sixties era. As stated by Walker: “his generation of men had failed women - and themselves, for all their activism and political development during the sixties, all their understanding of the pervasiveness of oppression, for most men, the preferred place for women had remained the home; the preferred position for women, wherever they were, supreme” (Walker, 28-29).

Moreover, the view of Suwelo that reveals him sleeping with many women thus symbolises man’s supremacy and power. Due to constant therapy sessions, Suwelo finally got peace with himself and later reunited with his wife. In the end it is noticed that the relationship between Fanny and Suwelo worsened since Fanny started conducting experiments with other great characters proposed to her through her readings and the skills she acquired when she visited West Africa.

Generally, in the beginning of the novel, every one of the main characters excluding Lissie is related to break up and this is because they wanted to fight against exasperation amongst them, conflict, and a basic fear that causes destruction. This novel therefore conveys a difficult process of their conflict as it thus says: “for the demonstrable values of oneness, wholeness, and unity as opposed to dialectical tension, exclusivity, and separateness.” (Dieke, 1992: 508). The well most organized means of proceeding with the ideas and merits or worths is by fellowship which is completely different from narcissism of self-destruction of “[m]an as separate from woman, humans as separate from animals, one race as separate from another, the old as separate from the young” (Dieke, 512). Also, this novel talks about the different relationships that contributed to every character, differing across people with separate races, periods, sexes, and cultures. Therefore, according to Dieke, “Walker creates a salutary vision, which points toward a monistic idealism in which humans, animals, and the whole ecological order coexist in a unique dynamic of pan cosmic symbiosis” (Dieke, 507). By focusing on fellowship/communion, it guides us the readers to see the importance of Walker’s theoretical writings and how it helps the community. For all the characters to have a practical knowledge for them to be completely spiritual, 3 very important characteristics are needed in the process. The first thing is that in this novel, an artist who is a character is deemed as complete. Secondly, “for Alice Walker, as for the post romantic French novelist Marcel Proust, recollected art is a rhetorical strategy of relocating the lost self, of seeking and uncovering an inner tapestry of identity” (Dieke, 509). To put it differently, this explains that all the characters need to undergo a means of connecting back together their past which will help determine both their future and present life. Again, as quoted in this book, “remembrance is the key to redemption.” (336) The third reason says that the part played by communication is vital. According to Dieke’s argument, he says that every act of movement is a proof which shows that a character takes part in the same emotions, intimate thoughts, and memories with the other characters. To a certain extent, this is to communicate opinions, nevertheless, it is very important to see that it creates a friendly and a happy environment. Thus, this strengthens the feelings of empathic connection and unity. (Dieke, 512)

Looking at this novel, *The Temple of My Familiar*, we noticed that there are many different types of communication that were presented such as: recording, dialogues, paintings, tape music, fragments of a diary, letters, stories and many more. The characters who were in various developing stages to become a complete person through communication, and also



assisting each other in the process. While they were communicating with each other and uncovering their views to create brand new. At the final end, “they all vaguely realize they have a purpose in each other’s lives. They are a collective means by which each of them will grow. They don’t discuss this, but it is felt strongly by all. There is palpable trust.” (398). Also Sol argues the fact that: “Lissie, Arveyda, and Fanny achieve an awareness of their place in existence with a sublimity scarcely paralleled in contemporary literature. By the novel’s end, Lissie recalls her incarnations at the beginning of human history, and Arveyda and Fanny unite as incarnations of (a very different) Adam and Eve. Meanwhile, Suwelo, Carlotta, and Hal can only achieve fulfillment through their understanding of the prodigies’ [i.e.Lissie’s, Arvydas and Fanny’s] powers and by coming to terms with their own painful pasts” (Sol, 398). Consequently, Walker’s 1989 novel will examine the womanish theory and the patriarchy in this discussion. It also emphasizes the themes in the novel, the contents and the motifs rather than the problems in the style or evaluation, in the narrative techniques.

Conclusion:

Inside the black society in today’s world, black women went through many problems/challenges and such problems/challenges were surrounded by emotional turmoil, political, and social, which made them not able to identify with Afro-Americanism or mainstream feminism. Notwithstanding, even though they were of the minority groups, the predicament of the black people was not completely taken advantage of by the two groups. Consequently, due to the absence of these groups, led to the emergence of black feminism by providing a platform specially for black women in order for them to voice their predicament by building a strong unity force among them. Looking at Walker who is seen as one of the most prominent and respectable black women and a strong black feminist advocate declares in her own terminology “Womanism” and produces a novel in a way that confronts the problems/challenges which black women are faced with. Therefore, the objective in this thesis is to inspect the representation of black women in Alice Walker’s *The Colour Purple* and *The Temple of My Familiar*. The emphasis is particularly on the struggles of black women and black people in general, and their existence in a violent, racist, sexist, and patriarchal society. In this research therefore, there has been substantial awareness in the African American culture mostly about politics, women and sexuality inside the black community which was represented through the lives of the characters in the novels. Womanism and patriarchy are the theories used to analyse the work. As earlier examined, womanish refers to a type of feminism which pays particular attention to the experiences, concerns of women of colour most especially black women, and conditions. Also, womanish therefore identifies the power and the intrinsic beauty of black womanhood which is in search for unity and relationship with the black men. Again, womanish recognises and censures against racism in a feminist society/community and sexism in a black American society/community. Furthermore, it explains that the feelings of black women for independence are equally based on their culture and their femininity. The patriarchal community/society on the other hand outlines women as sweet, submissive, and modest.

In investigating the two novels, Walker creates awareness in the struggles of black women based on the issues of racism, class, and gender by portraying in the novel the characters that



explains her opinion. In *The Colour Purple*, we see that the subject matter of sexuality was the main point where the novel is good enough in the ideology of black feminism. Sexuality here was seen as a very important interconnecting framework of gender marginalization, racism, and class. Also, the tension to obey to the stereotype gender roles, the male superiority over the female sexuality, and gender oppression were complete proof of the novels. However, this work contains powerful female characters, and there was also a move of consciousness all through the plot. The following such as: the “culture of dissemblance”, Sexism, and heterosexist, which are all addressed by black feminism are seen as proof in *The Colour Purple*. Moreover, the view about womanism was substantially handled in this novel just as the representation of black women was seen as further conspicuous, as more emphasis was made on how black women are looked past, are stereotyped and degraded. Throughout the text, Walker was determined to show how black women can be stronger, confident, and independent as we can see in the characters as they highlighted her determination which is being portrayed in the novel.

When going through the novel *The Temple of My Familiar* on the other hand, we noticed that this work is not completely or entirely operated in a womanism form. Moreover, comparing it to *The Colour Purple* we see that not all the protagonists are black women, and the evaluations of black women isn't seen as the subject matter of concentration. Therefore, if *The Temple of My Familiar* is a womanist, then Walker's conception generally in her literary work would be completely proven in a conceivably womanist design. To begin, *The Temple of My Familiar* is Walker's virtual demonstration of a universalist and non-separatist system of value. Among the six main characters in the novel, three of them are men. Here, using male as a protagonist is not only the choice of interest but rather the males are portrayed to be very gentle. Additionally, the message received from the novel shows that to be 'perfect' as a human being or a person, all should try to be at peace with one another. Nevertheless, “The Temple of My Familiar helps to broaden explicitly the range by demonstrating the mind set of womanism rather than just focusing on the definition towards men as against women and whites by appealing that there should be a harmonious comprehension between times, genders, places, races, and among species as well. Consequently, although *The Colour Purple* which is a literary work is said to elaborate the presentation on the significant explanation of womanism, on the concrete as mentioned above. Looking at the narrative volume of “The Colour Purple”, it shows us black women, black feminism and their hostile circumstances. When compared to *The Temple of My Familiar* we see that its character changes or moves backwards. Therefore, instead of concentrating on a particular problem on sexuality in black society, black feminism, rather the novel concentrates on a general approved definition of womanism. Although these elements are seen in the plot and are simple to their meaning, the non-separative attitude is inside its heart which is evidence that half of the characters in the novel are male protagonists.

Altogether, the two novels mainly portray how Walker's work sex pained her affections for black women, their interests, and their circumstances. The outcome is that her fictitious and her theoretical work are inseparably connected to each other as if they are of the same coin. Both novels are seen to affect each other, support/fortify each other, and develop response for one another. Also, as a result, Walker is seen as a well-acceptable instructor to



her theoretical framework in a clear representation though in an imaginary life of all her characters as she continues to still make them act in accord with her doctrine. Thus, this deal is probably the reason for her ability as an outstanding/extraordinary writer and a philosopher.

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